Course Name: **Ecosystems of Puerto Rico**

Course Number: **IDS 297, BIO 197**

Credit Hours: **3 undergraduate**

**Course Objectives**

Puerto Rico the smallest of the Greater Antilles is an island rich in natural resources and biodiversity. As other sub-tropical regions the Puerto Rican marine and terrestrial ecosystems are suffering the impacts of climate change, pollution, invasive species, habitat loss, and human population growth. Due to these factors, conservation and education programs have been developed all over the island to increase the awareness between citizens and visitors.

The program participants will have the opportunity to learn about the biodiversity of the island. Exploring the marine and terrestrial habitats of Puerto Rico, the students will gain a clear understanding of how those factors are affecting directly and indirectly these systems. Visiting and joining two of the conservation programs, the student will be aware of the importance of the environmental protection. Participant will experience the cultural exchange, while interacting with locals, especially with biology students of University of Puerto Rico.

**Program Fee:** $1,720

**Program Fee Includes:** Airfare, ground transportation in Puerto Rico, lodging, guides, Study Away student fee, basic medical insurance; separated costs not available.

**Program Fee Excludes:** Meals, snorkeling equipment, admission fees, incidentals/misc personal expenses, and souvenirs. $612 MSU tuition for 3 hours of undergraduate credit. Both Missouri residents and non-residents pay the Missouri resident per-credit-hour tuition rate, per University policy.

**Online applications are due by February 20, 2015.** A nonrefundable deposit of $360 will be billed to your student account. To apply, please:

- Visit the Study Away website at international.missouristate.edu/studyaway/
- Choose Apply Now
- Search for a Program (under Apply for a Study Away Program)
- Choose Simple Search
- Type Puerto Rico under Program Name
- Choose Ecosystems of Puerto Rico
- Choose Apply Now

**Scholarship Eligibility & Financial Aid**

Students may apply for the College of Natural and Applied Sciences Study Away scholarship. Applications are due to the Study Away office by April 10, 2015. Please see the scholarship page on the Study Away website. Additionally, students who receive financial aid may apply aid to this program. Contact the Office of Financial Aid at 836-5262 for more information.

**Interested in going?**

Contact the Program Director,
Ana I. Estrella-Riollano
Biology
AnaEstrellaRiollano@MissouriState.edu
(417) 255-7710

**Pre-Travel Meetings:**

- June 8, 2015
- June 11, 2015

**Application Due:**

- February 20, 2015

**Depart for Puerto Rico:**

- June 12, 2015

**Depart for Springfield:**

- June 19, 2015

Students should be prepared for long, rugged hikes and be able to swim. An ID and snorkeling equipment are also required.
Course Outline & Schedule

PRE-TRAVEL CLASS MEETINGS

June 8, 2015 Online introduction to the ecosystems of Puerto Rico.

June 11, 2015 Pre-travel orientation.

STUDY TOUR

Itinerary subject to change.

June 12, 2015 Depart for Puerto Rico. Walking tour of The Old San Juan area.

June 13, 2015 Explore El Yunque National Forest and hike the La Mina trail to observe the diverse flora and fauna of the forest. Discussion of human population growth and its effects on the forest.

June 14, 2015 Walking tour of the Camuy River Caverns and bird watching in the mangrove zone. Guest lecturer, Dr. José Fernández, professor at the University of Puerto Rico - Arecibo campus.

June 15, 2015 Explore the Rio Abajo Forest and visit the Rio Abajo Aviary, home of the most endangered parrot in the US territories. Guest lecturer, Mr. Ricardo Valentin, a biologist of the Department of Natural Resources, will give an overview of the bird recuperation program.

June 16, 2015 Snorkeling in the coral reef, Lecture and tour guided by Graduate students of University of Puerto Rico Marine Sciences Department. Explore the west of the island (beaches, mangroves, salt flats, and a fishing community). Visit the La Parquera Bioluminescent Bay, boat and swimming tour (night 7:30-10:00pm).

June 17, 2015 Explore Guánica Dry Forest Reserve, observation of flora and fauna. Visit to the rocky beach and snorkeling in the mangrove. Guest Lecturer: Dr. José Fernández.

June 18, 2015 Join Vida Marina (Caribbean Center for the Reduction of Aquatic Debris) restoration program. Lecture and activity will be guided by Dr. Robert Mayer, program directory and professor at the University of Puerto Rico - Aguadilla campus.

June 19, 2015 Return to the United States.

Course Credit & Requirements

Students must fulfill the academic requirements of the course as outlined below:

- Participation: attendance, punctuality, class participation, and motivation (20% of the grade)
- Five Daily Log or Journals: students will record their observations of each field trip and their personal reflection (50% of the grade)
- Power Point presentation: groups of two students will work together to present orally at the post-trip meeting. The topics will be assigned during the pre-class session (30% of the grade)

Required Text: None required.

Application & Payment Procedures

Missouri State University students and others who are approved by the Program Director may apply.

MSU Students: A non-refundable deposit of $360 will be billed to your University account upon application (deadline Feb. 20, 2015). You will receive a second billing on March 20, 2015 and a final billing on April 24, 2015, for the balance of the program fee ($1,360). MSU course tuition ($612) will be billed to your University account separately and is due according to the university payment plan.

Visiting Students: A non-refundable deposit of $360 must be paid through the Study Away Storefront on or before Feb. 20, 2015. The balance of the program fee ($1,360) must be paid through the Study Away Storefront by April 17, 2015. MSU course tuition ($612) is also due by April 17, 2015 and must be paid at the bursar’s office or on-line through my.missouristate.edu.

In order to ensure participation in this Study Away program, each student must pay the entire program fee by May 22, 2015. Alternatively, a student may show proof of the financial aid that will pay for the fee. If a student does not pay the program fee, or does not show proof of financial aid that is sufficient to cover the fee, the student will be withdrawn from the Study Away program, dropped from the course, and his/her airline reservation will be canceled. Visiting students must also fully pay the tuition amount by May 22, 2015 in order to stay enrolled in the program. Estimated program fees are based on rates in effect on the publication date of this flyer and may be subject to change. Program participants agree to a potential increase of up to 10% if rates increase before or during travel.

Cancellation & Refund Policies

- Students who withdraw prior to May 1, 2015 will receive a refund of fees paid, less the $360 deposit and any non-refundable purchases made on his/her behalf.

- If a student must withdraw after May 1, 2015 for a bona fide medical reason, s/he will receive a refund of fees paid, less the $360 deposit and non-refundable expenses. A certificate of incapacitating illness or injury from a licensed physician is required.

- Students withdrawing voluntarily after May 1, 2015 will receive no refund.

- When the program begins, no refunds will be issued under any circumstances.

- All notifications of withdrawal must be made in writing and sent to the Program Director and the Director of Study Away Programs at the Study Away Office, Jim D. Morris Center, Suite 403. Non-payment of fees does not guarantee withdrawal.