Pre-Departure Orientation

Environmental Field Studies Abroad 2017
Mission

SFS creates transformative study abroad experiences through field-based learning and research. Our educational programs explore the human and ecological dimensions of the complex environmental problems faced by our local partners, contributing to sustainable solutions in the places where we live and work. The SFS community is part of a growing network of individuals and institutions committed to environmental stewardship.
Pre-Departure Checklist

1. Complete **Purdue** requirements
2. SFS Program Commitment Deposit
3. Submit Post-Acceptance Forms
4. Medical Review
5. Read Field Preparation Guide
6. Read Program Manual
7. Travel & Visa arrangements
8. Reflect on Identity & Culture
9. Connect with SFS classmates on FB group
10. Pack & Prepare
Academics

- Hands on field-experience
  - Learn field research techniques, collect and analyze field data, and develop holistic and critical thinking skills
- How will academics be different from what you are used to?
  - Activities often determined by weather and other factors
  - Packed schedules, some days don’t offer a lot of down time
- Read Program Manual for academic expectations, policies, and course descriptions
Finances

- Notify your bank that you will be using your cards abroad
- Budget for any scheduled program breaks
- Research international fees
- “Finances” section of the Field Preparation guide
- Bring a credit card for unexpected expenses (medical care)
- Visas with a chip are recommended
- ATMs available
Travel & Visa

- Make sure your current passport will be valid for 6 months after your planned return. **Renew, if not!**
- Your admissions counselor will send you program specific visa information
- Group flights available on some programs
- Advantage Travel available to guarantee timely arrival
- Carry a copy of return flight itinerary
- Travel to the Center is monitored by SFS staff; parents/guardians will be notified by email of safe arrival
Health & Wellness

- Submit medical review forms
- Immunizations
- Health insurance
- Prescription medication
- Travel medication
- Dietary restrictions
- SAM (Student Affairs Manager)
- Communicate with your roommates
- Risk of drinking

Any medical or mental health needs should be discussed with our Health & Student Safety department. Self-disclosing leads to proper preparation and support.
SFS Experience

Structured Programming

Group Dynamics
Expectations

• Group experience
• Chores/cleaning
• Need to come up with:
  – Strategies for alone time
  – Communication with bunk mates
• Keep an open mind
• Communication/conflict styles
• Our stations can be remote
• Strong community standards including curfews
• “Unplugging” from internet/social media, can create more opportunity to engage locally!
Communication

- Internet at centers can be slow and unreliable
- Field trips/Excursions with no internet access
- Internet use is reserved for academic purposes
- Set expectations for communicating back home
- Skype is not available at centers
- Program specific details in your Field Prep Guide
The structure of SFS programs limits personal travel. Typically, program time will be all day 6 days per week. Some programs have scheduled time for personal travel when all students leave the center:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Mid-semester break</th>
<th>Weekend(s) away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks &amp; Caicos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing

• All students live at the SFS centers for the duration of the semester

• Shared rooms of 2-7 depending on program

• Some SFS staff and faculty also live at the center

• All centers have a dining hall, common space and a classroom

• Laundry on-site/send out
SFS Housing

Turks and Caicos

Australia

Cambodia

Panama

SFS field research stations

Costa Rica

Peru

Tanzania

Bhutan
Packing

- Read through the **Field Preparation Guide** carefully for full packing lists including special gear for treks and excursions
- Start packing early because it’s challenging!
- Remember you’re in the field, so bring weather appropriate clothing (warm, rain gear, water gear etc.)
- Pay attention to weight restrictions & make sure you can carry all of your bags at once by yourself
- Leave room for gifts & souvenirs
What is Culture?

Culture is a lens or filter through which we see the world and through which the world sees us.
Elements of culture

- Surface: food, dress, national symbols
- Beneath the surface: deeply held values and beliefs
- Values drive behavior, communication style, how people prefer to work together, how they view time
- Engaging with the local community; learning about their way of seeing the world
- Important to stay open and curious; remember the different lenses through which we all see the world
### Differences in Value Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S Values</th>
<th>Some Other Country's Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Control over the Environment/Responsibility</td>
<td>Fate/Destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Seen as Natural and Positive</td>
<td>Stability/Tradition/Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and its Control</td>
<td>Human Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality/Fairness</td>
<td>Hierarchy/Rank/Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism/Independence</td>
<td>Group’s Welfare/Dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Help/Initiative</td>
<td>Birthright Inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Orientation</td>
<td>Past Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action/Work Orientation</td>
<td>&quot;Being&quot; Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informality</td>
<td>Formality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directness/Openness/Honesty</td>
<td>Indirectness/Ritual/“Face”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicality/Efficiency</td>
<td>Idealism/Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism/Acquisitiveness</td>
<td>Spiritualism/Detachment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which list more nearly represents the values of your native country?
Consider your identity abroad

