



V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

Experience the ecological diversity of Puerto Rico!

Puerto Rico

Ecosystems, Cultures and Language

4 credits in Biology

July 30 – Aug. 13, 2007

Dr. Robert Fisher and Professor Rosita Cruz

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\$1960 + airfare + applicable tuition

Registration deadline: April 14, 2007, or until full

The Department of Biology in VCU's College of Humanities and Sciences and the Office of International Education are pleased to offer a unique opportunity in ecological studies in picturesque Puerto Rico. In this traveling program, participants will have the opportunity to experience the vast diversity of Puerto Rico's ecological makeup and, through cultural excursions, see how a country's landscape shapes its people.

Course and credit options: Students may enroll in 4 VCU credits through BIOL 391 Ecosystems, Cultures and Languages in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Please note: This course is open to all majors.

Course description: Students will work within the contrasting ecosystems of coral beaches, rainforests, subtropical moist forests and the tropical dry forests. The program will utilize the Luquillo Long-Term Ecological Research Site, the Mata de Platano Field Station and Nature Reserve and the UN Biosphere Reserve at Guanica.

Program cost: \$1,960 + airfare + applicable VCU tuition

The program fee is \$1,960 and includes the following:

- Accommodations
- Meals
- Study visits and tours
- Ground transportation
- On-site program director support
- Application fee and deposit
- Pre-departure orientation
- VCU administrative fees
- International Student Identification Card

The following are NOT included in the program fee. Students are responsible for:

- Airfare
- VCU tuition and fees
- Passport application fee
- Personal expenses during the program (estimated at \$200)
- Anything not specifically mentioned above

Please budget for these additional expenses.

Tuition: Tuition is charged separately and additionally at standard VCU rates for in-state students and at a 40 percent discount for out-of-state students. Estimated costs, based on current tuition per credit, are as follows: undergraduate in-state, \$179 (per 3-credit class: \$537); undergraduate out-of-state, \$401 (per 3-credit class: \$1,203); graduate in-state, \$379 (per 3-credit class: \$1,137); graduate out-of-state, \$533 (\$1,599 per 3-credit class).

Airfare: Airfare is not included. Participants are responsible for their own roundtrip travel arrangements from the U.S. to Puerto Rico. Dr. Fisher will assist participants in identifying a low-cost option for the group. For the best fares, purchase your ticket as soon as possible after recommendation by Dr. Fisher. The group must travel to Puerto Rico on the same flight for logistical reasons.

Payment of fees: The nonrefundable registration fee of \$50 is due upon registration. A nonrefundable deposit of \$200 is due two weeks after receipt of the acceptance packet. Students who register after April 1 must pay the deposit and registration fee together upon registration. The balance of the program fee and the tuition costs (based on the number of credits taken) will be billed separately through VCU Student Accounting after May 2007. (Both amounts may be billed at the same time.)

Eligibility: Students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA to participate in this program. All majors are welcome.

Application deadline: April 14, 2007. Applications will be accepted until the deadline, or until participant space is full. We only take eight to 10 students, so register early!

Activities and excursions: Field trips include viewing the world's largest radio telescope in Arecibo, visiting caves in the Rio Camuy Cave Park, touring the house of the artist Ne. Participants will assist in the bat research caves with Dr. Rodriguez and tour a variety of topographies including tropical research gardens, a tropical dry forest, a beautiful isolated mangrove island and the ancient salt flats of Cabo Rojo. In addition, the group will have access to beautiful beaches and a rare bioluminescent lagoon for swimming, snorkeling and scuba. Participants also will enjoy a family night with a wonderful Puerto Rican family, a visit to Ponce's Indian ceremonial park, a hike to the top of the rain forest, a swim in La Mina Falls, biking on the mangrove trails of Piñones and salsa dancing at the Rumba Club in old San Juan.

Accommodations and meals: Participants stay at a variety of sites including bat and rain forest research facilities, two university campuses and a beautiful old hotel in Ponce.

Meals have been designed to allow participants to experience traditional Puerto Rican cuisine from each area of the island. Come dine with us!

Financial aid: Eligible VCU students may apply for need-based financial aid to participate in this program. Contact VCU Financial Aid, Ginter House, Room 110B; call (804) 828-6669 or e-mail faidmail@vcu.edu. VCU offers its students a limited number of scholarships for study abroad participation. Contact VCU Education Abroad or [click here \(http://www.vcu.edu/oie/eao/fin_aid_scholarships/index.html\)](http://www.vcu.edu/oie/eao/fin_aid_scholarships/index.html) for further details.

Passports: If you have a passport, make sure it is valid for at least six months after your return date. If you do not have a passport, apply early because the processing time is up to eight weeks. For more information on how to apply, visit <http://travel.state.gov>.

Program directors: The program is led by Robert Fisher, associate professor of biology at VCU, president of the Virginia Academy of Science and co-director of the Virginia Science Resource Network. Dr. Fisher has extensive experience in Puerto Rico with educational outreach projects. The program is co-directed by Rosita Cruz of the VCU School of World Studies, where she is an instructor of Spanish. Professor Cruz also directs the VCU Education Abroad Spanish program to Guatemala.

Every effort is made to provide updated and accurate information at the time of publication. The sponsors reserve the right to make necessary changes to the programs and costs.