

VIEW FROM THE CANOPY



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OTS AND DUKE UNIVERSITY

ARE PLEASED
 TO ANNOUNCE
 A NEW
 UNDERGRADUATE
 SEMESTER
 ABROAD PROGRAM:
 TROPICAL MEDICINE
 AND
 PUBLIC HEALTH

Starting Date: Spring 2009

OTS and Duke University are launching a new semester program designed primarily for pre-med, biology, public health, and natural science majors to be trained in research in the areas of tropical medicine and public health in Costa Rica. Our 15-week undergraduate semester abroad program emphasizes the scientific, intercultural, and social aspects of global health, tropical medicine, public health, ethnobiology, and research topics in these subjects. Instruction focuses on the internationally-recognized OTS method of field-based, hands-on learning. Lectures, readings from primary literature, and discussions are also integral components of the program and provide the conceptual framework for discussion, analysis, and interpreting field observations and research. The program will visit all three of OTS' biological field stations in Costa Rica utilizing their sophisticated facilities and building on decades of research.

Students participating in the OTS Undergraduate Semester Abroad Program will be enrolled in four courses accredited by Duke University (four semester credit hours for each 15-week course):

- Tropical Medicine and Public Health
- Research Practicum
- Ethnobiology
- Spanish and Latin American Culture (either intermediate or advanced) with additional introduction to technical and colloquial medical terms

The new OTS/Duke semester program on global health program begins with an introduction to the tropical environment and Costa Rican culture and the medical system. The program examines the relationship between ecology and tropical disease, epidemiology, and public health. Students will study topics including vector ecology, infectious diseases, water quality and health, socialized medicine, and traditional and alternative medicine. Students are given exposure to current techniques and concerns in tropical medicine and public health through visits to numerous field sites including clinics and hospitals.

They will also analyze the impact of climate change on human health, and explore the social and economic determinants that contribute to the expanding impact of infectious diseases.

This is a rigorous program with high expectations. This course is an outstanding opportunity for students considering careers in public health, medicine, and other health-related areas. Students should have a strong interest in public health and biology and an avid curiosity for new cultures.

One year of Spanish is required.

We will begin to accept applications for this new program this summer. Please check the OTS website (<http://www.ots.duke.edu>) for the latest information or contact OTS Enrollment at (919) 684-5774 or ots@duke.edu.



Dennis Clements, Senior Advisor of the Duke Global Health Institute (GHI), and Lisa Croucher Assistant Director, Education and Training Global Health Institute visited La Selva in May to discuss the accreditation process through GHI.



HERE COMES THE RAIN AGAIN

BY ELIZABETH LOSOS, PRESIDENT AND CEO

It is raining again at our stations, as much with activity as with water. This summer we are offering courses to highschool science teachers (*Rainforest and Reefs*), advanced high school students (*Tropical Ecology and Tropical Medicine*), undergraduates (*Ethnobiology and Tropical Ecology*), and graduate students (*Neotropical Herpetology, Genetics and Conservation, and Plant Systematics*). We also held our annual course for policymakers with our U.S. Decision Makers course at the end of May and are preparing a training program for local naturalist guides to take place in Palo Verde throughout the fall and winter.

Other programs in the offing are highlighted in this issue, most significantly our new undergraduate Tropical Medicine and Public Health semester-abroad program.

This summer our three research stations in Costa Rica are full of researchers studying everything from population biology of reptiles to phylogenetic biogeography and from plant physiology to global climate change. Scientists and students gathered at La Selva in June for an NSF-funded workshop on Bioinformatics and at Las Cruces in late July for an NSF-funded workshop on

Restoration Ecology. In addition, through our new NSF Research Coordination Grant, we organized our first symposium of researchers to discuss their long-term data on changing tropical ecosystems at the Association of Tropical Biology and Conservation conference in Suriname in June.

Once again, I am pleased to report, our seven-week Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at La Selva is being held for twelve lucky students chosen from a wide range of schools throughout the U.S., including non-R1 schools and minority-serving institutions. This summer we are also offering our eight-week REU for 20 Native Americans and Pacific Islanders at Las Cruces, and a graduate International Research Experience program for two graduate students at Palo Verde. Add to this, our ongoing efforts to complete new researcher housing at Las Cruces, the installation of sensor towers at La Selva, and construction of the boardwalk into the Palo Verde marsh, and it has been an incredibly busy last few months!

Someone asked me the other day how we paid for all these activities, and I immediately thought about the critical grants from NSF for station improvements and workshops, all the students who pay their tuition to participate in our courses, the scientists and students paying station fees to conduct their research at our stations, and, too, our member institution dues. I remembered each one of the grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the John D. and

Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Rowe Family Foundation, and significant donors, such as Chris and Sharon Davidson, whose gifts enable us to offer financial aid scholarships, research fellowships, and support to many of our students not only in Costa Rica but in Peru, South Africa, Brazil and, even most recently, Guyana. We have been truly blessed with such supportive sponsors.

However, I must say, it didn't take long before I began to think about all of the annual fund donations that so many of you give to OTS which support our core programs and operations. While major gifts and restricted grants provide underwriting for so many of our training programs and cutting edge research, they often do not help to fund the "core" of who we are and what we do. Just over 1,000 donors provide the critical and necessary support to continue our mission on a daily basis. Without these unrestricted gifts, summers, such as what we are experiencing, would simply not be possible.

