

BRAZIL: Environmental Conservation and Indigenous Peoples



July 29th - August 16, 2015

Explore tropical forest ecology, the conservation of Amazonia, and the role of the indigenous groups, such as the Kayapó, in the Brazilian Amazon.

The Amazon basin is the largest remaining tract of tropical rainforest in the world, and home to many different types of human communities: indigenous groups, river dwelling families, rubber tappers, farmers, ranchers, and miners. Because of the wide-spread 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 are located in northeastern Brazil in the State of Pará. 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 hydro-electric 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 partnerships with environmental NGOs. The Kayapo have protected a vast expanse of rainforest along the “arc of deforestation” in the southeastern Amazon.

The Pinkaiti Ecological Research Station was founded in 1992 with the community of A’Ukre in order to, i) advance the study of Amazon forest ecology in an increasingly rare, undisturbed large tract of protected rainforest, and ii) provide sustainable income and learning opportunities for the community. During this time, researchers have studied plant and animal biology in collaboration with the Kayapo. In a rare partnership, the University of Maryland has arranged for a small class of students to learn the fundamentals of tropical forest ecology and conservation as well as to glimpse Kayapó understanding of the ecology of their forest.

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

ANTH 238B Lived Existence: Perspective in Native American Identity

AMST 269B Lived Existence: Perspective in Native American Identity

ANTH 498C Ethnographic Fieldwork

ANTH 698C Advanced Field Training in Ethnography

LASC 448F Brazilian Ethnography
&
LASC 448G Environmental Conservation and Indigenous Peoples

Itinerary: Students will spend a few days in Marabá, and have excursions in the surrounding area to learn about community based conservation issues. The remainder of the course is set in Kayapo territories, spending time in both the village and village-managed biological research station. Participants receive first-hand experience of the Kayapó’s partnership with environmental NGOs. Students will explore forest resource management, sustainable development, conservation, environmental policy and a range of other topics depending on the student’s area of interest. *This unique course is one of the only ways to visit the Kayapo lands.*

Applications due by March 9th, 2015

For more information contact Matthew Aruch (maruch@umd.edu) or visit <http://ter.ps/sumbrazil>