

ROOTS, FRUITS & JAMAICAN ECOLOGIES: PERMACULTURE INITIATIVES IN THE BLUE & JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS (Summer 2012): Frequently Asked Questions



2012 COURSE DATES:

This 6-week, summer intensive course will run from May 8-June 14th. It begins with 3 weeks of classes on the IUB campus (starting May 8), continues with 2 weeks in Jamaica (May 27-June 10), and ends with 1 final week of class after returning to campus.

2012 COURSE FLIER:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/docs/Non-OVST-Programs/RootsFruitsFlyer.pdf>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This interdisciplinary service-learning course is a partnership between IU's Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies (CLACS), the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCdT), and the Bowden Pen Farmers' Association (BPFA) in rural eastern Jamaica. Summer 2012 will mark the 6th offering of the course and Jamaica's 50th Anniversary of independence! To celebrate we will help coordinate a special trail hike/adventure race on the historic Cunha Cunha Maroon Pass Trail. In Jamaica students will also participate in permaculture and service-learning initiatives associated with sustainable agriculture, ecotourism, national park management, and forest ecology. Permaculture is a systems-thinking approach to designing productive ways of living for humans while working with and sustaining natural environments. Summer intensive class sessions at IU (Bloomington) will provide students with an understanding of: 1) basic permaculture design principles; 2) cultural practices in rural Jamaican communities; 3) ecological characteristics of mountainous regions in the Caribbean; and 4) the ways in which humans (re)shape local environments through farming and other activities. The seminars given in Jamaica with farmers, conservationists, park rangers, community leaders, herbalists, spiritualists, poets, and musicians, place further emphasis on the ROOTS and the FRUITS of indigenous agricultural, environmental, and cultural practices.

COURSE APPLICATION MATERIALS: HOW DO I APPLY?

The summer 2012 offering of “Roots, Fruits & Jamaican Ecologies” will be the 6th time the course has been taught. For a course application please email Dr. John Galuska, jgaluska@indiana.edu, or call 855-6215. After you complete the course application you should email it back to Dr. Galuska. **IMPORTANT NOTE: The (firm) 2012 application deadline is Monday, January 30th.** You will also need a short letter of recommendation to apply. For your recommendation letter, please ask a faculty member (or Associate Instructor) to write a short letter of recommendation on your behalf. The recommendation can be emailed directly to Dr. Galuska. We are primarily looking for an indication that the course is a good match for you based on your current interests. As part of the application I will also need an “unofficial” copy of your IU course transcript.

COURSE ACCEPTANCE & REGISTRATION PROCEDURE: HOW DO I REGISTER FOR THE COURSE?

The course is open both to IU graduate students and to IU undergraduate students with a minimum G.P.A. of 2.75. There are no particular course prerequisites. We have had a wide range of students from different majors (and schools) take the course in previous years. After the January 30th application deadline passes, I will email Overseas Study a complete list of the students who have been accepted to the course/program. NOTE: Accepted students will hear from me individually with a status update as I review applications. Overseas Study will then do “academic checks” on each student to make sure there is nothing barring him/her from participating in a study abroad program. Next, they will email the accepted students with information on the registration procedure for the course. Students can only register for the course through OneStart after they have been authorized to do so by Overseas Study.

COURSE CREDIT: HOW DOES THE COURSE COUNT TOWARD MY ACADEMIC WORK AT IU?

When you register for the course it will show up initially as “OVST J-497, Overseas Study in the Caribbean.” Once final grades for the course are submitted, it will be entered on your official transcript as “L-426, Latin American & Caribbean Studies.” NOTE: Graduate students can receive 800-level credit as a readings course in Latin American Studies. In past years the course counted toward Culture Studies (List-A) credit (but did NOT count toward N&M credit). The “Culture Studies List A” designation no longer exists. It is now known as “CASE Global Civilizations and Cultures” (GCC). The summer 2012 offering of the course will count in this regard. If you have questions about how the class might help you fulfill your major/minor, please let us know. We are willing to speak with faculty members and various departments about the class and how it might help in fulfilling particular course requirements.

COURSE COSTS & AIRLINE TICKET: HOW MUCH WILL THE COURSE/PROGRAM COST?

The 2012 course costs are \$2,400 for Indiana residents (RUGs) and \$2,600 for non-residents (NRUGs). This includes: the 3 IU-credit hours, 41 meals, 14 nights lodging, ground transportation, speakers and performer fees, service fees, and (required) student travel insurance. This does NOT include your round-trip airfare. Once students have paid their course deposit, I will make an initial round-trip airline reservation and provide flight details (we will be traveling as a group on all of our flights). Each student will then be responsible for purchasing a round-trip airline ticket by debit or credit card to Jamaica from Indianapolis International to Kingston (Norman Manley International). It will be important to purchase your ticket within the reservation time frame I provide. NOTE: We estimate the 2012 airline ticket cost to be approximately \$550.