We thank you for your help this past year, we assure you, your support has had a significant impact on the hundreds of students and researchers working in the tropics this summer. We hope you will continue to give to OTS – as I make this promise to you: there will be no let up between now and next summer – and next summer, I am forecasting, will be rainy once again and... wonderfully busy!

STAY INFORMED!

Awareness makes you a stronger advocate for the tropics! Sign up for OTS' E-Canopy, a monthly English language electronic newsletter for friends of OTS by going to our website www.ots.duke.edu.

U.S. DECISION MAKERS EXPLORE FACTORS SHAPING RESOURCE USE AND CONSERVATION IN THE TROPICS

PHOTO BY ZAK ZAHAWI



Since 1988 OTS has offered an intensive, one-week course designed for professionals whose work affects public policies relevant to environment and development in the tropics. Participants include staff from the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, Congressional Committees, U.S. Government Departments and Agencies, and the private sector (including not-for-profit organizations and businesses).

The course uses Costa Rica as a base for examining a range of issues related to the balance of economic development and the use, management and conservation of nature. An enhanced technical understanding of tropical natural systems, pressures upon these and the resultant strategies and choices employed in Costa Rica provides a basis for consideration of global relevance. Site visits, lectures, readings, and meetings with Costa Rican experts are oriented around a set of themes that illustrate ecological principles and explore the economic, political, and social factors shaping resource use and conservation.

The general themes covered in recent courses have included:

- Function, status and conservation of biological diversity (species, ecosystem levels)
- Environmental services and payments (e.g., ecotourism, watersheds, carbon sequestration)
- Climate change, role of forests, and impacts on biodiversity
- Parks, protected areas, and wildlife policy
- Land use change, corridors, and habitat fragmentation
- Tropical forest ecology, management, and use.

Our most recent course, **Conservation and Development in Tropical Countries: Insights and Implications**, was held May 24 – 30. The course was funded in equal parts through a grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation, OTS, and participant tuition.

Professors

Alan Thornill
Executive Director, *Society for Conservation Biology*

John Fitzgerald
Policy Director, *Society for Conservation Biology*

2008 Course Participants

Lara Katrina Levison
Legislative Assistant,
Speaker of the House,
Nancy Pelosi

Anthony Peter Caligiuri
Congressional Staffer,
Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest

Michael Eugene Hacker
Director of Coalitions,
Office of the Majority Whip

Andrea Burgess
Legislative Assistant,
Rep. Rush Holt

Vanessa Bonyng Green
Senior Policy Advisor,
Senator Judd Gregg

Nell Triplett
Natural Resources Specialist,
Department of the Interior

Alejandra Goynchea
International Counsel,
Defenders of Wildlife

Navoneel Dayanand
Senior Federal Affairs Officer,
Wildlife Conservation Society,
Federal Affairs Office

Kristina Lynne Alexander
Legislative Attorney,
Congressional Research Service/American Law Division

Mary Katherine Umekubo
Legislative Specialist,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs

Cynthia Melanie Perry
Chief, Branch of Policy and Partnership,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation, Policy and Partnership

Sarah Gannon-Nagle
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation, Latin America and Caribbean Branch

Brian Murray
Director for Economic Analysis,
Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy



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OTS GRADUATE COURSES 2008-2009



Nothing can replace the hands-on experience of a field-based course in the tropics! This is what the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) offers through its broad range of Tropical Biology and Ecology graduate level courses in Spanish or English in Costa Rica, and in Portuguese and Spanish in the Brazilian and Peruvian Amazon, respectively*. OTS graduate courses are open to students enrolled in graduate degree programs, with preference given to students at OTS member institutions.

**To be eligible for a course, an applicant must be fluent in the language in which the course is given.*

Traditional Courses

Amazonian Ecosystems and Global Change (Peru/in Spanish)
September 24 – October 21, 2008
Application Deadline: June 13, 2008

Ecología Tropical (in Spanish)
January 14 – February 23, 2009
Application Deadline: June 16, 2008

Tropical Biology
June 7 – July 29, 2009
Application Deadline: March 16, 2009

Sistemática de Plantas Tropicales (in Spanish)
June 10 – July 13, 2009
Application Deadline: November 6, 2008

Specialty Courses

Research Design for Socio-Ecological Studies
March 8 – 16, 2009
Application Deadline: November 7, 2008**

Biology of Neotropical Social Insects
March 15 – 28, 2009
Application Deadline: November 14, 2008**

Avian Ecology (tentative)
2 weeks, May 2009
Application Deadline: January 30, 2009**

Global Change and Tropical Ecosystems
3 weeks, May 2009
Application Deadline: January 30, 2009

* Notification date is within 30 – 45 days after the application deadline for traditional courses and within 15 – 20 days for specialty courses

** Followed by rolling admission

For more information, please visit us online at www.ots.duke.edu.



About OTS

OTS is a non-profit consortium of over 60 research institutions, colleges and universities from the United States, Latin America, Africa and Australia. OTS' mission is to promote education, research, and the responsible use of natural resources in the tropics.

The View from the Canopy is produced by the OTS Development Office. To receive it electronically, or to submit comments or news items, please contact Cathleen Lemoine at 919-684-6969 or via e-mail at cathleen.lemoine@duke.edu.



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