Identity

Race

Language

Ethnicity

Sexual Orientation

Gender

Family

Religion

Interests
Making the Most of SFS

• Set Goals: both academic & personal
• Prepare: research the culture, environment & current issues
• Be Present: fully engage while abroad (unplug!)
• Be Flexible: stay open and curious to difference
• Reflect: keep a journal or blog
• Make a plan: bring back what you’ve learned to campus
SFS Alumni

• What was the most challenging/rewarding part of studying abroad with SFS?
• Favorite memory?
• What do you wish you had known before studying with SFS?
• How did SFS impact you as...a person, a student, future career goals, etc.?
• Do you have any advice to share?
Australia

Tropical Rainforest Studies

Rainforest Management Studies

Techniques for Rainforest Research
The Field Station

- Atherton Tablelands in the heart of the traditional land of the Yidinji people
- Hiking/running trails around the Center; volleyball court
- Center is very large – long walks on forest trails between buildings
- Classroom, library, computer lab, outdoor dining area, common areas
- Center borders farmland and World Heritage Conservation Area
- Tropical birds, bandicoots, pademelons, musky rat kangaroo, amethystine pythons are frequently sighted around the Center
Community

- Yungaburra is 20 min. drive; town of about 1,000 people
- Semester program: Homestay with local family for two nights (usually go in pairs)
- Community dinners hosted at Center
- Help local conservation groups and communities plant rainforest trees
- Interact and conduct research with local Aboriginal groups
- Attend local festivals
- Field trips to Daintree National Park (all programs) and Chillagoe in the Outback (semester programs)
- Field station is remote but students can arrange for transport to town on non-program days
Weather

- Rainforest: rains all year round
- Dry(er) season: April - October
- Wet(ter) season: November - March
- Temperatures can get chilly at Center at night (May - August)
- Warmer on coast (Cairns)
- Summer I: New Zealand is chilly to cold: 50-60° during day, 30-40° at night and can be very rainy in June
Packing List Highlights

- Headlamp
- Raincoat and rain pants
- Lots of field clothes, a few nice clothes to wear to town
- Warm clothing, especially for summer and spring semester
- Hiking and/or rubber boots that you are comfortable wearing
- Gifts for homestay family (semester only)
The Field Station

- An international research institute and former king’s palace
- Perched at 9,000 ft. above sea level, overlooks town of Jakar
- Surrounded by traditional houses, hiking trails, beautiful flowers, forests, and fields
- Indoor classroom, cafeteria, study lounge, dorms, faculty offices
- Lots of traditional Bhutanese cuisine served – vegetarian and spicy!
Community

• Students will be in capital, Thimphu, and then in the Bumthang District for the rest of the program
• Jakar is a one-street town; population of ~5,000; small shops and restaurants
• Exposure to Buddhist religion and principles of Gross National Happiness
• Visit to local homes to conduct interviews
• Homestay day visit
• Attend local festivals and archery tournaments
• Optional multi-day cultural trek through valleys, forests, and villages
Weather

**Summer program:**
- Monsoon season: be prepared for anything!
- Very wet and muddy
- Can be sunny during the day at altitude making it very warm
- 55-70° during the day and 40-50° during the evenings

**Fall Semester program:**
- Generally dry and pleasant
- Cooler at the end of the program
- Make sure to have lots of layers and warm clothes

**Spring Semester program:**
- Cold & dry, light snow
- Temperatures around freezing at night, will get warmer over the course of the semester
Packing List Highlights

- Students will need to dress business casual or traditional garb for class; *kira* or *gho* can be purchased locally
- Culture is very conservative, so tank tops, yoga pants, and short shorts are inappropriate
- Broken-in hiking shoes, warm and rain gear needed for treks
- In country travel is via bus on very windy and single lane roads (if you’re prone to car sickness, please bring medications)
- Rain gear a must for summer session
- Warm winter clothing for spring semester
Cambodia

