

## **Ecuador and Galápagos Islands, January 2018**

Rutgers University and New Jersey Institute of Technology

**Travel dates: January 1-12, 2018**

### **Itinerary at a glance**

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#### **Neotropical habitats in Ecuador and Galápagos Islands**

Two additional mandatory course dates in Fall 2017 to be announced.

<b>Day 1:</b>	<b>Mon, Jan 1</b>	<b>Arrival in Quito</b>
<b>Day 2:</b>	<b>Tues, Jan 2</b>	<b>Quito tour, Equator Line</b>
<b>Day 3:</b>	<b>Wed, Jan 3</b>	<b>Crossing the Andes, Antisana cloud forest</b>
<b>Day 4:</b>	<b>Thurs, Jan 4</b>	<b>Antisana cloud forest, Amazon rainforest</b>
<b>Day 5:</b>	<b>Fri, Jan 5</b>	<b>Amazon rainforest</b>
<b>Day 6:</b>	<b>Sat, Jan 6</b>	<b>Otavalo market and villages</b>
<b>Day 7:</b>	<b>Sun, Jan 7</b>	<b>Andean pyramids and villages</b>
<b>Day 8:</b>	<b>Mon, Jan 8</b>	<b>Quito - Galápagos Islands</b>
<b>Day 9:</b>	<b>Tues, Jan 9</b>	<b>Galápagos Islands</b>
<b>Day 10:</b>	<b>Wed, Jan 10</b>	<b>Galápagos Islands</b>
<b>Day 11:</b>	<b>Thurs, Jan 11</b>	<b>Galápagos Islands - Quito</b>
<b>Day 12:</b>	<b>Fri, Jan 12</b>	<b>Departure from Quito</b>

**Grades:**    30%    **Participation**  
              30%    **Journal**  
              40%    **10-15 page paper due 3 weeks after end of course**



## Full Itinerary

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### Day 1: Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>

### Arrival in Quito

Arrival in Quito and bus transfer to hotel. Flight arrangements to be made by students and confirmed with staff. Most flights arrive from the USA late night - between 10pm and 12:30am.

**Overnight:** Howard Johnson Quito

**Meals:** No meals

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### Day 2: Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Tour of Quito and the equator line

Guided tour of the *UNESCO Cultural Heritage of Humanity* regions of old Quito. Visit to the Middle of the World complex and the Equatorial Monument. Afternoon lectures at the hotel.

**Overnight:** Howard Johnson

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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### Day 3: Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Crossing the Andes

We will drive by bus out of Quito to cross the Eastern range of the Andes mountains along the slopes of Antisana volcano. We will ascend to an altitude of 3900 meters above sea level (12500 fasl) and then descend to the Yanayacu Biological Research Station and Center for Creative Studies at 2500 meters above sea level (8200 fasl). We will explore the habitats of this unique cloud forest habitat. Over 400 species of birds, 100 species of bats, and many species of large mammals, including pumas and spectacled bears, have been observed in and around the station.

**Overnight:** Yanayacu

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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### **Day 4: Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **Cloud Forest**

After morning activities at Yanayacu station, we will drive by bus to continue down the slopes of the Andes to the headwaters of the Amazon River at Cotococha Lodge (about 400 meters above sea level, 1300 fasl). We will have an evening lecture and activities in the rainforest at Cotococha.

**Overnight: Cotococha Lodge**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

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### **Day 5: Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Amazon Rainforest**

After breakfast, we depart by canoe upstream for ten minutes for a forest hike to La Cascada de Latas. After lunch we will have a second rainforest hike with a native guide who will describe traditional medicinal plants and local culture. Students will be able to observe the habitat with the greatest measured biodiversity on Earth, including many species of insects, groups of monkeys, myriad plants, and many species of colorful birds. We are planning a night hike after dinner.

**Overnight: Cotococha**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

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### **Day 6: Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**

### **Otavalo market and villages**

This day starts with a long drive from the rainforest up to Otavalo, an ancient town with the longest continuously running market in the Americas (more than 600 years). The Otavalos are a trader community known worldwide for their textiles and tapestries. We will also visit the village of Peguche, an ancient community known for their textiles and tapestries production. We also plan to visit Ilumán, a town known for traditional healers called Yachacs.

**Overnight: Las Palmeras Inn**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

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### Day 7: Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>

### Otavalo – Quitsato – Cochasqui - Quito

The morning will include a short hike at Cuicocha Lake within a volcanic caldera that was formed approximately 3000 years ago. We may visit Cotacachi, famous for its leather products and handcrafts. After lunch in the town of Cayambe, named for the nearby glacier-covered active volcano, we will drive south over the equator to visit Cochasqui Archeological Park. The site is a testimony of the Quitu-Cara culture (500-1500 AD). Once a religious and astronomic observatory, Cochasqui has 15 unfinished pyramids and 21 funeral mounds known as “tolas”. Our day ends in Quito.

**Overnight:** Howard Johnson Quito

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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### Day 8: Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>

### Galápagos Islands,

We will fly from Quito to the Galápagos and board the M/V Galápagos Legend. We will tour the highlands of Santa Cruz to see birds such as tree and ground finches, vermillion flycatchers, paint-billed crakes, yellow warblers, and cattle egrets. We are also likely to see Galapagos Giant Tortoises.

**Overnight:** Galápagos Legend

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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### Day 9: Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

### Genovesa

Genovesa is located at the northeast extreme of the archipelago and has many endemic species. The ship will anchor in the partially collapsed caldera of the volcano. In the morning hike along Palo Santo forests and rocky coastline, we will likely see red-billed tropicbirds, Nazca and red-footed boobies, wedge-rumped storm-petrels, and perhaps a short-eared owl.

