THE HONORS COLLEGE AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

AMAZON PROGRAM (PERU)

ENVIRONMENT, PEOPLE AND OPPORTUNITY ON A RAINFOREST FRONTIER

Spring 2011 Syllabus: IDH 4007 (3 credits)

Location: GL 151
Probable meeting time: Tuesdays 2 – 4:45 PM

Instructors:
Dr. Jim Riach                       riachjim85@gmail.com       Honors College / ECS 335 / 305-348-1209
Dr. Devon Graham               mionectes@aol.com       Honors College / 786-232-2674

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a two semester interdisciplinary research service learning program offered through The Honors College that culminates with a four-week field element in the Peruvian Amazon during the Summer B session. During the spring semester, students explore varied aspects of the Amazon, ranging from its geological and ecological history, climate and biodiversity, colonization and exploitation by Native Americans, its exploration and colonization by European “discoverers”, and the current environmental and human challenges facing the Amazon, the countries that share it, and the people who live there. As the semester proceeds, students learn about research and project design and techniques, and develop project proposals to be implemented during the Summer B study-abroad component of the program in Peru.

During the trajectory of this course, we explore the origins of the Amazon (geological, biological, human), the mythos of the Amazon (the Amazon romanticized, as well as portrayed by the media, Hollywood, and in books), the reality of the Amazon today (peoples, environmental challenges, economic opportunities and challenges) and the ethos of the Amazon (what is our responsibility to the Amazon, are there spiritual connections to the Amazon?)

The required research proposal and project can relate to many fields of inquiry, whether directly related to the students major or not. Course faculty will provide guidance in helping each student to develop a project that is feasible, appropriate, well designed and of interest to the student. From 27 June-24 July 2011 students and faculty spend 4 weeks in the upper Amazon of Peru (in Iquitos and based at the Madre Selva Biological Station), where students implement their projects in collaboration with other students, faculty and local communities, as well as participate in faculty-led activities and group projects.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, students will have gained experience and knowledge in several interdisciplinary fields and will be able to:

(Environment/Geography/Biology)

- Explain how the geology and geography of the Amazon region (and the globe in general) interact to produce the largest rainforest area on the planet.
• Analyze how and why the Amazon rainforest impacts global climate to explain the implications that rainforest destruction and/or land use changes in the Amazon have for global climate change and weather patterns.

• Identify the mechanisms that promote and/or impact biodiversity to explain why the Amazon is known as a biodiversity hotspot.

• Describe the environmental and human values of Amazonian biodiversity, identify the factors contributing to the loss of this biodiversity, and explain the implications of the loss of this biodiversity to humans and the environment.

(Anthropology/Cultural and Social issues/Environment)

• Describe and analyze different views of human-environment relations in the Amazon.

• Elaborate on different perspectives regarding the impacts that indigenous cultures and “western” cultures have had on each other since they came into sustained contact.

• Describe how anthropological studies in the Amazon have contributed to a better understanding of humanity.

• Describe the types of land and resource use in the Amazon and the social factors driving them, and explain the resulting environmental changes and consequences to humans.

• Explain how legal, ethical and economic issues affect land rights, self-determination, and traditional knowledge and/or resources of indigenous and mestizo peoples of the Amazon.

(Conservation/Sustainability/Environment)

• Identify conservation or sustainable development programs designed by countries bordering the Amazon and national and international organizations and explain the different types of challenges facing the implementation of these programs.

• Identify key shareholders and resources that are critical to conservation and sustainable development efforts.

(Research/Project Design)

• Conduct effective and objective internet and literature searches on a particular subject, with appropriate verification of sources or with an appreciation of the limitations/biases of particular sources of information.

• Design and write a project proposal to be carried out in the field.

• Write a grant application for funding of a unique project proposal.

**READINGS & MATERIALS**

**Required texts:**


**Other readings and materials**

All students will be assigned a Moodle account for online access to online reading materials, links to websites and videos, lecture supplements, and professor e-mail access.
GRADING & COURSE EVALUATIONS

Grading will be computed on the basis of 100 points. For full points, students will need to be present in class for reading quizzes (at the beginning of class periods), as well as complete all assignments. Bonus points and optional assignments will allow diligent students to make up points if they are obliged to miss a class period.

