Travel to The Galápagos Archipelago, Darwin's living laboratory, is home to an abundance of wildlife. Discover the North Seymour Island, when we’ll see magnificent frigate birds, blue-footed boobies, land iguanas and playful sea lions. Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz with its population 3,000 giant tortoises and learn about the Floreana Island history.

March 6 – March 16, 2014
Applications deadline October 11, 2013
(Apply through the Study Abroad Office)

Course - 3 credits:
NR491 - NR595 - Special Topics in Forestry and Related Natural Resources

Meetings once a week, probably Thursday evenings to prepare for and reflect on what we will see on the trip.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Cost estimate for the trip is $4,400 (includes airfare and all major expenses)

Last day to pay for airfare ($889.91), November 13, 2013; for remainder December 3, 2013

Financial aid available through the Study Abroad Office, FER, CNR scholarships
http://cnr.ncsu.edu/fer/international/study_abroad.php

SPRING BREAK 2014
DAY 1 – MARCH 6th - USA – GUAYAQUIL

Our expedition begins in the U.S. where we check in for our flight to Guayaquil Ecuador. We pass quickly through immigration and customs and are met by our representative for assistance with our luggage before transferring to our hotel Fontana for the night.

Guayaquil, with a population approaching 3 million people, is the largest city and major port in Ecuador, as well as the economic and industrial center of the country. Guayaquil has a coastal location on an unusually long 30 miles inward reach of the Gulf of Guayaquil. The city is situated on the Guayas River and is surrounded by the major export farming areas of Ecuador.

DAY 2 MARCH 7th – GUAYAQUIL – GALAPAGOS – SINK HOLES – PTO AYORA

Today after breakfast, we will take our bus to the airport for our flight to the Galapagos Islands airport on Baltra, arriving around noontime.

After going through Galapagos arrival procedures, we cross the channel from Baltra to the northern side of Santa Cruz Island where our private bus is waiting to take us to the highland where we will have our first adventure in the Galapagos cloud forest which happens at about 1500 feet, here we will see the impressive sink holes called “Los Gemelos”. We will walk in the Scalesia forest, where we can admire all the indigenous vegetation and also find some endemic birds like Darwin finches, flycatchers, doves and others. After lunch we will continue to the city of Puerto Ayora, this colorful town is the administrative center of the Galapagos National Park. Charles Darwin Station headquarters and our hotel is also located here.

Santa Cruz Island is a large, high island in the center of the archipelago on which volcanic activity has long since ceased although there are still some interesting ecological remnants. The wetter southeast side faces the prevailing trade winds and holds the archipelago’s largest human population of about 20,000 people. (B.L.D)

Gear: Passport, walking shoes, sunblock, camera, hat, sunglasses, money.

DAY 3 – MARCH 8th - NORTH SEYMOUR ISLAND AND BACHAS BEACH

This morning we’re taking a bus across the island (40 min) to the Itabaca channel where you’ll be met by our day tour boat to take us to North Seymour Island (1 hour). This is a small, flat, uplifted island. Here
we'll see magnificent frigate birds, blue-footed boobies, gulls, land iguanas and playful sea lions. After a 1h30 min walk, you’ll come back to the boat, have a drink, change clothes and then go snorkeling to see the many different tropical fishes and maybe get to play with the sea lions.

This afternoon after a typical Galapagos boat lunch we’ll go to “Bachas Beach” located on the northern part of Santa Cruz. This is one of the most beautiful beaches in the islands with nice clear blue water. Here we’ll see a flamingo lagoon, sally light foot crabs, marine iguanas, pelicans and boobies flying by.

After walking and swimming we’ll go back to our boat and back to the hotel for a good rest, and a dip in the pool. Tonight we will have free time before dinner in town. (B.L.D)

**Gear:** Hiking shoes, bathing suit, towel, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, money and water.

**DAY 4 – MARCH 9th - HIGHLANDS OF SANTA CRUZ**

Today we are going to explore the highlands of Santa Cruz. We travel by bus through private farm-land to a place in the highlands where giant tortoises the highlands of Santa Cruz are found in their natural habitat. Santa Cruz has a population of about 3,000 giant tortoises. In this place we’ll also see one of the natural wonders, a lava tube and we will walk underground for about 30 min to enjoy this geological formation.

Our busy morning will end up with a delicious lunch in the highlands at one of the nicest farms in the island.

After lunch we will visit a wonderful farm and a very entertaining guy called Adriano Cabrera, who is a true Galapagos farmer. Mr. Cabrera will share with us his family farm and his vast knowledge as a long time farmer. We will see a small coffee, banana and sugarcane plantation and many other interesting plants in the area. We will learn how to make coffee and of course the whole sugar cane process and we will try all these goodies including Galapagos moonshines. There is also an opportunity to purchase to take them home as souvenirs. (B.L.D)

**Gear:** Jacket, hiking shoes, bathing suit, towel, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, water, money.

**DAY 5 - MARCH 10th – FLOREANA ISLAND**
Today we are heading to Floreana Island, locally called the “Mystery Island” and on our way we’ll hear some of the stories of strange things people believe happened there many years ago. This island is rich in human history. Ecuador took possession of the Galapagos here in 1832 and this was the first island to get colonized by Ecuadorian people.

Our speedboat ride takes about an hour and twenty minutes to reach Puerto Velasco Ibarra, a small settlement of fishermen and farmers. Here we go to hike in the highlands to see places where the pioneer people lived in very natural conditions. We will also see the “Galapaguera” where they keep giant tortoises part of an important captive breeding program.

Today we will have lunch at the Wittmer’s House, the home-museum of one of the first German families to arrive to this island in the 1930 and also involved in this mysterious story.

