Travel to Belize for Spring Break 2013 and get credit!!!

GARP 0311 Regional Geography of Latin America and the Caribbean (3 credits)
(PREREQUISITES: GARP 101 World Regional Geography or permission of the instructor). Class meetings will take place one day a week with travel to Belize during Spring Break 2012, March 9 - March 16.

This course is a broad survey of the physical and human geographies of the Latin American and Caribbean region with an emphasis on human – environmental processes in Central America.

The tiny Central American country of Belize is an extraordinary place. As a crossroads of Native American, Mestizo and Afro-Caribbean cultures, with other influences as diverse as East Indian, Northern European, Chinese and Palestinian, it is a kind of microcosm of the broader Central American and Caribbean region. The physical landscape is also diverse with some of the Caribbean’s best preserved rain forests and the Western hemisphere’s largest barrier reef.

This course combines weekly classroom study with an alternative spring break experience. During spring break we will head deep into the field to explore the region’s biological and cultural diversity first hand. We will spend three days volunteering with a grassroots, community-based conservation organization, helping to improve the trail system of Billy Barquidere National Park which the organization co-manages with the Belizean Government. This will be followed by a night on a tiny cay with the opportunity to snorkel on the reef only steps from the front door of the cabanas. Students will also visit the famed Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and Jaguar Preserve and have the opportunity to compare the experiences between a community-based project and a top-down managed nature preserve.

Throughout the trip students will enjoy the pleasures of Belize’s wonderful cuisine, observe its amazing wildlife, explore its unique history and learn from its people. The trip is not for the casual tourist and will involve camping, bugs and exposure to the elements. But for those seeking adventure and a deeper understanding of the relationships between people and environment this is an excellent opportunity.

Faculty
Brian W. Conz, PhD, Assistant Professor, Geography and Regional Planning specializes in human – environment geography and has focused his research in the Central American countries of Guatemala and Belize. Since 1999, Dr. Conz has made nine trips to Guatemala and four trips to Belize where he has built relationships with communities seeking to balance their development goals with the protection of their cultural and natural heritage.

The Maya Mountains of south central Belize