

BIOL 2125 Tropical Ecology of Costa Rica
Winter Quad A 2012
March 10 – 18, 2012 Field Trip

Information Sheet, Course Application, and Pledge

History

The Department of Biology at North Park has a long history of extensive field travel both within the United States and Internationally. Trips to the Arizona Desert, Texas' Big Bend region, Baja Mexico, Florida's Everglades, the Bahamas, India, East Africa, the Prairies of South Dakota, and wilderness Ontario Canada are part of a long history of outstanding trips North Park students have enjoyed since the 1970's. Almost without exception these trips have been true highlights of a student's North Park career and providing lifelong memories.

The **Costa Rica course and trip of 2012** is the 6th Costa Rica trip led by Professor Alan Bjorkman. In the summer of 2000 Bjorkman traveled to Costa Rica in Central America and took a course offered by the Tropical Science Center in San Jose on Tropical Trees. During this trip, his first to Costa Rica, he noted the incredible beauty and biodiversity of this modern democratic country. Upon returning he began planning the possibility of taking North Park students on a for credit course that would use Costa Rica and its incredible beauty as its base.

That planning led to biologist and eco-tourism company owner Mildred Alvarez of Travels in Paradise CR (<http://www.travelinparadisecr.com/>) who has carefully planned and organized all the land and water travel, lodging, food service, and ecology tour activities for the Department of Biology at North Park.

General Travel Pan

After meeting for 7 Monday evening (6:30-8:30pm) class sessions during winter Quad A at North Park, the entire Spring Break is dedicated to the field experience in Costa Rica. The entire class of 10-15 students flies with Professor Bjorkman from Chicago's O'Hare airport (early morning) to San Jose, Costa Rica (mid-afternoon). After passing through Costa Rican Customs the group is met by Ms. Mildred Alvarez and an air-conditioned mini bus to begin 8 nights and 9 days of travel. While the itinerary varies the group usually visits high volcanic peaks, mountain cloud forests, lowland Pacific Rain forest, wave swept Pacific beaches, and stays in comfortable rooms with private bath with 2-3 students to a room. Days are very active with early rising for bird watching before breakfast and a day filled with hikes, tours, and study of tropical ecology. Evenings are usually free, with students finding that the heat and the humidity of the day requires plenty of sleep, rest, and hydration along with careful monitoring of energy levels to avoid exhaustion. During days at the rainforest students will encounter insects and even some small reptiles like Geckos and Anoles near their living quarters. After a last night celebration dinner the groups sleeps in a comfortable hotel before flying back to Chicago arriving late Sunday night.

The Department of Spanish also provides the opportunity for students with a Spanish class language background to earn 2 sh of independent study. See Professor Linda Craft.

Health and Safety

Costa Rica is a modern democratic country that has had a long history of friendship with the United States. It has no army by its 1948 Constitution, only a police force, and has remained largely free of the drug crime so frequently attributed in the news to Central America. Once outside of large cities, tourists feel safe and very comfortable with friendly welcoming citizens at most lodge and tourist areas in the country. As with all international travel all participants are encouraged to be vigilant, keep a sharp eye on their valuables and belongings, always walk and travel with friends from the group, and not go where they are unsure of the outcome.

Who Should Attend and Fitness Level Required

You should be an active capable walker/hiker to enjoy this trip considering: This course is for those who want to visit a foreign country, culture, and deeply respect the land, its history, and its people. Students should be prepared to pace themselves, get plenty of sleep, monitor their energy levels, and be prepared for active walking in a wide variety of settings including 11,000 foot high mountains, 7200 foot high cloud forests, Pacific low land rainforest trails amidst a wide variety of wildlife including insects and small reptiles, surf swept beaches, and swimming in forest pools and ocean beaches. You must be able to swim at a basic level to go on this trip. This trip is not a spring break trip to the beach with late night partying and fun as the primary goal. You will be expected to be well rested the entire trip, be active, be responsible, get up early **each day** for wildlife viewing and live in close community with your classmates. The most successful student builds a lifetime of memories by engaging with energy and maturity in the entire trip and by respecting their classmates, our hosts, and the wonderful people of Costa Rica.

Course Fee:

\$2650.00 over and above winter tuition.

IMMEDIATE actions once Application and Course Pledge are signed and into the Professor

1. Return application to Professor Bjorkman, office W-21, mailbox or drop to Box 57.
2. Within 7 days of dropping off your application with Professor Bjorkman pay a \$350.00 **non-refundable deposit** to the North Park Business office (see Yasmine Capetillo, 3rd floor, Old Main) into the "Bjorkman Biology Travel" account 70-00000-1268. (This deposit says you are "in and serious about going".)
3. Begin gathering health insurance info, get vaccinations (or sign vaccinations waiver), health history, and emergency contact information.
4. Obtain/Renew a valid USA Passport. For Non-USA Citizens: have current legal USA status papers with you for the trip.
5. Professor will register all deposited and accepted students to the Records Office for the course during the Fall semester.

Other Payments and Dates:

\$900.00 Thursday, December 1, 2011
\$1500.00 Monday, January 23, 2012

Passport

Recommended Travel Vaccinations: Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid

Routine Childhood Vaccinations: Tetanus, MMR, DPT, etc.

See Center for Disease Control website for travel to Costa Rica:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/costa-rica.aspx>

North Park requires that you complete a health history and either get all of the above vaccinations or sign an immunization release.

BIOL 2125 Tropical Ecology of Costa Rica Course Pledge

I understand that this trip will cost \$2650.00 over and above Winter 2012 tuition. I also understand I am not eligible to attend and go on his course and trip until I have a completed and submitted this course application, been approved by the Professor, made my deposit, obtain a valid Passport, paid the balance of by all my fees before the field trip begins, read and signed a University Risk and Waiver of Release, completed an emergency contact form with health insurance information, completed a Health History form, and received any required immunizations or signed an immunization release.

I will also gather all required personal gear and attend the entire 7 winter quad A Monday evening class sessions. I also understand that all fees paid are non-refundable* for any reason. I also will adhere to all guidelines and rules for my and other participant's health and safety as outlined by the course instructor and leader during the entire 9 day field trip to Costa Rica. I also pledge to respect the others in my group, the land upon which we will be traveling, and our hosts and presenters along the way. I also realize that the Professor will evaluate all applications for this course and choose participants based upon factors that will assure the most compatible mix of students in attendance. It is possible due to high demand for this trip that all who apply may not be able to attend this course and trip.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

* **Non Refundable fees and payments mean** you cannot get a refund for fees paid for any reason. If you become ill the last few days or at any time before the trip and cannot attend, if you or a family member loses their job and you cannot go on the trip, if you or a loved one dies before the trip and you cannot go on the trip, if you drop out of school, if you leave and attend another school, if you join the armed forces or begin police academy, if anything happens and you cannot go on the trip, there is NO refund of fees paid. To cover a possible trip cancellation you will have to **purchase private travel cancellation insurance** and adhere to the policies of that insurance which may or may not cover the reason for you not being able to go on the trip.

* If the course is cancelled due to low enrollment or if your application to participate is rejected, your \$350.00 deposit is refundable.