This afternoon our speed-boats will take us to “La Loberia” Island which is a great places to swim and snorkel with sea lions and lots of colorful fish but of course non-swimmers can enjoy the wildlife from our boat, there are many Boobies, Frigate-birds, Pelicans, sea lions and more to see.

Mid afternoon our speedboat will take us to Isabella Island, this navigation will take about one hour and thirty minutes. (B.L.D)

**Gear:** Hiking shoes, bathing suit, towel, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, water and money.

**DAY 6 – MARCH 11th – ISABELLA – SIERRA NEGRA VOLCANO**

Puerto Villamil is a small and bohemian fishing village of about 3,000 people and is located right on a beautiful white coral beach, is a very peaceful place to rest and enjoy the solitude of this magic town.

Today’s journey will take us to Sierra Negra volcano, which is one of the five active volcanoes in this island, the last eruption here was in October 2005. We will go to the volcano rim and if the conditions are good we will continue surrounding the caldera all the way to the fumaroles where we can see and feel the heat coming from the earth. We will enjoy a picnic lunch in the shade of a giant tree.

On the way back we will stop at the Villamil flamingo lagoons where we will see the greater flamingo plus other shore birds such as plovers, sandpipers, willets and more. (B.L.D)

**Gear:** Hiking shoes, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, and water.
DAY 7 – MARCH 12th – BAY TOUR – WETLANDS AND WALL OF TEARS

This morning we will take a bay tour where we will go to see the famous Galapagos penguins, marine iguanas, sea lion, gulls and pelicans, we will also go to the canal of the sharks where white tipped reef sharks take a nice long rest. We also have a great opportunity to snorkel and see many different fishes, some sharks and hopefully some penguins. Back to the hotel for lunch and a good break or time to go on your own and enjoy the beautiful beach.

This afternoon we will go on a mountain bike adventure, we will follow the main road to the wetlands which is one of the hidden gems of Isabella along the way we can see different types of mangroves, shore birds and often we encounter young tortoises. At the end of the road we will find the wall of tears a sad reminder of the human history of Isabella. The wall was constructed between 1946 and 1959 while Isabella was a penal colony. As punishment the prisoners were forced to build the wall from huge blocks of lava. The wall is named for the many convicts that died while building it. (B.LD)

Gear: Hiking shoes, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, and water.

DAY 8 – MARCH 13th - SANTA CRUZ – DARWIN STATION

This morning after breakfast we will take our speedboat back to Santa Cruz, this trip will take us about two hours and will give us a chance to look for dolphins and hopefully some whales. After we check in in our hotel, we will have lunch and a well deserve rest.

This afternoon we will visit the famous Charles Darwin Research Station to learn about the conservation programs carried out by the National Park with the scientific support of this investigation center. We will also see and learn about the tortoise captive breeding program and of course we will visit our famous lonesome George widows. If you like to support conservation work and scholarship to local kids you can
purchase some souvenirs at the Darwin Station shop. Tonight you have time to enjoy dinner on your own in town. (B.L)

**Gear:** Hiking shoes, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, and water.

**DAY 9 – MARCH 14th – TORTUGA BAY BEACH – KAYAKING – SNORKELING**

Our next site is considered to be one of the two most beautiful beaches in the world, "Tortuga Bay", named after the turtles that used to nest here many years ago. Here we will enjoy the turquoise water, swimming, snorkeling, sunbathing & relaxing, we can also play beach soccer, water volleyball and go kayaking to explore the beautiful and the complex mangrove system where you can find pelicans, blue footed boobies, frigate birds, lava herons, and walking along the beach we can see ghost-crabs, marine iguanas, sally light foot crabs and other species. If you like some more exercise we can choose walking back to the town, this walk goes along the beach and then thru a very interesting cactus forest. (B.L.D)

**Gear:** walking shoes, bathing suit, towel, camera, hat, sunglasses, sunblock, water, and money.

**DAY 10 – MARCH 15th - BALTRA – GUAYAQUIL – CITY TOUR**

We return to Guayaquil and check into our hotel. This afternoon we are going to explore downtown Guayaquil. We will go to the Santa Ana Hill and “Las Penias”, one of the most traditional neighborhoods in Guayaquil. Sunset picture from the Santa Ana Hill is great. Then we’ll walk along the waterfront for dinner aboard the Pirate ship “Sir Henry Morgan” as we navigate the Guayas River. (B.LD)

**DAY 11 – MARCH 16th – BACK HOME**

Today we will transfer you to the airport for your flight home. (B)
INCLUDED

- 2 nights of hotel accommodation in Guayaquil based on doubles and triples (Hotel Fontana or similar).
- 5 nights of hotel accommodation in Santa Cruz based on doubles and triples (Casa Natura or similar)
- 3 nights of hotel accommodation in Isabella based on doubles and triples (Hotel San Vicente or similar)
- All the activities specified in your itinerary.
- Group transfers and transportation.
- Naturalist Guides in the Galapagos and Tour Guides on the mainland.
- All your meals specified in your itinerary except for one dinner in Santa Cruz.
- Soft drink or water with your included meals.
- Snorkeling gear, and a mesh bag.
- Galapagos National Park fee.
- Internal air: Guayaquil/Galapagos/Guayaquil.
- Migration card in the Galapagos.
- Tips for Guides, porters, drivers etc.
- Ecuadorian phone for the head teacher or tour leader (under request).
- Lots of fun.

NOT INCLUDED

- Travel insurance.
- International air.
- Private transfers or private transportation.
- Items of personal nature.
- Medical care.
- Internet service.
- One dinner in Santa Cruz.
- Scuba diving.
- Fuel surcharge.
- National Park fee increase (if there is any.)
- Single supplement ($400.00).