Program: Ceiba Tropical Ecosystems: Andes, Amazon, Pacific Coast, Summer

Shannon's Majors: Zoology and Environmental Studies

Academic Life: There were 10 students, a TA, and a professor. The four week course required two hour lectures hosted in a variety of “classrooms,” which changed frequently, and were mostly outdoors. The course transferred back as general ecology credits. There were a few guest presentations about conservation projects, and we also took lecture hikes to see each ecosystem and examples of the plants and animals we were learning about.

Most Memorable Moments: One of the most memorable experiences for me was our 6 hour hike through a páramo. It was very cold and around 4,200 meters with absolutely beautiful views. It was easily one of the hardest hikes I've ever been on, and it felt great to relax in some natural hot springs afterward.

Advice for Someone Considering Quito: This program is for people who enjoy being outdoors and are interested in something related to ecology or conservation. It's easy to think of studying abroad as a vacation and all play and no work. This course was intense, unique, and the physical requirements were demanding at times. I absolutely recommend it.

How Studying Abroad Sets Shannon Apart: I feel as though I faced some unique situations in which I had to make quick decisions. This has made me more self-confident and independent. This program showed me how to work hard and push myself in order to be successful. I now have a realistic view of what it is like to work with conservation biology, and I now have a better idea of what I want to do in this field as a future career.

Shannon 4,200 meters above sea level in the páramo.

“I feel much more passionate about conservation biology now.”