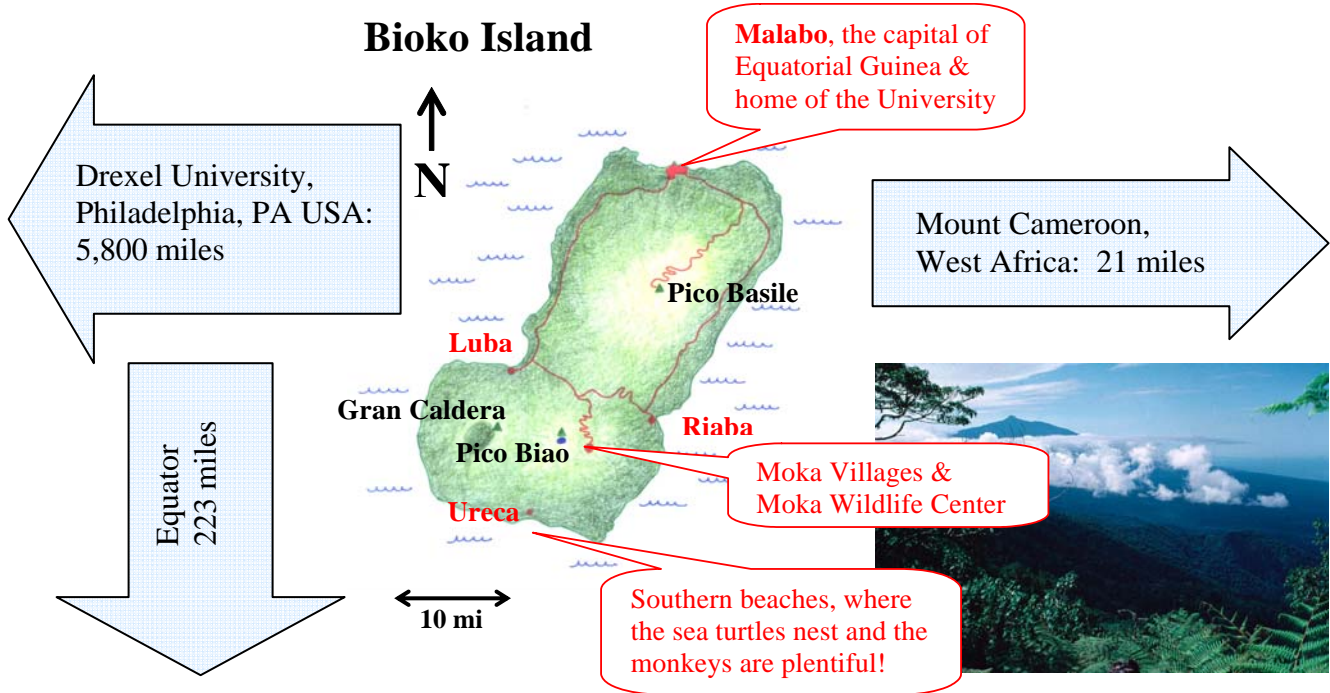


# STUDY ABROAD ON BOKO ISLAND EQUATORIAL GUINEA (AFRICA)



## The Program

This study abroad program, now in its 6th year, takes place on Bioko Island, part of the Spanish-speaking central African country of Equatorial Guinea. The program is focused on the emerging field of conservation biology and emphasizes individual field-based research projects in collaboration with one of Africa's leading conservation scientists. The research project is backed up by coursework the National University of Equatorial Guinea in the capital city of Malabo and by additional fieldwork in the tropical forests, mountains, lakes and beaches of Bioko Island. This opportunity is offered twice a year (beginning September and January). It is limited to a class of eight students.