Conservation, Ethics, and Environmental Change
The Field Station

• Located in Siem Reap – urban setting, not a rustic, remote Center

• Shared dorm rooms, student lounge space, pool, volley ball court, classroom, kitchen & dining area

• Close to markets, Angkor temple complex, and variety of restaurants and shops

• While at Can Tho University in Vietnam, students stay in an international student dorm

• Students stay in hotels/field stations while traveling
Community

- Siem Reap is small, bustling city
- Conservative, modest culture
- You will come face-to-face with difficult social issues (e.g., poverty)
- Important to understand cultural and historical contexts
- Overnight homestay in floating village
- Opportunities for environmental education and engagement with local NGOs
- You will visit: Kratie (rural Cambodia), Phnom Penh (capital of Cambodia), Kampot (coastal Cambodia), Can Tho, Vietnam
Weather

- Very hot year round

- Rainy season lasts from May - November: be prepared for very heavy rains, high humidity

- Dry season runs from December - April: intense sun and dust
Packing List Highlights

• Insect repellent – students must use repellent with at least 40% DEET to protect against mosquitoes.

• Light-weight rain jacket. Plastic ponchos are easy to buy locally, but actual rain jackets are nowhere to be found.

• Dry bag (medium or large) to keep your items dry during boat rides, field work in the rain, etc.

• Sport sandals (not flip flops) such as Keens, Chacos, or Tevas that are easy to take on and off. You will need to remove your shoes frequently as a sign of respect.
Costa Rica

Sustainable Development Studies

Sustaining Tropical Ecosystems

Applied Research Techniques & Strategies
The Field Station

- Small Rainforest Alliance certified organic orange and mango farm
- Students practice a sustainable lifestyle on campus
- Large house, dorms, outdoor classroom, hydroponics garden, computer lab
- Pool, soccer field, basketball court, hiking trails
- Town of Atenas is a 3 miles from field station; 1 hour walk or 10 minute taxi ride ($4-8)
Community

- Atenas is a typical Costa Rican town: plaza, church, shops, restaurants, school, etc.
- Similar style of dress as U.S.
- Short homestay visits to get to know a local family (no overnight)
- Community interaction: dance lessons, Zumba class, soccer, teaching English, working at recycling center, environmental education, monitoring and maintaining the municipal forest with local organizations
- Day trips and overnight trips are a large part of the course
- Weeklong trip to Nicaragua
Weather

- Atenas has “el mejor clima del mundo”: it is usually 80 degrees!

- The rainy season lasts from May - November, and the dry season is from December - April. During the rainy season, it rains a lot!

- Climate will fluctuate quite a bit depending on elevation and location. The rainforest is rainy, higher elevations can be quite chilly, while the coast is almost always hot.
Packing List Highlights

- Broken in lightweight hiking boots (lots of hiking throughout program!)
- Gum boots (rubber boots)
- Light raincoat or poncho
- Work pants/clothes to get dirty while working in the field
- Day pack and small/medium backpack for trips
- Lightweight sleeping bag
- Sneakers (or cleats!) – you’ll be playing a lot of soccer
Panama

Tropical Island Biodiversity Studies

Tourism and Island Systems: Assessment of Sustainable Practices
The Field Station

- On Isla Colón, about 7-minute boat/taxi ride to center of Bocas town
- Very small Center – close living quarters!
- Dorm-style accommodations; 4 students to a room
- Each room has AC and bathroom
- Outdoor classroom, student lounge, pool, library, computer lab, outdoor dining area
- Beach volleyball, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding
Community

- Fishing and tourism based economy
- Population of the archipelago consists of Latinos, as well as afro-Caribbean, indigenous, and ex-pat families
- Bocas Town, a vibrant and active town of about 3,000 people, provides ample opportunities for entertainment and lodging as well as commercial and health related services
- English is spoken broadly in the region
- Community Coordinator and Cultural Liaison on-site to plan activities
Weather

- High 80°s to low 90°s during the day
- Very humid
- Rainy season is from late May to early December
- Bocas is in wet tropical zone: average rainfall each year is 140 inches and the average temperature is 85°
- No hurricanes
Packing List Highlights

