Botany & Geology in the Bahamas, 2015-16

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The broader “study abroad” program

• A joint program with two separate courses, one on plant ecology and diversity of the Bahamas, one on geology of the Bahamas
• Students sign up for one course
• But most fall semester orientation and travel prep class meetings, most field trips and many evening reviews in the Bahamas are done together
• Lots of interaction and shared learning!
The Bahamas and San Salvador Island
Fall class meeting

• MANDATORY, you have to attend unless you’re burning or dying, no exceptions and no makeups (sorry)
• 1 credit required seminar course (PBIO 4900) for hourly weekly lectures, orientations and travel prep workshops; will be available for “permission only” registration in mid-spring
• Most class meetings co-taught by Ballard and Stigall, shared by both course groups
“Global Studies in Plant Biology Capstone” (PBIO 4850, Tier 3)

- Field course falls on spring 2016 semester, you will register in mid-fall (keep 4 credits free in spring)
- Plant ecology and diversity course, will also learn common terrestrial animals, broader principles of island ecology, biogeography
- Study of natural community composition from plot sampling along transects; student teams ID plants, record frequency in plots on Toughbook laptops, do evening analysis to see how communities change from shoreline to island interior, with shifts in salinity or substrate, etc.
- An introduction to Bahamian “bush medicine”, food resources
- Late afternoon focus on marine organisms, aka “snorkeling” :)
Eligibility & application

- PBIO 1150 or PBIO 2090, and junior or senior status by spring
- Seriously interested students must apply and interview by end of spring (I need ≥12 undergrads to do the program)
- $500 deposit ideally paid by end of spring, NO LATER than 1st week of Fall semester; this will be taken off the total bill of Program Fee plus Study Abroad Admin Fee in late fall
- Dr. Ballard will purchase airfares and reserve the field station, hotel rooms etc., in 2nd week of fall semester
Course trip schedule

• Trip is 29 December 2015-8 January 2016 (11 days)
• Day 1 (12/29)—group flight Columbus to Nassau, with overnight at hotel, supper nearby
• Day 2 (12/30)—group morning flight to San Salvador Island
• Days 2-10 (12/30-1/7)—field course activities; meals and lodging at Gerace Research Centre
• Day 11 (1/8)—group flight to Ohio
Typical field day

• 7:30 am—breakfast at the station
• 8:00 am—mini-lecture/intro to the day's objectives
• 8:30 am—morning field studies
• 12:00 noon—lunch in the field
• 12:30 pm—afternoon field studies
• 5:00 pm—free time (especially snorkeling, as weather permits)
• 6:30 pm—supper at the station
• 7:30 pm—review, class-related discussion
• 9:30 pm—free time or whole-group activity
Climate in the Bahamas

- December/January is “winter”--weather is mild, often sunny and warm but sometimes cooler and rainy (especially in evenings); sweater or hoodie at night is comfortable
- Water in winter can be chilly to some folks; consider renting a wetsuit ($25)
- Sun requires sunblock, broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses
Other stuff to know

- U.S. cellphones won’t work; faculty will have an “emergency” in-country cellphone
- The station has wifi internet in public areas
- Electrical appliances use the standard US plugs at the station
- Sports equipment is provided for basketball and volleyball; students should bring cards, chess, etc. if desired; paperback literature is available in the station library
- Snacks, postcards, and stamps can be purchased at the Snack Bar, and t-shirts are for sale in the library
- Conservative dress code—Shoes, shirts, and bathing suit cover-ups must be worn in all public and semipublic places, and also in the Research Centre Cafeteria [does not apply in your rooms, or the field]
- No ATM machines on island, credit cards not accepted
Fish Stew

Fried Conch

Guava Duff

Bahama Mama Shake

Fried Conch
Packing

- One checked suitcase no more than 40 pounds; put water bottle, camera, etc. in daypack for carryon
- 2-3 sets of field clothes (long-sleeve shirts, long-sleeve pants)
- 2-3 sets of casual clothes (t-shirts, shorts, 1 pr long pants for evening)
- Swimsuit, snorkel gear (incl. wetsuit if desired)
- Towel, washcloth, sheets, blanket & pillowcase
- Toiletries (plus a few conveniences), insect repellant
- Sunglasses, hat, sunblock
- Hoodie sweatshirt, sweater or windbreaker
Transect sampling
Costs of the program, #1
Worst case (12 bio and 8 geol undergrads)

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<td>Passport</td>
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<td>Recommended immunizations (hep A, typhoid)</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snorkel gear</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Incidentals (snacks, internet, laundry)</td>
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Costs of the program, #2
Best case (24 bio and 10 geol undergrads)

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Program Fee breakdown

The Program Fee covers:

• International flight, Columbus-Nassau
• In-country flight, Nassau-San Salvador Island
• 1 nt double-room lodging at hotel in Nassau
• Welcome dinner in Nassau
• Room & board, use of facilities at Gerace Research Centre
• The professors’ travel expenses

→ Program Fee goes down with more students! Help us recruit eligible students for the program
Bahamas National Arts festival

Snorkeling the mangroves
(OK, I admit, this is cheating)
“Out of Pocket”

- Passport—if you don’t have one, order no later than June; if you have one, it MUST NOT EXPIRE IN 2016!
- Immunizations recommended—hep A and typhoid shots at Hudson Health Center at least 4 weeks before program (late Fall, before you head home)
- Incidental are budgeted high
- Snorkel gear rental through OU’s Dive Shop; bring your own instead if you have it—regular outfit is mask, fins and snorkel, may want to purchase better snorkel; wetsuit is $25, booties are $35
So, like, what lame excuse did you have lined up for not doing this program?