In the afternoon we will hike a trail near the tidal lagoon to see pairs of swallow-tailed gulls, lava gulls, and both yellow-crowned and lava herons. The trail continues through Palo Santo trees, Opuntia cacti, and Saltbushes inhabited by Great

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Frigate birds and Red-footed Boobies. Depending on the weather and timing, there may also be snorkeling.

**Overnight: Galápagos Legend**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

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### **Day 10: Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>**

### **Santa Cruz and Santa Fe**

Our morning tour on Santa Cruz will include a walk along a brackish lagoon to see flamingos. The trail leads across typical dry zone vegetation up to Dragon Hill, where endemic land iguanas are seen. We will also see mockingbirds, Darwin's finches, yellow warblers, and Galapagos doves.

In the afternoon we will visit the white sand beaches of Santa Fe. From the beach we will pass through sea lion colonies, an endemic cactus forest, see endemic Santa Fe land iguanas (the largest in the islands). This island is the habitat for interesting species, including Galapagos hawk, Galapagos snakes, rice rats (one of the few endemic Galapagos rodents), a variety of finch species, and one of the four mockingbird species.

**Overnight: Galápagos Legend**

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

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### **Day 11: Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **Santa Cruz and Baltra, Quito**

Our morning hike will take us through red and black mangrove and salt to flamingo ponds where iguanas sunbathe. We will see coastal birds, Darwin's finches, mockingbirds, and gulls. This beach is one of the main sea turtles nesting sites in the Galápagos. A turtle can lay eggs 3 or 4 times per season with an average of 70 eggs each time. We will also find the remains of barges that sank when the United States Navy operated a base during World War II on Baltra Island.

After the visit, passengers will be transferred to the airport for their return flight to Quito. Once in Quito, we will transfer to the hotel.

**Overnight: Howard Johnson Quito**

**Meals: Breakfast, Dinner (light snack during flight)**

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### **Day 12: Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>**

### **Departure**

Transfer from the hotel to Quito airport for your flights.

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### Meals: Breakfast



### What to expect

This course is designed for all majors, and is appropriate for undergraduate students at all levels. Although the focus of the course is biology, we nevertheless cover topics that include the history, culture, art, and politics of Ecuador. The lectures assume no specific background knowledge. The course features travel to four of the world's most interesting habitats: Andean paramo, tropical cloud forests, Amazon basin rainforests, and the Galápagos Islands.

Most days involve guided walks or hikes on uneven terrain. These walks do not require any special footwear or gear and cover distances of much less than 10km (6 miles). If you are concerned about your ability to participate due to physical issues, please contact the course director ([eric.fortune@njit.edu](mailto:eric.fortune@njit.edu)). Temperatures can range from highs of 35°C (95°F) to lows of 15°C (60°F). Students more often report being cold on the trip than being hot! There will be opportunities to swim both in the rainforest and in the Galápagos Islands.

Accommodations are modern and comfortable throughout the trip, with the exception of Yanayacu. Yanayacu is a working research station, and as such has basic rooms, few amenities, and shared bathrooms/showers. At the other venues, students will share rooms with private bathrooms and will have Internet access. Roommates will be chosen by the faculty and changed at each venue.

No specific vaccinations or medications are required for the course. **However, we strongly recommend visiting an International Travel Clinic at least one month before departure.** They may recommend vaccines for Typhoid and Yellow Fever, and may provide malaria prophylaxis and/or antibiotics such as Ciproflaxin. We cannot guarantee accommodations for dietary concerns, although most venues will provide vegetarian options. If you are concerned about dietary issues, please contact the course director ([eric.fortune@njit.edu](mailto:eric.fortune@njit.edu)).

We will provide a detailed packing list that includes recommended clothing, footwear, baggage, and personal items. Ecuador uses the same voltage and outlets as we have in North America, and their currency is the US Dollar. Most US cellphones work in Ecuador, and we expect to have internet most of the time during our travels.

Grading is based on three factors. The first is participation. We expect students to be engaged in the experiences and lectures, and to be compliant with instructions from guides and faculty. Second, we require that students keep a



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written journal that will be graded. Finally, we require a 10-15 page paper that is due three weeks after the end of the course. The paper topic must be approved by the faculty, must be based on some experience or feature experienced on the trip, and finally must include cited research-based information.

Safety is our primary concern throughout the course. It is critical that students appreciate that Ecuador is a developing country with different expectations and laws for personal safety. Students that do not comply with instructions of guides and faculty may be sent home early to ensure their safety and the safety of the group.

To be sure, this course is an exciting and potentially life-changing experience. Dr. Fortune was the director of this course for over 10 years at the Johns Hopkins University before moving to Rutgers/New Jersey Institute of Technology. Through this course and other academic travel, he has traveled with over 300 undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni to Ecuador. If you have any questions about the course, please contact Dr. Fortune at [eric.fortune@njit.edu](mailto:eric.fortune@njit.edu).



### **Cost**

The cost of this course includes all accommodations, meals listed above, travel within Ecuador, and tips \*\*\* Our expectation is that once students arrive in Ecuador, they need not spend any additional money. Most students purchase additional beverages and snacks during the course, and shop for souvenirs and gifts. Some students also choose to give their guides additional tips. ATMs can be used to obtain cash, and credit cards are widely accepted. Cash is used at the Otavalo market.

Students must make their own flight arrangements. We will provide a list of recommended flights and suggested travel agencies. Flights typically cost between

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\$600 and \$900. Each traveler is required to provide their flight information to the course directors.

Additional costs may include passports fees (all travelers must have a passport that is valid until at least July 2018), and vaccines and medicines.