The University of North Carolina’s Galapagos Field Program and Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site offer Carolina undergraduates an unparalleled opportunity to explore the wonders of the diverse ecosystems of the Galapagos Islands and the Ecuadorian mainland that make this such an environmentally and historically significant region.

The summer program and semester-long field site, made possible by a unique partnership between UNC and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), are based at USFQ’s Galapagos Academic Institute for the Arts and Sciences (GAIAS) in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno on Isla San Cristobal, one of the Galapagos Islands. Free of humans and predators for almost all of their history, these “Enchanted Islands” have developed some of the most unique life forms on the planet, highly adapted to their surroundings and originally living in ecological isolation. Charles Darwin’s famous visit in 1835 and his subsequent development of the theory of natural selection brought international attention to the islands. Since then, the importance of the islands has been recognized by a series of protections and designations, including formation of the Galapagos National Park, designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve, and creation of a Galapagos Marine Reserve.

Today, the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon and highland regions of Ecuador are facing rapid changes and growing crises as increases in tourist and residential populations place new stresses on the environment.

Like the other five residential field sites and programs offered by the UNC Institute for the Environment and its partner institutions, the Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site and Galapagos Summer Program are administered by UNC’s Study Abroad Office, in partnership with the UNC Center for Galapagos Studies.
The Galapagos Summer Program, first offered in the summer of 2011, offers a rigorous academic learning opportunity in the Galapagos archipelago. Each summer, two different courses will be offered related to public health, marine sciences, human ecology and evolutionary biology in the Galapagos Islands. Both courses will include field trips and excursions to a variety of sites in the Galapagos, as well as classroom and field visits with people involved in local conservation and ecological issues such as fishermen, resource managers and local scientists. These activities will be a part of the formal course syllabus, and will provide field demonstrations to reinforce conceptual or factual content from class work. Students will receive six (6) credit hours for the summer program.

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** Courses will be conducted in English. Summer Program students will also receive 20 hours of non-credit, classroom-based Spanish language instruction at GAIAS provided by USFQ faculty, plus language practice with their host families on Isla San Cristobal.

**TIMING/COST/APPLICATIONS FOR THE SUMMER PROGRAM:** The Galapagos Summer Program is seven weeks long, beginning in late June. The deadline for applications generally falls in mid-February. Applications are made through the UNC Study Abroad Office, which offers advisors and a website at studyabroad.unc.edu/studyabroad.cfm.

The cost for the Galapagos Summer Program includes airfare, tuition, fees, room, board, additional meals and personal expenses.

Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 and rising sophomore status, and must be students of the campuses of the University of North Carolina system.
Students at the Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site follow an intensive ecology curriculum that includes courses from the natural and social sciences and combines classroom, field and lab learning and a research methodology class as they explore the beautiful, ecologically diverse Galapagos Islands and mainland Ecuador.

Students will be based at the USFQ’s GAIAS campus on Isla San Cristobal in the Galapagos and, depending on their interests and coursework, also spend time at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and USFQ’s Paluguillo Parimo campus in the Ecuadorian Andean highlands. Students will take five intensive 3-credit courses, all taught in three-week modules. These include: Evolution, Ecology and Conservation in the Galapagos; People, Politics and Environment in the Galapagos; and Marine Ecology.

The academic program includes a four-day cruise in the Galapagos Archipelago and field trips to a variety of sites on the Ecuadorian mainland and in the Galapagos, with ample opportunities to meet fishermen, resource managers, members of indigenous communities and local scientists involved in local conservation and ecological issues. Upon completing GAIAS coursework, UNC students will receive 15 credit hours of transfer equivalency credit.

Following this coursework, Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site students will engage in a six-week research project, working directly with UNC-Chapel Hill faculty or graduate students, or USFQ faculty. Students will pursue their research at one of three USFQ field stations of their choice: GAIAS in the Galapagos, Tiputini Biodiversity Station in the Ecuadorian Amazon, or Paluguillo Parimo in the Andean highlands. At the end of the six weeks, students will participate in a three-day summary session, where they will present their research to fellow students and to the director of the Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site. For their research, students will receive three (3) hours of UNC-Chapel Hill graded credit as ENST 395, Research in Environmental Science and Studies for Undergraduates.

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** Courses will be conducted in English. GAIAS offers basic classroom Spanish instruction as an optional, non-credit course, taught by USFQ faculty.

**TIMING/COST/APPLICATIONS:**

Applications to the spring semester Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site are made through the UNC Study Abroad Office (studyabroad.unc.edu/studyabroad.cfm). The application deadline is approximately the third week in September.

The cost for the Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site includes airfare, tuition, fees, room, board, additional meals and personal expenses.

Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and sophomore status, and must be students of the campuses of the University of North Carolina system. Students planning to attend this field site are advised to participate in ENST 396, a one-hour reading class, during the fall semester before going to Ecuador, to prepare them to develop their research into an honors thesis.

The Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site is a collaboration between the Institute for the Environment, the Curriculum for Environment and Ecology, the Center for Galapagos Studies and the UNC Study Abroad Office, as well as Universidad San Francisco de Quito and its Galapagos Institute for the Arts and Sciences.
The UNC Institute for the Environment (IE) is a multidisciplinary program leading UNC-Chapel Hill’s world-renowned environmental community in educating practitioners, researching and solving global challenges, and informing the public about critical issues. The IE focuses on the following key areas: balancing energy production and environmental quality, supporting environmental policy makers, managing and preserving watershed systems, and developing sustainable community design principles and practices. The IE operates field sites and programs across North Carolina and the world, with locations in Chapel Hill, Highlands, Manteo and Morehead City, North Carolina, and in Ecuador, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

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After orientation and initial classes in Ecuador’s capital, Quito, and field trips on the Ecuadorian mainland, students will travel to Isla San Cristobal where Darwin first set foot on the Galapagos Islands. GAIAS, USFQ’s San Cristobal teaching facility, is located right on the water at Playa Mann, making some class fieldwork trips an easy stroll from the classroom. Students often study on the balcony overlooking Playa Mann, or on the beach among the sea lions and marine iguanas.

On San Cristobal, students will be housed with host families; on field trips they will stay at local hotels. Spectacular hiking, swimming, snorkeling and other recreational activities abound, as well as ample opportunities to enjoy the culture and cuisine of this fascinating, historically and ecologically significant region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the Galapagos Summer Program and the Galapagos/Ecuador Field Site, please contact Institute for the Environment Associate Director for Education Greg Gangi, at ggangi@unc.edu or 919-962-9804.

www.ie.unc.edu/galapagos