

Spring and Summer 2010:

# Practice of Environmentalism:

Science, Policy, and  
Communication in the Field

Fieldwork in the Galapagos  
Islands, Ecuador



COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, D.C.



Spring and Summer 2010:

**Practice of Environmentalism:  
Science, Policy and Communication  
in the Field**

**Course and Fieldwork Guide**

School of International Service  
School of Communication  
College of Arts and Sciences  
American University

**Apply Now!**

**Applications are due November 2.**

**See page 9 for application details.**

Updated October 29, 2009

**Practice of Environmentalism**  
 Spring and Summer 2010  
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## Introduction

The Galapagos Islands of Ecuador combine extraordinary geography with a colorful history and rich biodiversity. Perhaps most famously, it was here that the naturalist Charles Darwin recognized that the Islands were alive with plant and animal species not found anywhere else on the planet. This unique, revered ecosystem now faces immense challenges, however, and policy makers struggle to balance high tourist demand, development imperatives in Latin America, and ecological sustainability.

Introduced plants and animals represent the single greatest threat to the terrestrial ecosystems of Galapagos. Since the discovery of Galapagos in 1535, humans have brought many alien species to the islands—some intentionally, including goats, pigs, cats, and both ornamental and food plants, to name a few—while others, including rodents, insects, and weedy plants, have been carried to the islands accidentally. While 95% of the archipelago's native species remain intact today, the number of threatened and endangered species in Galapagos continues to increase as human activity—specifically tourism—continues to impact the island ecosystems.

Addressing today's environmental challenges, like those faced by the Islands, requires integrating scientific knowledge, policy entrepreneurship, and media facility. This program, the first program of its kind at AU, brings together faculty and students in environmental science, international politics, and media production to promote such an interdisciplinary approach.

## Program Description

This team-taught program will bring together students and faculty in CAS, SIS, and SOC to forge an interdisciplinary approach to the study of environmental action. Through a mix of fieldwork and intensive classroom instruction, participants in the course should expect to gain a nuanced appreciation for the ways in which these three disciplines work with (and sometimes against) one another, and to more effectively employ skills from each of these disciplines in the pursuit of a more just and sustainable global society. Each student will, as part of an interdisciplinary team, produce a major media or policy project focusing on a particular environmental challenge.

The Program consists of two components and an optional independent study:

- (a) A **spring course**, jointly led by the three program directors from SOC, CAS, and SIS, that focuses on field research methods, policy analysis, and documentary communication techniques.
- (b) A **fieldwork course** that allows students to film and gather other forms of data/research on the Islands.
- (c) Optional **research projects**, supervised by one of the program directors, which explore a topic related to the topics covered in the program.

The Program's main themes are as follows:

- Communication of science and policy
- Communication between disciplines
- Knowledge creation and the pursuit of truth
- Environmental self-assessment

### Spring Course, 3 credits

The spring course prepares student to complete successful group projects in the field. The course focuses specifically on field research methods, policy analysis, documentary communication techniques, and other relevant skills to help students gain a broad understanding of and engagement with environmental challenges. At a theoretical level, students pay special attention to the cross-disciplinary study of narrative. This includes analyzing story-telling as a basic component in the creation of scientific knowledge and policy outcomes, as well as examining the media's role in shaping the scientific and policy enterprises.

### Fieldwork Course, 3 credits

This fieldwork course in the Galapagos Islands allows students to practice the skills learned in the spring course and carry out their group research projects in the field. Student groups are responsible for following the research design on the Islands and completing their final project over the summer according to the deadline set by the three program directors.

Students arrive in Quito on May 14 and convene as a group before heading off to the Islands the following day. The next 10 full days are spent in expeditions on San Cristobal, Santa Cruz, and Isabella islands, and each student research group is given ample opportunity and flexibility to conduct their fieldwork. Expedition and filming sites could include Kicker Rock, Jatun Sacha Biological Station, Turtle Bay, the Darwin Center, Floreana Island, flamingo lagoons, and the land tortoise rearing program. On May 26, the last day of the program, the entire group returns together to Quito for individual flights back to the USA.