**Points**

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Reading quizzes (8)</td>
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<td>Literature review</td>
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<td>annotated bibliography</td>
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<td>written summary</td>
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<td>powerpoint presentation</td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<td>Papers/powerpoints</td>
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<td>shaping of western view of the Amazon</td>
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<td>big questions</td>
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<td>Video analysis</td>
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<td>Fitzcarraldo and Burden of Dreams</td>
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<td>The Linguists</td>
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<td>Meet w/ professors (2x)</td>
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<td>Exercise in research methods/techniques</td>
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<td>Current events</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous assignments</td>
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<td>artistic interpretation of Amazon stereotypes</td>
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<td>poll of Amazon perceptions</td>
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<td>completion of NIH online course</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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*Missed assignments must be turned in by the subsequent class period for any credit and will have 1 point deducted from the assignment grade for being late.

**Grades** are based on the following percentages (equivalent to numbers of points)

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<th>Grade</th>
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**A grade of “Incomplete” can only be given to students who have completed >90% of their coursework, but who have a verifiable emergency within 2 weeks of the end of classes.**

ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading quizzes** - Simple quizzes based on readings will be assigned at the start of class (as per the syllabus schedule). These quizzes **cannot** be made up at a later time. The grading is done as a point spread as total percentage points. For example 100% on each of the eight quizzes = 10 points
**Literature Review** - All students will design and propose a service-oriented project to be implemented in the Peruvian Amazon. As part of the proposal, students will compile a literature review in a 1000-1500 word paper. The literature review for the proposal should be a summary of the literature of one of the four areas of interest listed below. All literature reviews should include information about the appropriate methodologies used to conduct service-oriented research in the area of interest selected. Faculty will give students a list of materials that are suitable for each category and which are available as digital and hardcopy resources or are additional recommended materials that students will have to obtain. This literature review will be worth 10 points and is due on March 1.

A second literature review based on a second choice from the four areas of interest listed below will be presented in a 5-10 minute PowerPoint presentation to the class. This literature review will be worth 5 points and is also due on March 1.

*Students are encouraged to seek out additional sources of information and submit them for approval for use in their paper or PowerPoint presentation.*

**Areas of Interest:**
- Sanitation and Appropriate Technologies
- Biology, Biodiversity, and Conservation
- Culture, Language, and History - contemporary reality in the context of the recent past
- Health and Sustainable Development

**Project and Proposal** – Projects are developed by 1 or 2 students for implementation during the field component (summer) in Peru. Projects may be related to a wide variety of disciplinary fields, but MUST be service-oriented. The projects must address relevant to any of our partners in Peru or the surrounding environment. Our main partners in Peru include the members of the local communities surrounding Madre Selva and the NGO, Project Amazonas.

Proposals will include 5 components: 1) the literature review previously compiled; 2) justification of the project; 3) a rough schedule for completion of the field components of the project; 4) a description of how data will be collected and any special materials that might be needed for data collection; and 5) a description of how the results of the project will be analyzed and presented. Course instructors will work closely with students during the preparation of independent projects. The proposal is due on April 19, but early drafts can be submitted for a non-graded review at any time, especially before scheduled meetings with the faculty.

**Papers/Powerpoints - Shaping of Western views of the Amazon**: Either select one chapter from *Explorers of the Amazon*, and turn in a 500-600 word reaction/analysis on February 8. Or, select a Western author, artist, entertainer, political or other public figure from the colonial period (ie., roughly between the years 1500 and 1900), and turn in a 500-600 word reaction/analysis of how that particular person presented the Amazon in his or her work, or otherwise influenced how Western culture viewed the Amazon. Be sure to include references (books, papers, website URL’s, etc. – not included in the word count!). Feel free to select a person who may have worked in a language other than English! If you prefer to do a short PowerPoint presentation (3-4 minutes maximum), that is an alternative to the short paper. Another option is to explain how the quality of life for Indigenous peoples and for Europeans was affected during the period of early colonization and occupation of the Amazon and why. Feel free to use resources compiled in Moodle for any of these options. This assignment is due February 8.
Big Questions: This is an exercise designed to train ethnographic observational skills and to help better understand the whole of humanity as represented in its various cultural forms. Students will be assigned a reading from the book *Consuming Grief: Compassionate Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society* (Conklin 2001) and from the book *The Siona Medical System: Beliefs and Behavior* (Langdon 1974). They will also be asked to read an article on ethnoprimatology (Cormier 2006). Students will then participate in a place-as-text experience in Miami by going to an ethnic restaurant, religious center, or a cultural event that they have not previously been exposed to. Students can write a 500 word paper or provide a short powerpoint presentation that describes the cultural elements that were observed during the experience, and which explains how these observations and the readings enhance an understanding of humanity and of their own culture. The assignment should also address how ethnographic studies have dealt with some of the big questions of life - in particular the question of who we are (our identity), how we know what we know, and whether we can ever really understand those that are different from us. The assignment is due on February 22.

