

ALS 3954:
Environmental Science, Health, and South American Culture
WINTER SESSION 2017
December 29th 2016 – January 15th 2017

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The core of this unique experience is a two-week trip to Ecuador that explores that country's incredibly diverse ecosystems and introduces students to its agriculture and its people. It includes visits to cities and universities, jungles, tropical islands, and mountains, and focuses on research and outreach efforts that will engage students in a multicultural perspective focused on the interaction of South American culture, environmental issues, and human health, and a chance to build lifelong friendships while engaging in professional and personal development opportunities. The framework for this high-impact experience is a special study course offered Winter Session. Preparation for the trip occurs during fall semester.



COURSE CREDIT

Three credits in Winter Session 2016-2017 (ALS 3954). These credits count toward the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences International Minor and Area 7 of the CLE. Check with your advisor to see how they may apply towards your major as some departments may allow credits for different requirements.

Pre-departure meetings and lectures occur October – December, with final projects being presented during spring semester.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

- Depart from Washington, Dec 29th
- Arrive in Quito, Ecuador
- Cayambe Coca (Andes Mountains)
- Tiputini Research Station (Amazon jungle)
- Hacienda Verde Andean Dry Forest
- Galapagos Islands (Santa Cruz, Isabella and Sante Fe)
- Arrive back in DC, Jan 15



EXCURSIONS

Quito - Quito is the capital of Ecuador. A city of 2 million, it was founded in 1534 on the ruins of an ancient Inca city and provides a glimpse of the country's cultural heritage. At 2,800 meters above sea level is the world's highest official capital. We explore the historic city and spend time at the University of San Francisco de Quito for lectures on anthropology, ethnomedicine, and other topics from USFQ faculty.

Galapagos Islands - An archipelago of volcanic islands distributed on either side of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean, the islands are famed for their vast number of endemic species. Lectures from USFQ faculty on plastic pollution, human impact on marine life, and other areas of current research.

Tiputini Biodiversity Station – Located within the world's greatest biodiversity hotspot and one of the planet's last wilderness areas, the main goal of TBS is to better understand nature so that appropriate

and effective conservation strategies may be implemented. Lecture topics from TBS researchers on animal behavior, the human impact on forest, conservation and preservation, and others depending on researcher specialty.

Hacienda Verde – is located in Andean Dry Forest. It is a family project that explores techniques of sustainable agriculture for the conservation of the Andean dry forest, Andean fruits and traditional uses of plants to promote cultural conservation. Hands-on experiences with medicinal plants including harvest techniques and preparations, and demonstrations from local people on traditional medicine and curing practices. Ethnobotanist Lucia de la Torre provides scientific and cultural information about plants.

Cayambe Coca – Is the high Andes Paramo. With its unique vegetation and soils it supplies most of the water for Quito and the Amazon. Additionally the soils have a tremendous capacity to store carbon. We will hike starting at about 13,000 feet to 12,000 feet examining this unique landscape. Comparisons are made between paramos with and without animal impact and the resulting differences in water contamination and health impacts.



COSTS

Program fee (covers air fare from Washington Dulles to Ecuador, all travel within Ecuador, all lodging, most meals, and CISI medical insurance): \$5,000*

*subject to change depending on currency exchange rates and other factors; does not include pre-departure expenses such as passport and immunizations.

*All students receive a \$300 scholarship as costs of the program and air fare are \$5300.

Winter Session tuition (3 credits): \$1,021.75 (in state), \$2,642.25 (out of state)

RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL AID

Global Education Office (GEO) (www.educationabroad.vt.edu)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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***HOW TO APPLY**

Visit the GEO website for application materials after August 1st.

A completed application, letter of reference, and \$500 deposit are required to be considered for inclusion in this program. Application materials are available from the GEO website

(www.educationabroad.vt.edu). Applications will be completed online. Upon acceptance, students will be billed the \$500 application fee through their student account. Remaining fees will be billed and are due no later than December 1.