### Independent Research, 3 credits

Students who wish to pursue an additional independent research project or Substantial Research Paper (SRP) under the direction of one of the three faculty members teaching the course may do so during the summer in conjunction with the Galapagos fieldwork. Based on a well-designed research proposal to be submitted to the program directors and reviewed during the spring semester, exceptional students are considered for independent research projects on topics of their choice. If accepted, students receive assistance with research design, contacts, logistics, and research resources while in the Galapagos.

## Program Schedule and Registration Options

Spring semester:	Course
May 14-May 26:	Fieldwork in the Galapagos Independent study in the Galapagos

Students can participate in the program through one of two options, detailed as follows:

1. Spring course plus summer fieldwork: 3 credits in the spring plus 3 credits of fieldwork in the summer for a total of 6 credits
2. Spring course plus summer fieldwork AND independent study: 3 credits in the spring plus 3 credits of fieldwork in the summer PLUS 3 credits of independent study for a total of 9 credits

For the spring semester class, students will be able to choose which course section they prefer to have recorded on their transcript. All sections indicate the same course:

- ENVS 596
- SIS 596
- COMM 596

For the summer fieldwork course, students will be registered through the SIS course number only, depending on their standing as an undergraduate or graduate student:

- SIS 303
- SIS 603

## Program Directors

**Simon Nicholson** is Assistant Professor in the global environmental politics program at SIS. He received a PhD from the School of International Service and a LLM from the University of Waikato in New Zealand. Dr. Nicholson is as a non-resident senior fellow at the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos Latinoamericanos (CEELAT) in Bogotá, Colombia, and speaks regularly in the United States and abroad about environmental action and the global food system.

**Kiho Kim** is the Department Chair of the Environmental Science program in CAS. He received his PhD at the University of Buffalo and did his post-doctoral work at Cornell University. Dr. Kim is a marine ecologist specializing in tropical coral reefs of the Caribbean, and his research focuses on the role of diseases in coral population ecology and the synergistic effects of environmental factors in the decline of coral reefs. He is currently a member of the Ocean Studies Board of the National Academies of Science, is an advisor to the Coral Disease Working Group of the World Bank, and is a councillor of the International Society for Reef Studies.

**Larry Engel** is Associate Professor in SOC and the Associate Director of the Center for Environmental Filmmaking at AU. A producer, director, screenwriter and cinematographer, his documentaries appear on PBS, the Discovery Channels and National Geographic, among other outlets. Prof. Engle has received many awards for his work, including a Daytime Emmy for Best Cinematography, a AAAS-Westinghouse Science Journalism Award for excellence in science writing for television, and the Mountain Spirit award from Mountainfilm in Telluride.

## About the Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos archipelago in the Pacific Ocean is one of Earth's most treasured hotspots of biodiversity. The islands, 19 in all, are famed for their vast number of endemic species, which were made famous through the studies of the young Charles Darwin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on his voyages with the *H.M.S. Beagle*. His observations of the specific species found only within these islands, especially the 14 slightly different species of finches, contributed to the inception of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, a theory which is widely accepted today across scientific academia.

The islands are unique from each other as well, in that their geologic activity has impacted the flora and fauna who traveled to and have since adapted to life there. There are hundreds of species found only in the Galapagos and the surrounding environs, but the most memorable of them are of course the more charismatic species, especially known for their curiosity and to a degree, their apparent domesticity. The Galapagos sea lions crowd the beaches of San Cristobal at night, seemingly unafraid of their human neighbors who share the islands. There are also the Galapagos land tortoises, possibly some of the oldest living species on Earth, the most famous of whom is Lonesome George, the last remaining survivor of his subspecies. Blue footed boobies, marine and land iguanas, penguins and hundreds of other birds and bright flora and fauna can be found in these magical islands where time seems to have stood still.