*A juvenile drill being kept as a pet in a local village; a linsang (small civet-like carnivore) photographed by Jessica Weinberg in the forest near the mouth of the Rio Moaba; graduate student Javier Garcia Francisco measuring a nesting green turtle; two students, a guide and a grad student observing a group of Preuss's guenons in the Gran Caldera.*

The program offers a unique opportunity for university undergraduates and recent graduates to:

- Study tropical biodiversity and its conservation, with an emphasis on field work that takes advantage of Bioko Island's pristine rainforests ranging from sea level to over 10,000 ft in altitude, its seven species of rare monkeys, and its four species of nesting sea turtles.
- Work in collaboration with an experienced African field biologist on an individual research project, thereby adding to the biodiversity database being created for Bioko Island.
- Work in collaboration with an established conservation program, the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program ("BBPP," [www.bioko.org](http://www.bioko.org)) on the political, economic and ecological issues involved in biodiversity conservation, thereby building personal credentials and contacts.
- Explore the linguistic and cultural diversity of Equatorial Guinea by collaborating with local university students on research projects and on Spanish language skills.



*Study abroad students and UNGE students work on a project together; the main building at UNGE; students work together identifying butterflies; the Moka Wildlife Center, the site of the Field Research in Tropical Ecology course*

The program is run in conjunction with the BBPP (Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program), part of the academic partnership between the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) and Drexel University. Formerly (through Spring 2008) the program was offered by Arcadia University's highly respected Center for Education Abroad. Beginning Fall 2008, sponsorship of the program has been assumed by Drexel University's Study Abroad Office ([www.drexel.edu/studyabroad/](http://www.drexel.edu/studyabroad/)) because the two principal scientists affiliated with BBPP (Dr. Gail Hearn and Dr. Tom Butynski) relocated to Drexel University.

## The Experience

Located 20 miles (32 km) off the coast of Cameroon in west central Africa, Bioko is a part of the African country of Equatorial Guinea. At Bioko's northern tip is the country's capital city, Malabo (population: 100,000), a city pulsing with petroleum wealth and easily accessible from many European capitals. Moving south the island becomes increasingly rural, devolving into large swaths of undisturbed virgin rainforest.

The island of Bioko is one of the most beautiful and biologically-significant places in all of Africa. It is home to Africa's greatest concentration of endangered primates and to more than fifty unique species of plants. During the dry season (November to February), butterflies gather in the rainforest and endangered marine turtles come ashore to nest on the black sand beaches. Nearly 200 species of birds fly amongst the island's three volcanic peaks, the highest almost 3000 meters above sea level (~ 10,000 ft).

The cornerstone course of the program is **ENVS 344. Field Research in Tropical Ecology** (6 quarter credits = 4 semester credits) which takes place at the Moka Wildlife Center in Bioko's comfortable

southern highlands, home to many of Bioko's most interesting forest animals, including four galago (bushbaby) species, chameleons, and turacos, as well as threatened medicinal plants like the African wild cherry.



*An endemic chameleon species; the sign at the Moka Wildlife Center; students, guides and professors pressing plants under the supervision of visiting scientist Quentin Luke; students catching butterflies after learning the techniques from visiting scientist Steve Collins*

Since 2006 this course has been taught by Dr. Thomas M. Butynski, a well-known conservation biologist with particular expertise in the primates and birds of Africa. He has designed the course to provide a true field research opportunity for undergraduates, allowing each student to test their interests against actual working conditions, and with the benefit expert advice. Each of our eight students selects a research project before the study abroad experience begins, and after advance planning with Dr. Butynski, carries out the project under his supervision during a two-week field study. Our students each work with a student partner from the National University of Equatorial Guinea, adding a cultural and “service learning” aspect to the research.

After arriving back in Malabo, students complete their research write-up in a final week before beginning other classes. All research projects are also presented in poster form during one or sometimes two “expositions” open to the public near the end of the term.

Guest Scientists are often also available as mentors, since Bioko's still-to-be-documented wildlife draws biologists from all over the world. In exchange for assistance from BBPP these scientists share their expertise with our students and with the students from UNGE. For example, in spring 2007, Quentin Luke (tropical botany) and Steve Collins (African butterflies), both based out of Kenya, also advised student projects. In the fall of 2007, US-based mammalogist Ron Pine served as guest scientist.

