Earn college credits, gain field experience, and train for employment in archaeology

For students, practical, hands-on experience will include training in:

- Archaeological Survey and Excavation Methods
- Research Design Development and Collaborative Team Research
- Research Photography, Mapping, and Data Recordation
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Laboratory Dating and Soil Sampling Techniques
- Total Station and Precision Survey
- Geophysical Survey Methods
- Precontact- and Postcontact-era Artifact Identification

The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is stewarded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and is 190 square miles in size. Student archaeologists will explore this remote landscape through an exciting, teaching-focused, and rigorous 5-week field course. Working with an expert staff at sites located miles into the swamp interior, students will be important researchers in our effort to systematically collect information on resistance communities that thrived between ca.1600 and 1860. Students will also be making substantial contributions to the federal preservation and protection of these unique historical sites. This is an excellent opportunity for students to learn about poorly understood African American and Indigenous American social, cultural, and economic histories and developments.
Great Dismal Swamp History—1600-1860

The Great Dismal Swamp has a complex and deep social history. Indigenous Americans inhabited the swamp for several millennia prior to colonial occupation in the region (early 17th century). Subsequently, its recesses were home to thousands of Indigenous and African Americans who had escaped the brutalities of colonialism, indentured servitude, and slavery. Included among these groups were maroons, or African-Americans who permanently extricated themselves from the conditions of enslavement. After 1800, corporations found profitability in the swamp through the labors of enslaved African-Americans. In all, a poorly documented and secret human world existed in the swamp between 1600 and the Civil War. The historical archaeology being done through the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study is bringing the history of these people and their communities to light.

Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study

• Has been active for over a decade.
• Is an internationally recognized and multidisciplinary research project.
• Is a National Endowment for the Humanities “We the People” Collaborative Research program.
• Has been the subject of numerous films, articles, news reports, and public television programs.
• Is an active contributor to federal government historical preservation and public interpretation initiatives.
• Is one of the few field programs in North America that focuses on swamp-dwelling maroons and Diasporic communities.
• Has provided many participants with invaluable research opportunities and unforgettable learning experiences.