

HNRS 301

Global Engagement: Belize

Global Environmental Stewardship and Education

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Course Dates: *Spring 2010 – Tuesday, 6-8:00 P.M.*
Belize: May 11-22, 2010



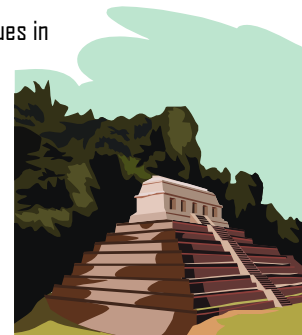
COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Belize, a small Mesoamerican country, is rich in physical and cultural diversity. Historically, the Mayan Civilization dominated and flourished in this area from AD 250-900 (the Classic Period). Today approximately 310,000 people of mixed racial and ethnic origin call Belize home. Belize, while close to New Hampshire in size, has a highly varied physical landscape including a 185-mile barrier reef (second in size to Australia's Great Barrier Reef), as well as numerous subtropical forests. Realizing the environmental impacts associated with development and escalating tourism, the country now protects more than 40 percent of its territory in conservation reserves. But despite these reserves, environmental stewardship and sustainability are challenged by deforestation, rapid coastal development, increasing poverty, and the recent discovery of oil deposits. Belize's Barrier Reef Reserve System is also under threat due to changing global ocean conditions and unsustainable tourism activities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and EXPECTATIONS

Designed to immerse you in Belize's diverse culture and environment, this course offers an opportunity to engage in focused observations and hands-on service learning projects within a national park and surrounding local schools. Throughout the course, we will also explore environmental and social challenges present in Belize today. Background readings, discussions and reflective writing assignments will occur both on campus and in Belize. These assignments will focus on investigating past and present environmental and social issues and opportunities in this ethnically and ecologically rich country. In addition, we will examine the roles and responsibilities of those who hope to embody the ideal of global citizenship and environmental stewardship.

Prior to traveling abroad, our class will examine past and current societal and environmental issues in Belize and its surrounding area. Readings, discussions, reflective essays and guest lectures will take place throughout the term. During the travel portion of the class, you will be required to keep a field journal, conduct focused observations and participate in a group service learning project. Your recorded observations (both in your journals and through the photographs you take) will serve as a basis for discussion and reflective writing throughout the course and will lead to the creation of a final project – a digital story of your experience that you will create once we have returned from Belize.



TRAVELS IN BELIZE

The town of San Ignacio, in the Cayo District, will serve as our home base. Nestled in the lush mountainous rainforest, this beautiful area is often referred to as the heart of Belize's ecotourism trade. You and a fellow KSC traveler will stay with a host family in San Ignacio except for possible overnight group trips to the Noj Kaax Meen Elijio Panti National Park. For the majority of our time in Belize, you will be learning and working in this new national park to help assist predominately Mayan village staff with environmental projects including rapid environmental surveys and infrastructure development. Additionally, we anticipate working with local community

schools and groups. These experiences will afford you unique opportunities to interact with and learn from local citizens about life in and the environmental of Belize, and to explore our role in contributing to what we perceive as “positive change” in others’ lives. San Ignacio will also serve as the jump-off point for our travel to the key ancient Mayan city of Caracol. For the final days of our stay in Belize, we will head back to Belize City and out to the Cayes and the Barrier Reef System. While there, we will examine global climate change and its impact upon coral reefs, both in Belize and around the world.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Spring, 2010 - 7 meetings during the spring term on KSC campus.

- January 19 – Introduction to Global Engagement: Belize
- February 2 – Dr. James Stemp (lecture on Mayan Empire)
- February 16 – Response to readings
- March 2 – Speaker Cliff Lerner (lecture on Belize environmental issues)
- March 23 – KSC Global Education Office (general input and guidelines)
- April 6 – *City as Text* and prep for digital storytelling project
- April 27 – Content exam (readings and lectures)

May 11-22, 2010 - Belize

READINGS

While in Peru, we will discuss reading materials given to you prior to departure.

Texts and Course Readings:

1. Peedle, I. (2004) *In Focus Belize: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture*. New York: Interlink Books.
2. Sutherland, A. (1998). *The Making of Belize: Globalization in the Margins*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey

Beyond the course texts, we will post readings to Blackboard regularly. Most readings will require an in-depth written response. You will be given questions and/or prompts for these responses. Each response will receive a grade, ranging from 1-10. Grades will depend on depth, evidence of critical thinking, and attention to editorial detail. Turning in responses late will result in lowered grades as there is plenty of time between class sessions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance at all course meetings
- Completion of all assigned reading responses
- On-campus and In-country journal assignments
- Quiz on readings and guest lecturers
- Active and positive participation during the trip
- Final media project – Digital Story. (You will need a digital camera to complete this assignment.)

Course grades will be based on your participation, timely completion of all assignments (including the final project), exam score and conduct during our trip. Keep the following in mind:

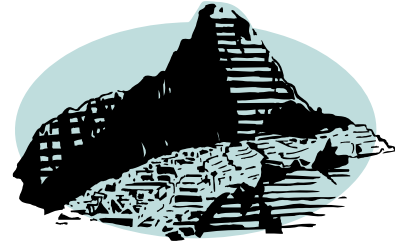
- 1) You are expected to act mature and responsible at all times. As adults, you are responsible for your own conduct.
- 2) The professors will not be held responsible if you should lose something, get in trouble, or have other problems related to your own decisions while traveling.
- 3) You will be given advanced notice of all departure times, deadlines, and meeting locations. Please do not fail to pay attention or otherwise cause confusion in the group.

4) Everyone is expected to attend all of the group activities and be on time.

Of course, we will do everything to make sure your trip is as engaging, informative, and exciting as possible, but please remember the following—we will be traveling in a large group in a foreign country. *All of your decisions should be made in terms of how they will affect the entire group, not just yourself or a small group of friends.*

GRADE ALLOCATION

	<u>Points</u>
Response to Readings	20
Course Journal	20
Group Discussions/Participation	20
Quiz on readings and lectures	20
Digital Story Project	<u>20</u>
Total Points Available:	100



OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS DURING OUR TRIP

Be Respectful. As you may know, some people in the world have a stereotype of Americans as arrogant and uncultured, and loud. Don't be that stereotype! You would expect people who come to America from other countries to be respectful of our rules and norms; we need to do the same while traveling abroad.

Be Punctual. When we tell you that you need to be somewhere by 2:30, we don't mean 2:45, 2:40, or even 2:32. We mean 2:30. Generally you should plan to give yourself extra time for everything because it takes longer to do things in large groups. So if we say be somewhere by 2:30, you should plan to be there by 2:20 or even 2:15. As Dr. Klaus Bayr used to say, "It's hard to catch a train when it has left the station."

Be Prepared for Lots of Walking! We will not be traveling in cars as we do in America. Virtually everywhere we go will require walking. You can be assured that you will walk much, much more than you normally do. We will probably walk an average of 2 or 3 miles per day, sometimes more. Please don't complain, just keep up or give yourself extra time if you know that you are a slow walker. We suggest that, starting two weeks before our departure, you begin to walk for at least a half hour a day. This will get you in shape for our trip.

Contacting Home. You will have occasional access to Internet cafes during our travels and limited access to phone service. Therefore, tell your family that you may be out of contact with them at times during the trip. As needed, the staff of Pro Belize will be able to make contact with the US.