OCN 480/GEO 592: Landscapes of Belize

Program Overview

Participate in an in-depth exploration of Belize’s physical setting, history, and culture through an analysis of its literature and an exploration of its landscapes along the Sibun River Valley, from the Maya Mountains through the pine savanna to the Caribbean Reef system. Experience ancient Mayan sites, modern Creole culture, Central American geology, oceanography at the world’s second largest barrier reef system, and cutting-edge environmental protection, eco-tourism, sustainable land use, and best management practices.

Program Facts

Location.......................... Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize
Tentative Program Dates ......................... Mar. 3 - 11, 2017
UNCW spring classes: Jan. - May 2017
Program Leader(s):
Dr. Andrea Hawke - hawkesa@uncw.edu

Eligibility

Students are eligible to apply for this program if they meet the following eligibility criteria:

- A valid passport
- Degree-seeking student
- Sophomore standing by Spring 2017
- Good judicial standing
- 2.50+ GPA at time of application
- Instructor approval

Application

Application Deadline: November 18, 2016

- To apply, log in at: https://itsappserv02.uncw.edu/intprogapp/ and select your program of choice
- A $500 non-refundable deposit is due at time of application

Academics

This is a 3-credit course offered as OCN 480 and GEO 592. The geography, geology, and oceanography of Belize will be examined once a week at UNCW prior to the Spring Break trip (March 3-11, 2017) to Belize. Classes will be held following the trip as needed for wrap-up. UNCW course meeting time is TBA and will be determined based on student schedules.
Belize is a small, English-speaking country of great environmental and cultural diversity situated on the Caribbean coast of Central America. A PASSPORT IS REQUIRED! After preparation at UNCW, our Belize visit will include sites of environmental and cultural interest in the Maya Mountains, such as ancient Mayan ruins at Cahal Pech, the modern Mayan village of San Ignacio Town, the Mountain Pine Ridge station for the geological and hydrological headwater of the Sibun system, and Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary where we will canoe on the Sibun River, and explore the vegetation in the tropical savanna. We’ll also have a private tour of Belize’s National Zoo, visit Dangriga Town on the way to the coast, and spend the last three days on Tobacco Caye, 12 miles offshore, for snorkeling and study of the marine environment on the western hemisphere’s largest reef system.

Program Activities & Features

Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary will be our host at three sites: the western Maya Mountains, the central tropical savanna, and Tobacco Caye in the Caribbean. Studies will include environment, oceanography, geology, land use, and people as we follow the Sibun River watershed from the mountains to the sea. Activities include canoeing along the Sibun River, a visit to the Cahal Pech Mayan ruin, spelunking through limestone caves, and snorkeling the outer and inner reef system.

Estimated Program Fee: $2,000*

Program Fee Includes:
- Medical insurance
- All lodging in Belize
- Three meals a day
- All travel (bus and boat) in Belize
- All entry fees
- Canoe, caving, and snorkel gear
- Lecturers and guides

Additional Costs:
- Round trip flight from Wilmington to Belize City ~$750.00 (subject to increase)
- Belize Departure tax: $40
- Required books (~$20)
- Personal spending money
- SCUBA or deep-sea fishing excursion at Tobacco Caye

Federal and state financial aid may be applied toward this program. Even if you are normally ineligible for financial aid, you should submit a financial aid application (FAFSA). You may find that you are eligible for additional funding.

UNCW students may also apply for a UNCW Education Abroad Grant and additional study abroad scholarships. Grant applications and additional information are available at: www.uncw.edu/international/abroad/aid.html

*Program cost subject to decrease with student participation