

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

ENVI-299 Ecology Experience Abroad

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: 2022

D. Effective Term: Fall 2022

E. Sponsoring Department: Science & Engineering

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 1
 Field Study: 90 hours
 Out of class student work per week: 2

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: BIOL-102 or permission from instructor. Special permission only.

I. Laboratory Fees: No

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Marianne Baricevic (marianne.baricevic@raritanval.edu); Sarah Imbriglio (sarah.imbriglio@raritanval.edu)

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisites: BIOL-102 or permission from instructor. *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 location 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. 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 related to

travel and strenuous outdoor activities, and engage in intensive academic work throughout the duration of the trip. Additional costs for travel, food 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 outside of NJ. 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 experience, students will be better 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. There is no lab for this course.
- C. Please describe the transferability of this course. ~~For example:~~
 - 1. This course does not transfer as a general education course.
 - 2. This course does not typically transfer as a program requirement for any major.
 - 3. This course may transfer as a program or free elective in ecology, environmental studies or related fields. Students should consult with particular transfer institutions to determine transferability.

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, and an elective for the Liberal Arts (Environmental Studies Option) A.A, and Environmental Science A.S.
- D. Course transferability: This course is similar to courses with study abroad/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, insurance, 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. Representative biomes and ecosystems
 4. Biodiversity – flora and fauna
 5. History of scientific research 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 (where relevant)
 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 representative geography, biodiversity, and ecological patterns and processes in the area of interest

3. Describe basic aspects of the local human economy, culture, and history
4. Explain the environmental consequences of human interactions in the area of interest
5. Describe and critically evaluate scientific research and conservation practices designed to study or solve environmental problems 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
- C. demonstrations
- D. quizzes
- E. essays
- F. journals
- G. discussions

VII. Grade Determinants

The following may be used to determine the final grade:

- A. field and reading discussions
- B. research report
- C. presentations
- D. service learning
- E. journal
- F. participation

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. student oral presentations
- F. student collaboration
- G. independent study
- H. field trips
- I. Documentaries/Films

VIII. Texts and Materials

The following types of course materials may be used:

- A. Suggested Texts (e.g., for northeastern Brazil):
 1. Dean, Warren. 1995. *With Broadaxe and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest.*

2. ~~Cronon, William. 1983. Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England.~~

- 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 print collections;
- B. Field guides
- C. Museum and Herbarium collections of plant and animal specimens
- D. RVCC field research equipment
- E. RVCC passenger van
- F. Films and documentaries