

BRAZIL

Environmental Conservation and Indigenous Peoples

July 14 - August 3, 2011



This course to the Brazilian Amazon will address tropical forest ecology; conservation of Amazonia; and the role of the indigenous Kayapó and other local groups in the Amazon region.

The Amazon basin is the largest remaining tract of tropical rainforest in the world, and is also the home to many different types of human communities: indigenous groups, river dwelling families, rubber tappers, farmers, ranchers, and miners. Because of the widespread development and expansion in the Amazon region, a number of indigenous and local communities now participate in arrangements of “partnering” with outside entities, intended to increase the security of their lands and their well-being. In this study abroad course, students have the rare opportunity to visit with and learn about the many different actors and activities in the Amazon region.

The Kayapó territories represent one of the largest remaining tracts of neotropical rainforest in the world. The Kayapó, who continue to practice hunting and horticulture, have effectively protected their lands through organization, political prowess, and technological advances. In 1989, they earned worldwide recognition for their precedent-setting victory in halting a large hydroelectric project that would have inundated their lands. Today, the Kayapó supplement their own on-the-ground monitoring of their territory with overflights and Landsat imaging made possible through their partnership with environmental NGOs.

The Pinkaiti Ecological Research Station has been in Aukre, center of the Kayapó indigenous area, for 15 years. During this time, researchers have studied the sustainability of local hunting practices and their impact on fauna. In a rare partnership with Pinkaiti, the University of Maryland has arranged for a small class of students to learn about the reserve, meet the Kayapó, and be taught by them along with researchers.

Courses: Students will enroll in one of the following 6-credit courses.

ANTH 495 Ethnographic Fieldwork

ANTH 698C Advanced Field Training in Ethnology

LASC 448C Special Topics in Latin American Studies: Brazilian Ethnography

ITINERARY: Students will be based initially in Belém, and will travel on many excursions in the surrounding area to learn about community-conservation issues. The course will feature a visit among the Kayapó and first-hand experience of the Kayapó’s partnership with environmental NGOs. In the rare event that student are not permitted to enter the Kayapó area, students will make several excursions from Belém, and get a first-hand experience of ecology and river-dwelling communities in the Amazon region.

Program Cost: \$4,200

Application Deadline: Tuesday, March 1, 2011

For program and course information, please contact **Janet Chernela** at chernela@umd.edu, or visit:

www.umd.edu/studyabroad