

Brazil

Amazon Resource Management and Human Ecology

Explore natural resource management and human ecology in diverse settings across the Amazon River Basin.

LATIN AMERICA



Coursework

Please note: This program will have credit distribution and/or other curriculum changes beginning in the fall 2012 semester. Please visit www.sit.edu/BRA for details.

Amazon Resource Management and Human Ecology Seminar

ENVI 3500 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English and Portuguese with required readings and relevant educational excursions. The course examines the key issues in natural resource management and human ecology currently affecting the Brazilian Amazon. Direct field observations are a central component of the course. Lecturers are drawn from a wide range of institutions and entities such as Instituto do Homem e do Meio Ambiente (Imazon) and Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Fundação Vitória Amazônica; and the Brazil Landless Workers Movement (MST).

Seminar topics typically include:

Natural and Human Ecology of the Amazon

Historical overview; *índios*, *quilombolas*, *caboclos*, *colonos*, and *urbanos*; socioeconomic development in historical perspectives; biophysical geography and regional ecosystems; forest-succession dynamics.

Natural Resource Management

Agriculture and agrobusiness; agroforestry; timber extraction; ranching, mining, fishing, and hunting; hydroelectricity and energy production; nontimber forest products; ecotourism; water, carbon, nutrients, and biodiversity management.

Environmental Conservation

Economics of tropical deforestation; conservation units; government policies; roles of NGOs; international perspectives; climate change; forest fragmentation; forest regeneration; ethnopharmacology; environmental economics.

Linking Ecological and Human Issues

Development in the Amazon; urbanization; community health; ecofeminism; land distribution and conflicts; MST; environmental justice and human rights; biopiracy and

intellectual property rights; environmental education; political ecology; media.

Educational Excursions

Students on this program generally take educational excursions to the following locations: Curuçá, Zona Bragantina, Manaus, the Trombetas River system, Juruti, Santarém, Tucuruí, Jacundá, Marabá, and Parauapebas. Students visit a rural *caboclo* community to learn how the community maintains its livelihood from traditional resource extraction. Excursion sites may vary according to semester logistics and site conditions.

Intensive Language Study: Portuguese

PORT 1000–4000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours
Emphasis on speaking and comprehension skills through classroom and field instruction. Based on in-country evaluation, including oral proficiency testing, students are placed in beginning or intermediate classes. Special arrangements are available for advanced speakers of Portuguese.

Environmental Field Study Seminar

ENVI 3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours
A course in research methods in both the social and natural sciences, focusing on how to collect, analyze, integrate, and report social and ecological data to critically understand and evaluate program-related environmental issues. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy. Field studies are focused on designing and structuring a research project; writing a research proposal; collecting and analyzing data (social and natural/qualitative and quantitative); interviewing; surveys; maintaining a field journal. One part of the course is devoted to an analysis of cultural differences between Brazil and the US. Students develop skills on how to conduct research within the cultural context of the Brazilian Amazon.

Credits 16

Duration Fall/Spring 15 weeks

Program Base Belém

Language Study Portuguese

Homestay Belém, 4 weeks

Rural Visit/Homestays Caboclo community, 3–4 days; Landless Workers Movement (MST) community, 3–4 days

Other Accommodations Small hotels and a short stay on a riverboat

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites Previous college-level coursework and/or other preparation in environmental studies, ecology, development studies, or other related fields is strongly recommended but not required. Although there is no language prerequisite, a background in Portuguese, Spanish, or another Romance language is recommended.

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours
Conducted in Belém, Santarém, Manaus, or in another approved location in the Brazilian Amazon appropriate to the project. **Sample topic areas:** land use within MST communities; environmental consciousness; aquaculture; agroecology; environmental policy; mining; alternative energy resources; alternative farming practices; sustainable tourism development; informal market economics; commercial fishing; waste management; park-based conservation; sustainable hunting practices.