Video Analysis
Fitzcarraldo (1982) and Burden of Dreams (1982): The analysis for these videos will take the form of a role-playing exercise in perspectivism. Students will watch the videos in class on February 22 and March 1. The class will be broken into groups of 3-4 students depending on class size and asked to assume the roles of Indigenous people, Europeans, or nature from the perspective of Indigenous people and of Europeans. Students will develop performances that show the similarities and differences between the past and the present in the relationships between these 3 roles. The date of the performance is March 8.

The Linguists (2008): Students will watch the video in class on March 22 and will be assigned readings related to language revitalization. Students will also be assigned a language and culture for which they have to develop a skit or a PowerPoint presentation that shows the power of language in helping to understand the culture that was assigned. The assignment is due April 5.

Meet with the Professors - Students will set up appointments to meet with course faculty twice during the semester to discuss projects and questions related to the Peru of the program. The first meeting is due before 15 February, the second before 5 April.

Exercise in Research Methods/Techniques - Course faculty will assign students handouts with information on types of research methods that can be used in the implementation of their projects in Peru. Students will be assigned some exercises involving observation and interviewing skills and other exercises involving skill in sampling and measuring of the natural environment. The results of the exercises will be due on March 1.

Current Events - Students will be expected to present twice during the semester on any Amazon-related news items of interest to the students. This will be done towards at the start of class after the reading quiz when time allows.

Miscellaneous Assignments - Course faculty have designed various miscellaneous assignments that cannot easily be classified into any of the above categories. Each of these assignments is listed in the syllabus and will be explained in greater detail in class.
ADDITIONAL HONORS REQUIREMENTS

Honors Citizenship Requirements - All members of the Honors College are expected to be active citizens of the College, the university, and the community at large. To be a committed Honors College student is to take advantage of enhanced learning opportunities and to assume a leadership role in the world. All College members are expected to participate in the community-building activities listed below:

1. Attend one Honors Excellence Lecture per academic year and one Honors Colloquium per semester (fall and spring). (Attendance will be taken).
2. Participate in the Honors College Convocation each fall. (Attendance will be taken).
3. Attend at least three Honors Hour sessions per semester or enrichment events specified by the Honors College as satisfying this requirement. (Attendance will be taken).
4. Perform at least ten hours of Community Service per semester either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.

Academic Misconduct Policy - Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity.

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

- FIU Honors College Student Handbook – http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html
- FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy - http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html

Student Portfolios - The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment.
COURSE SCHEDULE: Spring 2011

Course Times: Classes meet Tuesdays from 2-4:45 PM
Room: GL 150 conference room

Class Structure: Classes begin with a reading quiz (as per the syllabus) or with handing in assignments/homework which are always due at the start of class. Classes end with a short “round-table”, with each student contributing insights into one thing they learned in class, or one question that was raised for them during the class. Classes may involve lectures, interactive in-class activities, videos, and guest speakers. Course participants are encouraged to think about how to integrate the varied topics covered in the course. For instance, “how does biological context influence culture?”, or “what role does biodiversity play in agricultural systems in the Amazon?”