Take a look at three example papers on the BBPP website ([www.bioko.org](http://www.bioko.org)): [galago distribution](#); [turaco distribution](#) and [forest regeneration](#) and two example posters, [galago distribution](#) and [fig tree density](#), that resulted from the Fall 2006 Field Research in Tropical Ecology course..

A second shorter field course, **ENVS 343. Field Methods in Tropical Ecology** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits) involves a one-week expedition to Bioko's undisturbed southern coast. This expedition, near the end of the study abroad experience, gives students the opportunity to plan and execute their own research survey. The activities include doing a survey of forest animals, especially the seven species of monkeys which occur at high densities in this area, and making a record of the nesting activities by the four species of sea turtles on the black sand beaches of the southern coast.

The remaining courses (**ENVS. 342 Natural Resource Economics**; **ENVS 344 Society and Environment**; and **LANG 180 Spanish Language and African Culture**) are taught at the National University of Equatorial Guinea in the capital city of Malabo in the six week period between the two field experiences. Details on all the courses, all accredited as approved Drexel University courses, can be found below. Take a look at the tentative schedule for fall 2008. Peruse the photos taken by a student on our very first study abroad semester in back in 2002: [www.bioko.org/study\\_abroad/page1.htm](http://www.bioko.org/study_abroad/page1.htm)



*Study abroad students pose before an around-the-island excursion with Canadian Helicopter; UNGE faculty and students working in Aula #5; Study students relax outside Aula #5; A common moth from Moka; Students working together in Aula #5.*

## Academics

The courses offered in this program have been specifically designed to reflect the realities of biodiversity conservation in developing countries. The following five courses have been approved by Drexel University and will be offered in the Fall 2008 term (18 September through 14 December):

- **ENVS 344: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: [FIELD RESEARCH IN TROPICAL ECOLOGY](#)** (6 quarter credits = 4 semester credits) An Intensive Research course that takes advantage of the unspoiled rainforest adjacent to the Moka Wildlife Center, a university affiliated research station located in the highlands of Bioko Island. Opportunities exist for student research on topics including primates, antelope, birds, chameleons, butterflies and plants.
- **ENVS 343: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: FIELD METHODS IN TROPICAL ECOLOGY** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits) A lecture and field excursion course based at the University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) combining instruction in standard methods for studying rainforest communities (expedition planning; GPS and mapping, forest diversity and productivity; wildlife population monitoring) with multi-day field experiences in Bioko Island's remote protected areas.
- **ENVS 342: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMICS** (4.5 quarter credits = 3 semester credits) A lecture course that combines instruction in the economic implications of natural resources (renewable and non-renewable resources, efficient utilization, market performance, government controls, sustainability and discounting) with a university-wide guest lecture series addressing local issues.
- **ENVS 341: EQUATORIAL GUINEA : SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT** (4.5 quarter credits = 3 semester credits) A lecture and community outreach course based at UNGE that combines instruction in mankind's relationship with the natural environment (human population, natural resources, environmental degradation, pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change) with environmental outreach activities specific to Equatorial Guinea.
- **LANG 180: SPANISH LANGUAGE AND AFRICAN CULTURE IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA.** (4.0 quarter credits = ~3 semester credits) A lecture and discussion course that explores the social and cultural traditions of Equatorial Guinea through readings of significant works (poetry, fiction, social and cultural commentary) in Spanish by Equatoguinean authors.

Students typically take 4 or 5 courses for a total of 18 to 22 quarter credits (= 12 to 15 semester credits) during each 11-week term. There are opportunities for service learning, especially teaching English as a Second Language, as well as volunteering in local schools, clinics and at BBPP's Moka Wildlife Center.

The environmental sciences courses in the program are taught in English and the professors (some US citizens; some Equatoguinean citizens) typically have advanced degrees from accredited universities in the United States. The Spanish language course is taught in Spanish, by a bilingual (Spanish and English) Equatoguinean professor.