## Program Fees

Students enrolled in the program pay tuition and fees in both the spring and summer semesters. In the **spring**, students pay tuition at the prevailing AU tuition rate plus a mandatory \$100 equipment fee. For graduate students, tuition is \$1,237 per credit hour (or \$3,711 for the course); for advanced undergraduates, it is part of the block tuition paid to the university.

For the **summer**, students pay tuition at the prevailing AU tuition rate plus a mandatory program fee of approximately \$1,950 (subject to change). For graduate students, tuition is \$1,167 per credit hour (or \$3,501 for the course); for advanced undergraduates, \$1,022 per credit hour (or \$3,066 for the course). Tuition fees in the summer are subject to change following the AU Board of Trustees meeting in March 2010.

The **summer program fee** covers the orientation program, shared lodging in Ecuador for the duration of the program, program-related group site visits and field trips in Quito and on the Islands, some group meals, mandatory international health insurance, program-related ground/water/air transportation in Quito and the Islands, entry/exit taxes, and equipment usage.

Participants are responsible for their own travel to and from Quito, some meals, any and all visa, immunization and immigration documents, and all personal expenses. A suggested amount of \$500-\$1,000 is recommended for students' personal use.

## Who Should Attend

As a multi-disciplinary program, the program invites applications from students from all majors and disciplines from any AU college or school. Graduate students with interests in environmental policy, conservation, development, biology, environmental science, media and film, and/or tourism are invited to apply.

Advanced undergraduates who have completed at least 90 credits toward the completion of their degrees or are enrolled in the AU Honors program and have interests in any of the aforementioned fields are as also encouraged to apply.

**Special note:** The Galapagos Islands portion of the program can be physically taxing. Applicants should expect to spend some time in the water and on boats as well as hiking, biking, and/or walking.

## Program Orientation

Students are required to attend an orientation session at AU during the spring semester. While the spring course will prepare students to complete fieldwork on the Islands, the pre-departure orientation will cover logistical issues (health, safety, visa, etc...). This orientation will take place during the spring semester.

## Visa Information

Students are solely responsible for obtaining any and all visas or other immigration documents to enter Ecuador. SIS supports students in this endeavor and assists with necessary letters or other documents as needed. For more information on entry requirements, consult the following website:

[http://www.ecuador.org/nuevosite/serviciosconsulares\\_visas\\_e.php](http://www.ecuador.org/nuevosite/serviciosconsulares_visas_e.php)

As of October 23, 2009, citizens of the United States do not require a visa to enter Ecuador for stays of up to 90 days. US citizens must carry valid passports with validity of at least six months beyond their stay in Ecuador.

## Medical Information

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that travelers consult a health care provider 4-6 weeks prior to traveling abroad. It also recommends that travelers make sure their routine vaccinations are up-to-date. For more information on vaccinations and travelers' health issues, consult the CDC website at:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/ecuador.aspx>

**Special note:** According to the CDC, unless students plan on traveling outside the Galapagos Islands and Quito, they do not need to obtain a yellow fever vaccination. Similarly, there is little malarial threat in the areas in which the program will take place; however, students traveling outside these areas on their own may consider anti-malarial medication. Students should consult the CDC website and their own medical provider prior to departure.

## Nuts and Bolts of Enrollment

### Applications

Students must complete and return all parts of the application, which can be found in the final pages of this program brochure. **No incomplete applications will be accepted.** Completed applications should be delivered to the SIS Office of International Program Development (address on page 10) **by November 2, 2009** for priority consideration.

Components of the application are as follows:

- Participant Application and Information Form
- Personal Statement
- Transcript
- Résumé/C.V.
- Academic Advisor Approval Form

### Admission and Acceptance

Applications must be **received by November 2, 2009** for priority consideration. As part of the review process, the Program Directors may invite students to meet with them to discuss the submitted application.

Once admitted to the Program, students receive notification via e-mail. At that time, students are required to submit a **non-refundable deposit of \$250**, through a check made out to American University, to secure their place in the Program.

