

Biodiversity and Conservation in Belize

Academic Session: Spring 2024

Campus Dates: May 6 – 10, 2024

Travel Dates: May 12 – 26, 2024

Course Code	Course Title	Units	Prerequisites
BIOL 520	Field Course in Tropical Biology	6	Consent of the Department

Students must have BIOL 313/Biological Sciences Core Curriculum to apply.

From the University calendar:

An examination of biodiversity in a selected region of the tropics, including aspects of ecology of animals and plants, animal behaviour and an introduction to field techniques for observing and censusing selected taxa. Field studies will take place at forest and savannah sites with consideration of community-based conservation efforts.

Program Description

The Tropical Biodiversity and Conservation in Belize, Group Study Program will introduce students in the Biological Sciences Department and other related majors to tropical biology, field techniques, and biodiversity and conservation in a developing country. Prior to departure, students will participate in a one week, on-campus introduction to patterns of global biodiversity, tropical ecology, the natural history of organisms local to the field site, conservation efforts in a developing country, as well as a brief overview of the history, politics, and culture of Belize.

While in the field, from the base at Lamanai Outpost Lodge in the Orange Walk District, students will gain first-hand experience in observation, data collection and analysis of local flora and fauna, including birds, bats, insects, crocodiles, lizards, plants and more. Experientially, you will have the opportunity to view and consider anthropogenic effects, both current and historical, on the tropical landscape of Belize. Students will develop and carry out a team-based project and present their results to the class.

Itinerary

Pre-Departure

May 6-10, Calgary: On-campus Introduction Sessions (5-6 hours/day of lecture and discussion)

In-Field

May 12, Calgary/Belize: Calgary to Houston to Belize City. Land/water transport and orientation to Lamanai Outpost Lodge

May 13-18: Group investigation of local habitats, plants and animals including:

- Variation in forest structure and diversity
- Insect sampling and observation
- Aquatic invertebrate diversity
- Bird census
- Mist netting for bats
- Camera trapping
- Medicinal plants tour
- Crocodile tagging

May 19-24: Small group research projects – planning, data collection, analysis and report writing
Additional visits to Lamanai Archaeological Reserve, and the local community (Indian Church) and school

May 25: Project Presentations; farewell dinner

May 26, Belize/Calgary: Land/water transport to Belize City, Belize City to Calgary or independent travel.