## Language:

While all coursework on this program is in English, the national language of Equatorial Guinea is Spanish; thus students are required to have either one year of university level Spanish (Spanish 103) or its equivalent or several years of university level French, the second language of Equatorial Guinea.

To advance their language skills more quickly before studying abroad, Drexel students should consider taking more language courses during their freshman summer vacation term or on campus during their co-ops terms. For more information please contact Modern Languages Program at 215-895-5816.

Students are encouraged to continue taking Spanish while they are in Equatorial Guinea by enrolling in Lang 180: Spanish Language and African Culture in Equatorial Guinea

## Grading

**Drexel students** will receive Drexel credits and Drexel grades. The grades will be tabulated in their GPA.

**Visiting students** will receive one official Drexel transcript sent directly to your home institution. It is your responsibility to make sure that you understand how you will receive credit for the work you do on Bioko Island. Please check with your study abroad and academic advisors before you leave in order to avoid future disappointment.

## Housing

Students live in tents while on the Field Research in Tropical Ecology course, and while on the Southern Beaches field trip (Field Methods in Tropical Ecology), a total of about 4 weeks of the program, but during the rest of the program live in a group house. The house is located in the Los Angeles section of Malabo on a busy street 4 minutes walk from the University. The house has hot water, electricity, A/C, and intermittent email. Every student is issued a cell phone, thus there is no land line in the house. In prior years the group has employed a maid/cook to clean, purchase food, and prepare meals. This cost is not included in the program fee. Students should budget about \$450 on communal fund expenses (breakfast, dinner, occasional lunch).

## Fall 2008 Calendar

- Thursday September 18, 2008: Leave USA
- Friday September 19, 2008: Arrive in Malabo, EG
- Saturday December 13, 2008: Leave Malabo, EG
- Sunday December 14, 2008, arrive in USA

## Cost

### Drexel Students

Drexel students pay their regular Drexel tuition plus an additional program fee of \$4200. This fee covers housing, orientation and in-country field trips including the 3 week Moka expedition

The program fee **does not** include meals, health and accident insurance, books, personal property/travel insurance, and immunizations or airfare to and from Equatorial Guinea. Drexel students can use all of their Drexel financial aid to help pay for the program.

### Visiting Students

The 2008/09 program fee for visiting students of \$14,200 includes tuition, housing, orientation, and in-country field trips including the 3 week Moka expedition as well as a Drexel University transcript. The program fee **does not** include meals, health and accident insurance books, personal property/travel insurance, and immunizations or travel to and from Equatorial Guinea. Check with your study abroad office to see if you can use your federal financial aid or other aid to help pay for the cost of this program. Please look at the budget portion of the program brochure (top of the page) for more information.

### Visas

US Citizens are not required to have a visa to enter Equatorial Guinea but non US citizens will have to obtain a visa. The consulate of Equatorial Guinea is located in Washington DC. You will work directly with Drexel's study abroad office as well as The National University of Equatorial Guinea in order to facilitate the visa issuing process. This process may take 6-8 weeks so students should act early.

### Immunizations

You should begin the immunization process well in advance (8 weeks or more) of your study abroad semester by contacting your primary care doctor. Your doctor can advise you on immunization centers in your area. Medical insurance often does not cover the costs of immunizations and prescription antimalarial drugs.

The best source of information on immunizations and appropriate prescription drugs for travel in Central Africa is the Website of the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Documentation of yellow fever immunization is required to enter many tropical countries, including Equatorial Guinea.

### Scholarships

#### Drexel Students

Because this is a Drexel sponsored program, all of your financial aid travels with you.

#### Visiting Students

You should be able to use your federal financial aid to help defray the costs of this program. Please fax all consortium agreements to the attention of Daniela Ascarelli, Director Drexel Study Abroad at the following fax number: 215-895-6184. Check with your study abroad office to see if you can use your home school financial aid to help pay for the cost of this program.

#### All Students

If you are interested in seeking additional funding please take a look at our PDF on \_Scholarship & Funding Opportunities. Remember that scholarship deadlines may be much earlier than study abroad deadlines, so plan accordingly.

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