10 Jan 2011: FIU Spring Classes Start

11 Jan 2011: Introduction to the Course (Riach/Graham)
- Introduction of professors and students, overview of what the course will cover and how it is organized. Brief review of student projects and accomplishments in the Amazon from 2008-2010.
- Introduction to research service learning

In Class Activities:
- Amazon mapping project (students working in groups of 3). Hand out class binders. Review funding/grant application/study abroad deadlines, etc.
  *Important Note: fund-raising meetings and activities are to be held OUTSIDE of class. Set date/time/place for first fund-raising meeting, student leadership needed.

Assignments for following class:
- Media & Entertainment portrayal of the Amazon – bring 5 references that show popular portrayals of the Amazon (newspaper articles, films, books, etc. (no websites please). Be prepared to describe in class how that reference reinforces or shatters perceptions and stereotypes of the Amazon and create your own artistic representation of those perceptions or stereotypes in the form of a drawing, sculpture, collage, or music.
- Poll 20 people (note whether they are family, friends, fellow students, strangers) with the following question: “What are the first 2 things that pop into your head when you think of the word Amazon?”
- Fill out student information form and bring to next class.

Readings for following class:
- Project Amazonas website - http://www.projectamazonas.com
- FIU Amazon Program website - http://www.hon.fiu.edu/~peru
18 Jan 2011: 2: Popular perceptions of the Amazon today and in the past (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class.
- Students provide a brief synthesis of the “Amazon perceptions” of the people they polled and present their artwork.
- View clips from various online clips or relevant movies that depict various views of the Amazon
  How are perceptions of the Amazon rooted in reality or myth? How are popular perceptions exploited for political, social, entertainment or even conservation gain or fame? Can you believe everything you read or see? How to distinguish truth from fiction or exaggeration.
- Students compare/contrast the perceptions and stereotypes of the Amazon from the poll they took and the video clips seen in class with material from the Project Amazonas and Amazon Program websites.

Assignments for following class:
- Bring photocopy, or send scan of passport photo page (the full two-page spread)
- Watch the Expedition Videos from the Field Museum. Links in Moodle.
- Start assignment "Shaping of Western Views of the Amazon" due Feb 8
- Start "Biq Questions" assignment due Feb 22
- Start literature review assignment due March 1

Readings for following class:
- Kricher: Ch 1: Tropical Climates and Ecosystems (pp.3-20)

25 Jan 2011: 3: Overview of the Natural Environment of the Amazon (Riach)

In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class.
- What will it be like to spend 4 weeks there and to carry out projects in the Amazon? Powerpoint/video clips of the Madre Selva Biological Station, the site that we will be housed at in the Amazon.
- What physical, geological and climatic factors combine to make the Amazon the world's largest rainforest area? How is Amazon climate determined, and how does it affect global climate?

Assignments:
- Continue working on assignment "Shaping of Western Views of the Amazon" due Feb 8
- Continue working on "Biq Questions" assignment due Feb 22
- Continue working on literature review assignment due March 1

Readings for next class: some of the following are optional - actual assigned readings will be announced in class
1 Feb 2011: History of the Amazon (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class.
- How did people and the Amazon interact during the time before European discovery and what were the consequences of that interaction? How did people interact with the environment? What was their quality of life and health?
- How is the indigenous experience reflected in art and literature (both pre- and post-European contact?)
- How did Western exploration and the colonial period impact the Amazon? What were the changes in both human populations (distribution and composition) and in the environment (extractive activities, environmental perturbation). How is the Amazon reflected in “European” consciousness in Western art and literature?
- View clip of National Geographic's Lost Cities of the Amazon

Assignments:
- Go to Moodle, check out the funding links for potential sources of grant/scholarship money at studyabroadfunding.org - a searchable database (put in “Peru”)
- Sign up to meet with Prof. Riach and/or Prof. Graham before 15 February to discuss potential projects and trip finances. (Sign-up sheet at class)
- Continue working on assignment "Shaping of Western Views of the Amazon" due next class
- Continue working on "Biq Questions" assignment due Feb 22
- Continue working on literature review assignment due March 1

Readings for next class:

8 Feb 2011: Amazon Ethnographies and the "Big" Questions (Riach)

In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class.
- Submit funding opportunities found
- Presentation of "shaping of the western view of the Amazon" assignment
- How have Amazonian ethnographies helped to better understand humanity? What have been some of the areas of study they have focused on?
- How can ethnographies of other cultures help us better understand our own culture?