COURSE DEPOSIT: HOW DOES THE COURSE DEPOSIT WORK?

The course deposit (\$500) is paid directly to Overseas Study and is ONLY paid after you have been formally accepted to the program. The deposit is non-refundable, is paid by check, and it will be due to the Overseas Study office (Franklin Hall 303) on or before February 27th, 2012. It is vital that the course deposit be paid by the stated deadline. This is a formal indication that you will be taking the class and we should go ahead and begin finalizing the airline, housing, and food arrangements. NOTE: The deposit counts toward the overall course costs.

COURSE-RELATED FUNDING: IS GRANT MONEY AVAILABLE TO HELP PAY FOR THE COURSE COSTS?

Many students ask if there are grants or scholarships to help pay for the course costs. We highly recommend the IU International Enhancement Program (IEP) grant. The IEP grant is a great way to help cover part of the Jamaica costs. It is available to any IUB student to help subsidize the cost of studying abroad. In past years a significant number of our Jamaica students received between \$500-1,000 in IEP grant money to help pay for the course. The 2012 deadline for the IEP grant is the Friday before the IU spring break. To be eligible for the grant students need a 3.40 (or better) cumulative GPA, or 3.70 (or higher) major GPA. For a short-term program like the Jamaica class, the maximum amount you could receive is up to \$1,000. This is a GREAT opportunity to reduce the overall course-costs so please check out the IEP link:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~iubhonor/hds/iepeligible.php>

In the past we have also been able to find significant funding for minority students. We have also found some partial funding for students who are willing to work for RPS during the summer. If you are willing to do a bit of research and make a few contacts, you might be able to find department-specific opportunities. I encourage you to ask your assigned academic advisor about this.

BURSAR BILL & FINANCIAL AID: CAN I RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID FOR THE COURSE?

Once students have been accepted to the course/program, Overseas Study will provide both the Bursars office and the Financial Aid office with a list of participating students as well as information about the total course expenses. The Bursar will bill you for the REMAINING course fees (\$2,400 minus \$500 deposit = \$1,900 for Indiana residents, and \$2,600 minus \$500 = \$2,100 for non-residents). Since the course costs increase your overall academic costs for the school year you might be eligible for additional aid (IF you already qualify for aid and receive an aid package). I advise you to please speak with a representative from the Financial Aid office if you have specific financial aid questions. However, IF you intend to apply for a financial aid package for the summer it is my understanding that you must enroll in at least 6 credit hours. The Jamaica course is a 3-credit course and so you would need to take 3 additional credit hours during the 2nd half of the summer. IMPORTANT NOTE: If you ONLY take the Jamaica class there is no IU tuition charge. If you take both the Jamaica class and additional classes you would need to pay IU tuition for the additional class.

PASSPORT & VISA: DO I NEED A PASSPORT & VISA?

Yes, you will need a passport. No, you will not need a visa for entry into Jamaica. If you do not have a passport, please apply for one as soon as possible. Obviously, if you don't have a passport, you won't have a passport number and will have to leave that item blank on the course application (this is there to remind people that they will need a passport). You will be responsible for paying for your passport application fee.

CLASS MEETING TIMES & SCHEDULE: *WHEN & WHERE WILL THE CLASS BE MEETING AT IU?*

The course will begin meeting on May 8th and run until June 14th. We will meet every day (Monday-Friday) for a period of 3 weeks. Our official meeting time is normally scheduled as 3:30 PM-5:30 PM. The 2012 meeting location has not yet been set, but it will likely be in Foster Quad or in Jordan Hall. That gives us a total of 14 class sessions before we go to Jamaica. As things are currently scheduled, we'd fly to Kingston on May 27th and be in Jamaica until June 10th. Then we have 4 more final class sessions and a potluck party.

CULTURE, ECOLOGY & PERMACULTURE: *WHAT TOPICS WILL THE COURSE ADDRESS?*

The Co-Instructors, Dr. Galuska and biologist Dr. Keith Vogelsang, bring a wide range of knowledge, interests, and experiences to the class. We teach the course knowing that some students will have more experience with "culture" related courses (Anthropology, Folklore, etc.) and some will have strong "science" backgrounds. Others might have limited experiences with both Anthropology classes and Biology. Regardless, all students bring interesting perspectives and ideas to the group. Our class sessions at IU will provide you with an understanding of: 1) Jamaican/Caribbean history, 2) cultural practices in Jamaica, 3) ecological characteristics of mountainous regions and forests in the Caribbean, and 4) the ways in which humans (re)shape local environments through agriculture and other practices. Bridging both cultural and environmental components of the course is permaculture design. Permaculture is a systems-thinking design approach meant to create productive and ethical ways of living that sustain and care for both humans and the Earth. Our time on campus provides a foundation for the hands-on cultural, environmental, and agricultural projects we will participate in during our stay in Jamaica. In addition to these projects, each student will identify a topic of interest and explore the topic with our friends and partners in Jamaica. There we will have unique opportunities to interact with conservationists, park rangers, farmers, community leaders, herbalists, spiritualists, poets, musicians, and other individuals.

