I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: ENVI-299 Ecology Experience Abroad

B. New or Modified Course: New

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2017

D. Effective Term: Summer 2017

E. Sponsoring Department: Science & Engineering

F. Semester Credit Hours: 4

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 6
   Lecture: 3
   Laboratory: 6
   Out of class student work per week: 9

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

I. Laboratory Fees: Yes

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair at time of approval: Sarah Imbriglio simbrigl@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisites: None. Special permission only.
This course provides immersive experience studying the biodiversity, ecology and conservation of a given region of interest. Students will travel with the class to the selected country or region and will participate in lectures, guided tours of natural areas and other points of interest, and hands-on research and conservation activities. Preliminary coursework will help students prepare for the trip, including an introduction to the relevant aspects of local culture, language, geography, natural history, and scientific research techniques. Trip activities will be held primarily outdoors and may include visits to remote sites with rustic accommodations. Students must be in good physical condition, willing and able to adjust to new and sometimes challenging circumstances, and engage in intensive academic work throughout the duration of the trip. Additional costs for travel and lodging are required.
III. Statement of Course Need

A. This course provides a significant expansion of existing RVCC course offerings to enable academic experiences for students through travel and immersive studies abroad. Given the increasingly global nature of economic and cultural interactions, it is imperative that students be offered academic opportunities to study abroad. Through a combination of preparatory coursework and direct personal travel experience, students will be best able to learn from the cultures and environments of different regions around the world, and in so doing expand and enhance the breadth and depth of their knowledge and perspectives, including basic literacy in cultural and biological diversity, and an understanding of the global contexts of local environmental and human concerns.

B. The laboratory component is essential for students to gain hands-on experience in the science of ecology and conservation, which is fundamental to understanding and applying course concepts in their professional and real-world contexts.

C. Course transferability:
   a. This course does not transfer as a general education course.
   b. This course does not typically transfer as a program requirement for any major.
   c. This course may transfer as a program or free elective in ecology, environmental studies or related fields.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

A. Free Elective
B. This course does not serve as a General Education course.
C. This course does not satisfy a program requirement for any major at RVCC.
D. Course transferability: This course is similar to courses with travel components taught at other institutions. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Introduction
B. Trip logistics and planning
   1. Trip itinerary
   2. Travel, lodging and other accommodations
   3. Visas, medical and legal requirements
   4. Required and/or other suggested trip materials and resources
C. Physical geography and natural history
1. Regional geology
2. Major landforms and landmarks
3. Biomes and ecosystems
4. Biodiversity – flora and fauna
5. History of science and exploration
6. Ecological patterns and processes
7. Human interactions and environmental issues

D. Culture and language
1. Human geography - history of settlement and land use
2. Political history
3. Regional and local economics
4. Cultural characteristics and lifestyles
5. Introduction to local language
6. Fine and performing arts

E. Scientific research and conservation
1. Case studies in current ecological research and conservation
2. Creation and/or familiarization with local field guides
3. Preparatory field trips to local museums, botanical gardens and/or natural areas
4. Hands-on experience with field research techniques
5. Analysis, interpretation and presentation of research results

F. Post-trip Activities
1. Debriefing
2. Assessment of student experience and learning

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Apply the scientific method to analyze and evaluate the ecology and conservation of the region (GE-NJ3);
2. Evaluate the ethical implications of human activities for local environments (GE-NJ ER);

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Describe noteworthy aspects of the biodiversity, ecology and conservation of the area of interest
2. Describe basic aspects of local human economics, culture, and history
3. Explain the environmental consequences of human interactions in the area of interest
4. Demonstrate proficiency in the scientific research process with regard to ecological research and conservation practices in the area of interest
C. **Assessment Instruments**

Given the outcomes described above, the following assessment methods may be used:

A. field research projects
B. research papers and/or presentations (required)
C. demonstrations
D. quizzes
E. essays
F. journals

**VII. Grade Determinants**

The following may be used to determine the final grade:

A. mid-term and final exam
B. field quizzes
C. landscape design project
D. book report
E. research papers and/or presentations (required)
F. service learning
G. laboratory assignments

Given the goals and outcomes described above, the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course include:

A. lecture/discussion
B. small-group work
C. computer-assisted instruction
D. guest speakers
E. laboratory
F. student oral presentations
G. student collaboration
H. independent study

**VIII. Texts and Materials**

The following types of course materials may be used:

A. Suggested Texts (e.g., for northeastern Brazil):

B. Articles from scientific journals and periodicals
C. Films and Documentaries
D. Internet Databases and Information Sources
E. Library Article Databases
(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

A. Library databases and other computer and library resources;
B. Field guides, posters, and literature from RVCC Science Library
C. Museum and Herbarium collections of plant and animal specimens
D. RVCC field research equipment
E. Films and documentaries from RVCC Science Library;

X. Honors Option- Not applicable