BIOLOGY 251: Field Study in Belize (Prof. Evans)
Course Information (May 24- June 3, 2015)

Course Description:
This course is an interdisciplinary field immersion into two of the most biologically diverse ecosystems on earth: coral reefs and tropical rainforests. You live in remote field stations in Belize and examine the natural history of these two systems and explore how they have changed over time as a result of human interactions. Every day at each site will be packed from early morning to well into the night with activities that allow you to intensely explore these unique environments. You will hike, climb, snorkel, explore caves and sometimes just sit still observe, and absorb the magic of the tropics.

Logistical Information:
Please see the attached “Bio 251 Travel Tips Guide” (14pp.) This detailed guide provides you with everything you need to know about where you are staying, what you need to bring, what you can expect in Belize, how you are expected to behave, etc..

Grading:

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Participation
You are expected to engage all activities with gusto! You are required to be on time for each scheduled event and to be prepared each day with the appropriate personal and class gear.

Two Day Review Presentations
You will work in a group to prepare a review of a morning or afternoon session from the first 2 days at both the rainforest and coral reef sites. Group presentations will be given in the evening of the second day at each site. You will be assigned a group grade. Work should be shared equally within the group.

Independent Project
On the fourth day at each site, you will work with a partner to conduct an independent research project. The hypothesis for this project will be approved on the evening of the 3rd day. You will present the results of your project to the group in the evening. Your presentation is to be no more than 20 minutes and should be in a standard format (introduction, methods, results, discussion/conclusion). Effort should be shared equally with your partner.

Journal
You are to keep a journal during your 10 days in Belize (we will give this to you). You are expected to have entries for each day in which you record your field notes, data, thoughts, observations, field exercise work, etc.. Your journals should be neat and as detailed as possible. You will be graded on completeness. Your first activity at each site will be to have a solo experience where you record your initial thoughts and impressions in your journal. This will be mirrored at the end where you have another such experience, allowing you to reflect back on your initial observations and to convey your newly realized sense of place after having spent 4 days exploring and conducting research.
Program Schedule:

Day 1  Sunday, May 24  Arrival Day/Las Cuevas
- Leave Atlanta on Delta Flight 703 at 10:05 am.
- Arrive at Belize City International Airport at 11:21 am on Delta.
- Bus to Las Cuevas Field Station.
- Stop in Mountain Pine Ridge.
- Arrive at LCRS and settle in.
- Night walk.

Day 2  Monday, May 25 Las Cuevas
- Early morning bird studies
- Orientation and tour of Las Cuevas facilities and trails.
- Introduction to rainforest hike.
- Long-term forest plot
- Evening presentation by Boris Arevalo on LCRS research
- Night hike

Day 3  Tuesday, May 26 Las Cuevas
- Visit to Caracol Archaeological Site
- Explore Las Cuevas Cave
- Night hike

Day 4  Wednesday, May 27 Las Cuevas
- Birding at observation tower
- River hike
- Project prep
- Project proposal presentations
- Night walk

Day 5  Thursday, May 28 Las Cuevas
- All day work on research projects
- Project presentations in evening

Day 6  Friday, May 29 Las Cuevas/South Water Cay
- Pack
- Travel to coast via San Ignacio (arrive in Dangriga by late afternoon)
- Boat to South Water Cay
- Settle in at Pelican Beach Resort

Day 7  Saturday, May 30 South Water Cay
- Early morning bird walk.
- Snorkel patch reef and sea grass area off south end of island.
- Reef ecology exercises
- Late afternoon explore of reef flats and algal communities.
- Night dive (BOAT) in south end patch reef.
Day 8  Sunday, May 31  South Water Cay
• Early morning bird and plant walk
• Field trip (Twin Cay (BOAT) to explore mangrove ecosystem.
• Field trip (BOAT) to Man O War Cay to see the frigate bird and booby rookery and then onto Tobacco Cay to snorkel the patch reef.
• Review of day’s observations.

Day 9  Monday, June 1  South Water Cay
• Early morning bird and plant walk.
• Visit (BOAT) to Carrie Bow and tour of the marine biology lab there
• Travel (BOAT) to front of South Water and snorkel to spur and groove system around to inlet.
• Free time to develop project ideas.
• Develop and discuss project proposals.

Day 10  Tuesday, June 2  South Water Cay
• All day work on research projects
• Project presentations in evening.
• Class Party!

Day 11  Wednesday, June 3  Departure Day
• Up early and leave island by boat to Dangriga.
• Take small plane to Belize International Airport.
• Fly back to Atlanta