Assignments:
- Continue working on "Biq Questions" assignment due Feb 22
- Continue working on literature review assignment due March 1

Readings for next class:
- Handouts on service research, research methodologies, and research techniques
15 Feb 2011: Amazon Research & Techniques (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Reading quiz
- What does research or a service project entail?
- What are effective research/project techniques? How can one develop a reasonable and innovative research or project proposal that can be carried out in the time allotted? What are effective methods of soliciting information from local people? Mock interviews.
- What are the characteristics of good research/projects? What is the value of a research log, and how do you keep it? What information should be included? How can you benefit long-term from undergraduate research – how can you best present your work in your CV or in future job/graduate school interviews?

Assignments:
- Exercise in research methods/techniques.
- The course faculty will assign students handouts with information on different types of research methods that can be used in the implementation of their projects in Peru.
- Students will use the handouts to complete an assigned exercises involving observation and interviewing skills and other exercises involving skill in sampling and measuring of the natural environment.
- Write a summary of the results of your exercise activity due March 1.
- Continue working on "Big Questions" assignment due Feb 22
- Continue working on literature review assignment due March 1

Readings for next class:
- Class handouts

22 Feb 2011: Film Screening - Fitzcarraldo (Director: Werner Hertzog) (Riach)

In Class Activities:
- No reading quiz.
- Viewing of film Fitzcarraldo
- Assigning students roles for the video analysis assignment.
- Submit/discuss "Big Questions" assignment

Assignments:
- Start working on the video analysis assignment described in the assignments section of the syllabus due March 8.
- Continue working on a summary of the results of your exercise activity due next class.
- Continue working on literature review assignment due next class

Readings for next class:
- No readings assigned.

1 Mar 2011: Independent project idea reports (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- No reading quiz
- Submit project literature review and presentations of second choice of areas of interest literature reviews of in class, feedback and suggestions from your professors and from the class as a whole.
- Submit/discuss summary of research methods exercise
- Viewing of film Burden of Dreams
Assignments:
- Complete the NIH on-line ethics course. Protecting Human Subject Research Participants: [http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php](http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php), print out the certificate of completion and bring a copy to class due next class.
- Continue working on the video analysis assignment described in the assignments section of the syllabus due next class.

Readings for next class:
- [http://www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) - Center for Disease Control website

8 Mar 2011: Health and Safety in the Amazon (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class
- NIH Certificate due
- Presentation and discussion of *Fitzcarraldo* video analysis role playing exercise
- A discussion of health and safety issues in the Amazon. PowerPoint presentation on the basics of staying safe and healthy during your study abroad experience. What should you worry about? What don’t you need to worry about? How can you intelligently read travel health websites?

Assignments for next class:
- Keep working on your proposal due April 19

Readings for next class:
- Short article on the Yagua Indians Available as pdf in Moodle
- Readings on language revitalization Available as pdf in Moodle

Deadline for next class:
- Financial Aid Applications are due in Financial Aid Office at least 3 months prior to departure.

13-20 Mar 2011: FIU Spring Break – NO CLASSES

22 Mar 2011: Sustainable development and cultural considerations (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Viewing of film *The Linguists* no reading quiz.
- What have people been doing to promote sustainable development and better health in the Amazon. What are the characteristics of successful and failed projects? Is there a role for microlending, alternative economies, etc.? What have been the successes of FIU students in these areas in the Amazon?

Assignments for next class:
- Work on the video analysis assignment for *The Linguists* as described in the assignments section of the syllabus due April 5
- Keep on working on proposal due April 19
- View all the expedition videos for the Field museum - link in Moodle
Readings for next class:
- Handouts on biodiversity

29 Mar 2011: Biodiversity and Natural History of the Amazon (Riach/Graham)
In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class
- Overview of the plants, animals and ecology of the Amazon. Role of biodiversity in local diets, use of medicinal plants, building materials, craft and arts, etc. Overall contribution of biodiversity to the quality of life and possibilities for sustainable development.
- Show clips from past student projects.
Assignments for next class:
- Make an appointment to meet with one or both professors outside of class prior to 12 April to discuss progress on project proposals
- Continue working on the video analysis assignment for The Linguists as described in the assignments section of the syllabus due April 5
- Continue working on formal project proposals due April 19
Readings for next class:
- Handouts – TBA. Readings on cultural knowledge and intellectual property rights and ethics
- Kricher. A Neotropical Companion, 2nd Ed. - Ch. 14 (Deforestation and Conservation, pp. 334-368)