SITE LOCATIONS & SCHEDULE IN JAMAICA: *WHERE WILL BE GOING?*

After arriving in Kingston, we will head east along the south coast of the island for our first night where we will stay in either a small hotel or a recently established ecovillage. We will then hike from the town of Hayfield to the trailhead of the Cunha Cunha Maroon Pass trail. This historic trail will bring us up, over, and then down part of the Blue Mountains and to the Ambassabeth Ecolodge compound near the community of Millbank in the Rio Grande Valley. This area of Jamaica, sandwiched between the Blue Mountains and John Crow Mountain ranges, is an ecological "hot spot" and home to many flora and fauna that exist nowhere else on the planet! We'll spend the majority of our trip (10 nights) in "the valley" working with members of the Bowden Pen Farmers Association, Maroon leaders, and a number of other individuals. We'll also get to visit the Maroon community of Moore Town and spend time with their leader, Colonel Sterling. When we leave Ambassabeth, we'll head to the north coast and spend 1 night in the city of Port Antonio. From Port Antonio we will head to the western edge of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and spend 2 final nights at the Holywell Recreational Area (4,000+ feet up in the mountains above Kingston). At Holywell, we'll have the chance to interact with park rangers as well as a proprietor of a unique coffee plantation. If the group is highly adventurous and motivated, we might even contemplate making the trek the Blue Mt. Peak (7,400+ feet)! We have quite a bit of flexibility in terms of our schedule. We'll return to Kingston early in the morning on our final day in Jamaica to catch our flight home.

PERSONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ISSUES: *IS JAMAICA SAFE?*

For many years Jamaica has struggled with a high crime rates. However, much of the crime is concentrated in the nation's urban areas such as Kingston and Montego Bay. We spend the majority of the rural areas which have small populations and low crime rates. When we travel and work on our service-learning and

permaculture projects, we are usually accompanied by one or more of our trusted community partners. Fortunately, we have had no significant issues with crime on any of our past four trips. Prior to leaving for our trip we discuss a number of common sense personal safety measures to help make sure our time in Jamaica is incident free. During our trip we do take part in a number of strenuous physical activities (hiking, swimming, etc.) outdoors. During such activities we carry first aid kits. The injuries we have experienced in past years have been minor (including things like small cuts and bruises). Jamaica has had confirmed cases of H1N1 but has not been identified as a high risk location for contracting H1N1. Similarly, Jamaica has experienced cases of malaria in recent years, but the number of cases has been small and the risk of contracting malaria in Jamaica is quite low. There are no required vaccinations for travel to Jamaica, but it is recommended that visitors have their routine vaccinations up to date prior to travel. Tap water in Jamaica is safe for consumption and the filtered spring water we drink at Ambassabeth Ecolodge is also safe. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** As part of the Jamaica course requirements each student will enroll in a short-term travel insurance program offered through IU/Overseas Study.

LODGING & FOOD: *WHERE WILL WE STAY AND WHAT WILL WE EAT IN JAMAICA?*

At both Ambassabeth and Holywell we'll be staying in shared cabins. Some of the cabins were built as recently as last year, while others are more than 10 years old. NOTE: Camping may be an option for some nights if you are interested. Most of cabins do not having running water, but the bathroom facilities are very nice and do having sinks, showers, toilets, etc. At Ambassabeth we will also have access to two kitchens, a meeting/eating hall, and an amazingly pristine river for bathing, swimming, and exploration. For our overnights at the north and south coast, we will be eating at hotels or restaurants. At both Ambassabeth and Holywell a small group of cooks will be hired to prepare traditional Jamaican meals for us. This is amazing food and has always been an extremely memorable part of the trip or students. The cooks like it when we visit the kitchen, get to know them, and socialize. NOTE: If you are a vegetarian, or have other special dietary needs/preferences, please let me know so we can plan accordingly.

POST-JAMAICA: *WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE RETURN FROM JAMAICA?*

In our 4 class sessions after we return to IU, we will spend time reflecting on our experiences and accomplishments. Each student will also give a brief presentation on his/her individualized research project. These presentations will be tied to a paper that will be submitted as the final assignment for the course. We will also have a group dinner/potluck the weekend after the course ends.

OTHER QUESTIONS?

To apply for the course, or to learn more information, please contact Dr. Galuska: jgaluska@indiana.edu, 855-6215. Information about the course is also available through the IU Overseas Study website and on Facebook:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/docs/Non-OVST-Programs/RootsFruitsFlyer.pdf>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=9852459670>