- Snorkeling gear & rash guard
- Waterproof notebook & underwater slate
- Field clothes as well as street clothes for going into town
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Waterproof wristwatch
- Gum boots (rubber boots)
- Light raincoat or poncho
Peru

Biodiversity and Development in the Andes-Amazon
The Field Station

- Located in Urubamba, in the Sacred Valley of the Incas – high elevation agricultural area
- Dorms house 2-3 students per room
- Common spaces include study hall, student lounge, green space for activities, kitchen & dining hall, classroom
- No wireless internet – ethernet connections available in student lounge
- Students stay at field stations in the cloud forest and lowland rainforest on expedition
Community

• Town of Urubamba has about 2,700 residents
• Most Peruvians are friendly and welcoming toward visitors, and very proud of their country
• Economy based on agriculture, mining, and tourism
• Over 40 ethnic groups and many different languages spoken
• Lowland rainforest—rainforest studies; biology and ecology; river observation. Near indigenous communities of Huacaria, Wachiperi, and Machiguenga peoples
• Cusco—study tourism dynamics and economic development
Weather

- You will be staying in places ranging from 10,000 ft. elevation to 650 ft. elevation; be prepared for hot and cool weather
- Weather in Urubamba will be temperate (60s-70s), not very humid
- Lowland rainforest: hot, humid, rainy. Rainy season runs from October - April, but even the dry season sees considerable rain
- Cloud forest: high altitude, chilly, can be very wet
Packing List Highlights

- Students **must** wear DEET—no natural insect repellant
- Rain gear
- Warmer clothes & layers
- Closed-toed shoes
- Long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Ethernet adapter for your laptop if you need one. No wireless internet!
Tanzania

Wildlife Management Studies

Wildlife Management and Conservation

Techniques for Wildlife Research
The Field Station

- About 2.5 hours west of Arusha, near the town of Karatu; within walking distance of Rhotia
- Within Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem of Northern Tanzania
- Private fenced-facility
- Duplex-style student cabins: 4 bunks per room with attached bathroom
- Classroom, library, computer lab, dining area, gazebo and common areas
Community

- 2-credit language and culture course in Swahili and East African tribal communities
  Students often walk/jog to town; soccer games with community members; frequent visits to local markets

- Visit local homesteads for traditional celebrations, lectures, and to conduct interviews
  Dress and culture is very conservative

- Many day and overnight trips as part of the program to visit national parks, local communities, etc.

- Several multi-day expeditions to parks; camping trip in the Serengeti

- Day-long homestay
Packing List Highlights

- Toiletries can be hard to find and expensive

- 1 ream (500 sheets) of 8.5"x 11" high quality white paper

- Modest clothing is best. Loose-fitting dresses, skirts, or pants for women to wear while visiting more traditional communities.

- Running shoes –you’ll be playing a lot of soccer!

- Binoculars
Turks & Caicos Islands

Marine Resource Studies

Tropical Marine Ecosystems: Management and Applied Research Techniques
The Field Station

- Center looks directly out over the sea, adjacent to Cockburn Harbour
- Coral reefs, mangrove islands, sea grass beds, deep water diving all easily accessible
- Docks, motor boats, commercial compressor, tanks and weights for SCUBA diving
- Freshwater is a limited resource - one freshwater shower per week; laundry is washed by hand using saltwater
- Open air dining area/common space, hammocks, computer lab, classroom
Community

- Small, fishing-based community of about 1,200 people

- Variety of cultures and ancestries: African, British, Haitian, Dominican, etc.

- Community engagement: teaching English, marine/environmental education, swim lessons, community dinners

- Soccer, volleyball, basketball, and rugby with community members
Weather

- Hot and dry
- Average temperature of 80°, hotter in summer
- Dry season February - September
- Wet season from October - January (17” annual rainfall)
Packing List Highlights

- Conservative clothing to be worn when interacting with community members (e.g. one piece bathing suit or rash guard for teaching swim lessons)
- Rash guard for sun protection and warmth during water activities
- Clothes are washed in salt water and dried in the sun: don’t bring anything too nice
- SCUBA gear with service receipt if you plan to dive. No possibility to rent either SCUBA or snorkel gear on South Caicos.
- Reef safe/biodegradable toiletries
SFS on the Web

- fieldstudies.org/blog
- Facebook.com/TheSFS
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