### Registration

Once the non-refundable deposit of \$250 is received, students will be registered for the appropriate **spring course** by the SIS Office of International Program Development. Once registered, students will be billed through the AU Office of Student Accounts for the course tuition and \$100 equipment fee.

In April, students will be registered for the appropriate **summer course** by the SIS Office of International Program Development. Once registered, students will be billed through the AU Office of Student Accounts for the course tuition and program fee.

### Financial Aid

Students are able to use AU financial aid, including loans, to cover tuition for both the spring and summer courses. Some awards may not apply to summer registration, so students will need to consult their financial aid advisors for specific information. Students should also remember that in order to be considered full-time students in the summer semester, they will need to be registered for 6 credits or receive *in lieu* certification from their academic advisor. Students should consult their advisors to discuss their eligibility.

### Summer Payments

**Students are required to pay the summer program fees (tuition and program fee) in full a minimum of seven days before the start of the program.** Students will be dropped from the course by the Office of the Registrar if payment is not received by that time. If this happens, a reinstatement fee of \$100 will be added to the outstanding balance, all of which must be paid in advance for re-registration. If this happens, students are not released from their commitment to the program but instead will need to pay the outstanding balance before they will be eligible to receive course credit.

### Withdrawal Policy

Once students have accepted their place in the course and paid the deposit, they are committing to participate in the entire 6-credit program. **Students may NOT drop the program courses on-line or through their academic advisor.** Requests to withdraw from the program will be entertained **ONLY** during the add/drop period of the spring semester. Students seeking permission to withdraw must contact the SIS Director of International Program Development in writing ([rbellinger@american.edu](mailto:rbellinger@american.edu)).

**Students who are granted special permission to withdraw from the program will be responsible for any expenses incurred on their behalf prior to the date of withdrawal from the program; these expenses are non-refundable.** Tuition refunds in this program do not follow the standard refund policy as outlined in the American University Schedule of Classes. No refunds are guaranteed after the program start date and depend upon the terms of any/all contracts between American University and affiliates of this Program.

Students must commit to taking both the spring and summer courses.  
Any and all concerns about this may be directed to [rbellinger@american.edu](mailto:rbellinger@american.edu).

## Additional Information

### Visiting Students

Non degree-seeking student or degree-seeking students from other educational institutions are not eligible to apply to the program.

### International Students

Students who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States may be required to obtain immigration documents from the university to enter or re-enter the United States as a function of their participation in the program. For information regarding visa status, benefits and limitations, international students should consult with the office of AU International Student and Scholar Services, or the appropriate office on their home campus. More information for AU international students is also available online at [www.american.edu/other.depts/iss](http://www.american.edu/other.depts/iss).

### Alumni Audit

The alumni audit option is not available for study abroad programs.

## Deadlines

Due to the logistics involved in planning this program, the application process begins immediately. Applications received after the program is full will be put on a waitlist. Applications should be received by **November 2, 2009** for priority consideration.

### Return completed applications to:

SIS Study Abroad Programs  
(Mailbox in SIS 103, Main Office)  
American University  
4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20016  
Fax: 202-885-2494

Questions? Please contact the SIS Office of International Program  
Development at [sissum@american.edu](mailto:sissum@american.edu).

SIS Study Abroad: Discover More. Enrich your Experience.

## Application Instructions and Checklist

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### Instructions:

1. Download and read thoroughly the Program Guide, available from the SIS Summer Abroad website, <http://www.american.edu/sis/sisabroad>.
2. Complete the Participant Application and Information Form and the Internship Interest and Application Form, if applicable.
3. Compose your personal essay and print out a copy. (Please see below for details.)

#### Instructions for Personal Essay:

Provide a concise overview (500 words) of your interests as related to your participation in the program. Include any relevant information from your background and explain how you think the program will complement your academic/professional pursuits.

