Welcome to the UGA Spring Semester Study Abroad
Field Studies in Natural Resources: Sustaining Human Societies and the Natural Environment
ECOL 4271/6271 (4 credits)

This is a sample syllabus intended as a general guide only and deviations may be necessary (a final syllabus will be included in the course-book or available by contacting the office)

Lead Instructor and Program Director: Dr. Michael Tarrant, Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, UGA, Tarrant@uga.edu

Office Address: Discover Abroad
Building 4, Suite 102
Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
Athens, GA 30602-2152

Telephone: 706-542-9713
Website: www.discoverabroad.uga.edu
Contact Email: discoverabroad@uga.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the sustainable relationship of humans and their environment through educational travel, field trips, active participation, lectures, seminars, and applied exercises to Hawai’i, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. Location-based case studies are used to integrate the different perspectives of diverse natural, biological, and social science disciplines and to improve our understanding of sustainability. These countries boast some of the most diverse and remarkable natural and cultural resources in the Southern Hemisphere including networks of national parks, reserves, offshore islands, and coastal areas, as well as unique indigenous cultures and history. Pre-departure and post-departure assignments are required (refer to the Course Requirements section in this syllabus as well as the itinerary).

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

In order to evaluate the complex relationships between human culture and the natural environment and to address the “big questions” facing sustainability, you will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of natural history, biogeography, ecological diversity, and related social and cultural contexts of Hawai’i, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji as presented in readings, seminars, lectures, and field activities.
2. Apply this knowledge to understand the complexity of sustainable development in Hawai’i, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji and to international and global issues generally; in particular to
   a. Demonstrate understanding of differences in causality and correlation, the effects of scale (geographic and temporal), and inter-disciplinary approaches in issues of sustainable development
3. Engage in creative individual- and peer-based experiential learning to design integrated solutions to the major challenges facing sustainable development through recall, translation, deconstruction and reflection of the knowledge acquired.
4. Critically evaluate the human and biophysical dimensions of sustainable development through personal experiences, peer-group evaluations, and applied research projects; in particular, to be able to
   a. Judge the strengths and weaknesses of solutions to problems arising from human-environment interactions using evidence from applied case studies;
   b. Evaluate ethical implications of conservation and sustainability;
   c. Defend your perspectives in written and oral presentations.
5. Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with Discover Abroad’s Professional, Academic, and Ethical Code of Conduct (refer to the Program Manual for a description and course-related implications).

Course Credit

Credit is offered for 4 semester hours at the undergraduate level (4271) or graduate level (6271) in:

ECOL Ecology

Graduate and Honors Option Credit

Students who wish to take this course for honors credit will be required to register for the graduate version of the course. To do so, simply request this course upon applying to the program, and the CRN will be given to you when it comes time to register. Remember that there are additional requirements for graduate credit. See "Additional Course Assignment for Graduate Credit and Honors Option" below. Questions about graduate course credit and how it works with your honors program of study may be directed to the Honors Program (honors@uga.edu), Tel: 706-542-6938.

Prerequisites

All students in good academic standing are eligible to take the course. There are no academic prerequisites, however, some activities will require a level of physical exertion and may span a broad climatic gradient requiring certain gear (refer to the Program Manual).

Attendance

Punctual attendance at all scheduled program–related activities is required, including group meetings, discussions, field excursions, as well as lectures and any other scheduled activities. Participation in educational field activities (such as hiking, snorkeling, swimming, etc.) is voluntary and at the discretion of the student; however, should you wish not to participate you must inform the instructor and an alternate education non-field activity will be assigned. An excused absence or decision not to participate in one or any of these field activities will not affect your course grade. During the field studies, no student may leave the group without the consent of the faculty supervisor. Unless an absence is approved by one of the instructors, students will lose 10% of their final grade for each day or part-day they fail to participate. Unexcused absences or chronic late arrival to program activities may be grounds for dismissal from the program (refer to the Program Manual for further details).

Late and Missed Assignments

Because of the nature of this course and the tight schedule, assignments are not accepted late without prior approval from the instructor.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in the University's Culture of Honesty policy (www.uga.edu/honesty). All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The penalties for academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) award of a failing grade for the course, suspension, notification placed on the student’s transcript of their having been found guilty of cheating, and expulsion from the university, and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the University Academic Policy Panel.
Special Accommodations

Any student(s) who require special accommodation(s) or other requirements in this course must contact the instructor before or at the UGA on-campus orientation and register with UGA Disability Resource Center (www.drc.uga.edu). Some activities include moderate exercise, such as hiking and snorkeling.

Course-book


3. Collection of readings and course material. Download from UGA e-Learning Commons (www.elc.uga.edu) prior to departure. The files will be available approximately four weeks prior to the start of the program and you should not expect to be able to download the materials easily or cheaply once in country.

You are required to bring a laptop or notebook with Microsoft Word (ipads, kindles, or other similar electronic reading devices are not acceptable for course assignments) and a flash drive. The program accepts no responsibility for lost or stolen items and we recommend that you consider purchasing insurance for any expensive personal items before bringing them on the course.

Optional Reading

For pre-departure (optional) reading, we recommend:


Course Requirements

*Pre- and post-departure assignments: Personal digital introduction (2%) and digital story (13%)*

Due date as listed on the Course Itinerary. This course requirement meets the following learning outcomes: 3, 4.

*Pre-departure lectures and in-country first full day quiz (15%)*
A quiz (n=3) will be given on the first full day in-country. Quiz #1 will cover information from (1) the pre-departure lecture (Discover Abroad) and (2) the pre-departure lecture (New Zealand) and will be given in Queenstown, NZ. Quiz #2 will cover information from the pre-departure lecture (Australia) and will be given in Sydney. Quiz #3 will cover information from the pre-departure lecture (Fiji) and will be given in Nadi, Fiji. The quiz format will be mostly multiple-choice, but may also contain a few short answer and/or essay questions.

Field modules (55%)

The field modules are location-based questions to be answered as individually written 250-word essays, group debates, site quizzes, and/or research projects. Due dates as listed on the Course Itinerary. This course requirement meets the following learning outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Final exam - concepts quiz (15%)

Due date as listed on the Course Itinerary. This course requirement meets the following learning outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Additional Assignment for Graduate or Honors Option Credit

Graduate credit for the course requires both of the following: (1) the quality of the presentations, written exam material, and project assignments will be of a higher quality than at the undergraduate level. Accordingly, written material and project assignments will receive more rigorous grading than at the undergraduate level. (2) An electronic field guide of the unique native flora (containing 10 species of native trees/plants) from Australia. The photographs must be your own, file no larger than 8MB, and the style must strictly follow the New Zealand Plant Guide. Email the compressed Word file (titled, “your last and first name Australia field guide”) to the instructor within four (4) weeks after the end of the program in-country. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements (e.g., file name, compression, submission date, etc) will result in an automatic 10% (minimum) to 20% (maximum) penalty in grade. A grade of 75% or above is required.

Grade Assessment

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 100 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5 – 92.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5 – 82.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79.4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5 – 72.9 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>59.5 - 69.4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 59.4 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Itinerary

Refer to the sample itineraries available online. Final itineraries will be distributed on arrival in-country or contact the office for the most recent version.