5 Apr 2011: Current Issues: What will a Future Amazon Look Like? (Riach/Graham)
In Class Activities:
- Quiz on reading assignment from previous class
- Presentation of the video analysis of The Linguists
- Discussion of climate change, globalization, indigenous land tenure, logging, carbon trading, cultural assimilation, economic and political conflicts, conservation issues.
Assignments for next class: (working singly or in pairs)
- Work on your proposal due April 19.
Readings for next class:
- No readings assigned

12 Apr 2011: The Future of the Amazon (Riach/Graham)
In Class Activities:
- “Current issue” presentations.
- Class wrap-up and travel preparation
- Information on vaccinations needed – where to get them
Assignments for next class:
- Finalized project proposals
Readings for next class:
- No readings assigned
19 Apr 2011: Office of Education Abroad (OEA) (Riach/Graham)

In Class Activities:
- Mandatory OEA pre-departure session of 60-90 minutes. This session will cover issues related to medical care, culture, insurance, ethics and behavior with a representative from the OEA office. No quiz.
- Final project proposals due.

22 Apr 2011: FIU Spring Semester classes end

25-29 Apr 2011: FIU final exam week – no classes

4 May 2011: Grades Due

SUMMER B (FIELD EXPERIENCE) ITINERARY - PERU

27 June: Departure for Peru (evening) – Amazon Study Abroad Course / Summer B

28 June: Arrival in Iquitos, Peru – check-in at hotel, exploration of the city.
29 June: Iquitos, Peru – exploration, purchases of supplies, etc.
30 June: Departure by riverboat to Madre Selva Biological Station
1-21 July: Madre Selva Biological Station – orientation, project implementation, group activities.
22 July: Return to Iquitos from Madre Selva Biological Station
23 July: Iquitos, Peru – work on final reports
24 July: Iquitos, Peru – final reports due, evening departure for USA

25 July: Return to Miami from Peru (early AM) – Amazon Study Abroad Course Ends.

SUMMARY OF MATERIAL TO BE COVERED (not necessarily in order)

The Physical Amazon
1. What is the Amazon – physical boundaries, how it is defined, in what countries is it located.
2. Origins of the Amazon – overview events that led to the physical origins of the Amazon basin.
3. Climate of the Amazon – current climate patterns of the Amazon

Biodiversity and Ecology of the Amazon
1. How the Amazon “functions” ecologically
2. Origins of the Amazon flora, fauna, and biodiversity in general
3. What are the primary groups of organisms that dominate the Amazon
4. How do we define or measure biodiversity? Why is it important?

Humans and the Amazon
1. Overview of the history of human occupation of the Amazon.
2. Comparison of pre-historic and modern patterns of land use in the Amazon.
3. Influence of pre-European peoples on the Amazonian landscape.
4. Diversity of pre-European peoples – culture, language, resource use.
5. Influence of European colonization on the Amazon.
6. Exploration of the Amazon by the West – primary figures and their accomplishments and contributions.
7. Exploitation of the Amazon by the West – successes, failures, and ecological impacts.
8. Current issues in management and use of resources from the Amazon.
9. Myths and legends of the Amazon at the time of discovery through the modern era.

The Future of the Amazon
1. Current ecological/social/political pressures on the Amazon environment
2. Proposed solutions to “saving” or “sustainably using” the Amazon
3. Examples of successful/failed projects.

Appendix I

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR THE COURSE

Websites:
FIU Amazon Program. http://hon.fiu.edu/~peru
FIU Office Of Education Abroad. http://educationabroad.fiu.edu/

Books:
Medicinal Resources of the Tropical Forest. 1995. Balick, Michael J. et al.
Floods of Fortune: Ecology and Economy along the Amazon. 1996. Goulding, Michael, et. al.
Columbia Univ. Press.