4. Print out a copy of your C.V./ résumé
5. Print out an unofficial transcript from my.american.
6. Meet with your academic advisor to gain approval for your participation in the program and complete the Academic Advisor Approval Form.
7. Return all application materials by **November 2, 2009** to:

SIS Study Abroad Programs  
(Mailbox in SIS 103, Main Office)  
American University  
4400 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20016  
Fax: 202.885.2494

**Please note that incomplete applications will NOT be accepted.**

### Checklist:

- Participant Application and Information Form
- Personal Essay
- Transcript
- Résumé/C.V.
- Academic Advisor Approval Form

## Participant Application and Information Form

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### Student Information

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ AU ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street, City, State, Zip

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:  Female  Male Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Passport Information

Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

In non-US citizen, visa type: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Academic Information

Status:  Grad  Undergrad School: \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Field: \_\_\_\_\_

Current cumulative GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Students who are on academic probation are not eligible to apply.

List any coursework you have taken which may be relevant to the program:

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Have you been subject to judicial sanction at American University?

Yes  No

Note: If yes, please provide in a sealed envelope a statement which explains the circumstances and outcome. All disclosures will be kept confidential.

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### Registration Information

Please indicate which spring course section you would like to have recorded on your transcript:

ENV5 596  SIS 596  COMM 596

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### Health Information

Do you have any medical conditions or physical limitations that SIS should be aware of?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide a statement which explains your condition in a sealed envelope. All disclosures will be kept confidential.

## Participant Application and Information Form (continued)

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### Faculty Recommender

Please provide the name and contact information for a faculty member at AU who could provide a reference for your participation in this program. Please do not list Simon Nicholson, Kiho Kim or Larry Engel.

Name of recommender: \_\_\_\_\_

AU School: \_\_\_\_\_ AU Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Affidavit

By submitting my application and the supporting documentation, I certify and agree to the following:

- 1) I certify that the information I provide throughout this admission process is accurate and complete;
- 2) I confirm that I have read and understand the information in the Program Guide;
- 3) I confirm that I am in good academic standing at my home institution;
- 4) I confirm that I have no pending disciplinary case or discipline record which I have not disclosed in the application. I understand that the existence of a pending discipline case or a disciplinary record may prohibit me from participating in this program. I authorize SIS to consult with the Student Conduct Office as necessary;
- 5) I will notify SIS of any changes to my information, including my status related to discipline and academic standing at my home institution;
- 6) I grant the University permission to use any photographs, audio, and/or videotapes of me and quotes taken from me in connection with this program for any educational, marketing, and other purposes related to the business of American University;
- 7) I understand that, if accepted, it will be my responsibility to obtain all visas and/or immunizations necessary for admission into the country of the Program;
- 8) I will, if accepted, attend all spring class sessions, pre-departure orientation meetings, and summer expeditions associated with the program;
- 9) I understand that, if admitted, I will be required to submit a non-refundable deposit of \$250 and that I will be billed through Student Accounts for tuition and fees for the spring class AND for tuition and fees for the summer course. I also understand that if I accept an offer of admission and then need to withdraw from the program for any reason that I cannot do so on-line or through my advisor but must and will contact the SIS Director of International Programs in writing before doing so.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Academic Advisor Approval Form

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### Student Information

Grad  Undergrad

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

AU ID # \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Program Information

Semesters: Spring 2009 and Summer 2010

Title: The Practice of Environmentalism: Science, Policy and Communication in the Field

Course(s) and Credits:  ENVS 596 Practice of Environmentalism (spring class) 3 credits  
Please check one.  SIS 596 Practice of Environmentalism (spring class) 3 credits  
 COMM 596 Practice of Environmentalism (spring class) 3 credits

AND

SIS 303/603 Galapagos Fieldwork (summer course) 3 credits

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### Advisor Approval

Is the student, representing him/herself, his/her college or school, and the University, ready and able to participate in a study abroad program?

Yes  No

If no, please provide a separate statement which explains your answer.

In the box below, please specify how the course will be used toward the completion of the student's academic program:

The above-mentioned student has met with me and  IS  IS NOT cleared to participate in the aforementioned program for a total of 6 credits (3 in spring, 3 in summer).

If the student does not enroll as indicated above, an updated clearance will be required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature                      Date