



Center for Engaged Learning Abroad

Belize Internship Course Syllabus

Course Information	Instructor Information
Course: Credit Hours: 3-16	Nancy Adamson, Ph.D. nadamson@celabelize.com Filiberto Penados, Ph.D. fpenados@celabelize.com

Required Readings:

What's Up with Culture? module: <http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Young, C. 2008. Belize's Ecosystems: Threats and Challenges to Conservation in Belize. *Tropical Conservation Science* 1(1):18-33.
Available online: tropicalconservationscience.org

Belize entry in Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belize>

Specific readings related to internship placement area will be assigned.

Recommended Readings:

Slimbach, Richard, *Becoming World Wise: A Guide to Global Learning*, 2010, Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.

Kohls, L. Robert, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, 2001 (4th edition), Boston: Intercultural Press.

Course Description

Academic internships are practical work experiences related to various fields of study that enhance student learning through hands-on experiences and close collaboration with a qualified off-campus mentor. The experience must contain a research or problem-solving component that is discussed and formulated by the interns and their agency supervisor. Internships may earn varying amounts of credit hours depending on the amount of time devoted to the internship placement and the amount of academic work associated with them. This internship course is designed for students who want to live and work in Belize. The pre-departure section will help students prepare for the experience of living and working outside your home country by offering tools for understanding and interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds;

awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference; a discussion of how to document your study abroad experience through journal writing and reflection; how to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by your internship; and some tips for transitioning back home. While in Belize, students are required to work full-time at an agency and complete a series of assignments that will encourage reflective thinking about the work they are doing and their cultural experiences in their homestays and their internship agency.

Course Attendance Policy

Full participation for the entirety of the experience is mandatory.

Academic Integrity:

CELA is an academic community, which values academic integrity and takes seriously its responsibility for upholding academic honesty. All members of the academic community, including interns, have an obligation to uphold high intellectual and ethical standards. For more information on academic integrity, ask the Internship Coordinator.

Students Needing Special Services

CELA is committed to accommodating students with special needs when possible. Please note that Belize has no laws concerning accommodation and very few places in the country are easily accessible to those with physical disabilities. Likewise, there are few resources for students with hearing or sight impairments. Please ask CELA's internship coordinator for details.

Course Objectives/Competencies

Through living and working in Belize as an intern, you have the opportunity to:

- Explore a career field and develop your professional skills
- Build on your classroom knowledge and apply that to a workplace and develop work skills that come only from direct experience such as self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility and initiative.
- Gain valuable work and cultural experience in an international setting
- Learn about another country and its history, cultures and economy
- Participate in activities with fellow interns before and during your internship experience

At the end of their internship, students will:

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with Belizean culture, history and ecology through journal reflections and discussions.
2. Demonstrate positive and professional interactions with the Belizean agency where placed.
3. Engage in experiential interactions with Belizean colleagues, host family, and the community at large. This will be evident through journal prompts and reflections. Note that *a record of the similarities and differences from both countries should be recorded.*
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the issues facing the Belizean people in the area in which your internship agency works and draw comparisons with those issues in your home state and country through journal entries.

5. Demonstrate active involvement, engagement and full participation in a variety of experiences and activities through preparedness and completion of internship.

Evaluation of Student Performance:

Assignment 1 – Pre-arrival readings	10 points
Assignment 2 - Pre-Arrival Paper	15 points
Assignment 3 – Daily Journal Submissions	20 points
Assignment 4 –Final Paper/Project	20 points
Participation, Effort and Attitude	15 points
Employer/Supervisor Evaluation	<u>20 points</u>
Total	100 points

Assessments:

Assignment 1- Pre-arrival readings

Complete assigned readings (see links above) and prepare a short response/reflection to each reading. Responses are due **prior to arrival** in Belize and submitted electronically in Word format.

Assignment 2 – Paper on Belize

Write a 5 page paper which briefly describes Belize (location, population, economy, culture) and reflects in some detail on the challenges Belize faces in the area in which your agency does work. Papers must be referenced. The Wikipedia assigned reading on Belize will not be accepted as a reference for this paper. End this assignment with your goals for the Belize internship experience.

For example: If you are working in a social service agency such as Cornerstone or Marla’s House of Hope, look at social issues facing Belize such as poverty, HIV/AIDS infection rates, maternal-child health, etc. If working at a place like Friends of Conservation and Development or the Belize Botanic Gardens, look at environmental issues (protected areas, waste management, forestry, etc.); or if at an agency dealing with tourism such as BTIA, look at eco-tourism issues such as cruise ship tourism, challenges of international marketing of a small country, etc.

DUE: No later than arrival day in Belize. Must be completed in order to start internship.

Assignment 2 – Daily Journal

Students will keep a daily reflective journal which is submitted weekly to your CELA Academic Advisor. Please read the short article on “How to Keep an Internship Journal”. Journals are to be submitted electronically weekly in Word format. In addition to your

regular daily journal entries, Topics for specific weeks for your journal include the following which may be adjusted for different lengths of internship:

Week 1: Focus on your agency (its mission, work, projects, personnel, organization, and client base).

Week 3: Interview your host family about their culture/ethnicity. How do they define culture and/or ethnicity? What do they see as expressions of their Belize culture? In what ways does this discussion help you to think about and describe your own culture?

Week 6: Interview your agency supervisor about work culture in Belize. How does that differ from your experience of work in your home country.? What advice would you give a new intern about how to understand work culture in Belize?

Week 8: you can choose which week to submit this. What is your experience as an international visitor in Belize? What are Belizeans curious about your culture? How do you describe yourself to them? What have you learned about your culture from being in Belize?

Week 10: Go back to what you wrote in week 3 and 6 - reflect on how your understanding of Belizean culture has changed/deepened.

Other weeks: Interns are free to choose a theme from their own experiences for weeks with no specific assignments.

Final Week: Read back over all of your journal entries and your initial pre-arrival essay. What was hardest and easiest to adjust to in Belize? Why? What are the most significant one or two insights about culture, difference, and international travel that you've had during your internship? How has the internship changed you?

Assignment 4 – Internship Project

You are in Belize to assist a Belizean organization carry out its mission. For this project you will work with your agency supervisor to identify a project that the agency needs done. The object of this assignment is to ensure that you are producing something to leave behind at the agency. The format of this assignment will vary. Early in the internship, please sit with your agency supervisor and work out a project and then write a short (1-2 paragraphs) description and submit to the Internship Coordinator for approval. This is a major piece of work that you will produce for your agency.

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