

ECS Offerings for March 2009

The African Adventure: Life in Cameroon

Our return to Cameroon (our fourth ECS to Africa) will solidify our sister relationship with a small school in the town of Fango Tango. Students live and interact with families, students, and officials in a typical rural African village. Lessons include language, music, dance, and other cultural expressions of African life.

The Blues: Music, History, and Folk Culture of the American South

Arguably the most uniquely American of musical genres, the Blues traces its roots to the slave subculture of the Deep South. This ECS travels to Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana visiting the haunts of famous blues singers and meeting modern practitioners of the art. The trip ends with a return visit to New Orleans.

Evolutionary Biology: The Galapagos as a Classroom

Again we dispatch a class to the sites in which Charles Darwin developed his early understanding of how evolution works. The class travels to Quito, Ecuador by air, then takes a boat to the Islands, where they study the many endemic species that Darwin encountered.

Geology of the American West, Technologically Speaking

The broad, practical science of geology is explored using modern technological methods. Students are exposed to electron microprobes, polarizing microscopes, digitized analytical research tools, and GPS/modern cartographic tools to learn why the West looks the way it does. The course travels to Western Colorado, Utah, and Arizona.

Habitat: Homelessness in America

This course examines the causes and effects of homelessness in America through discussions with governmental and non-governmental social service providers and charitable organizations that deal with low-income housing. Students work in a soup kitchen, a shelter, and a Habitat project, if the weather allows. This seminar requires a mature attitude because of direct exposure to difficult human conditions.

Life and Death: The Beginning and the End of Life

With proper counseling resources, students research the difficulties of getting into and out of this world. The class visits all of the organizations that serve on both ends of our lives, including birthing centers and nurseries, police detectives, penitentiaries, and hospices. There is a philosophical, but not a religious, dimension to this course.

Spanish Homestays: Life in Cuernavaca

Spanish immersion language training flows from family homestays and schooling in this culturally connected Mexican town. Students spend part of each day in a language institute where teaching is all in Spanish. Side trips explore the history and culture of the region, and daily life with their Mexican families pushes students into Spanish usage in a gentle but compelling way.

Sports Physiology

This course explores what happens in the body when it is in exercise mode. Students learn about and monitor their physiology as they mountain bike, ski, and play sports. The course makes use of modern medical equipment in clinics and the Olympic Training Center to show students how to optimize their workout regimens for maximum performance.

The Writer's Gym

Perhaps the single most important skill a student can carry to college today is the ability to write clearly, concisely, and interestingly. Whether the student is interested in fiction, poetry, journalism, or perfecting the essay, this course offers intensive training that will take the student to the next level in writing. Local and regional professionals help with criticism and advice.

Note to Parents:

Priority for placement of students in ECSs next fall depends on several factors. These include:

- the student's year in school (seniors have priority over juniors, etc.)
- previous placements (1st place subtracts, 2nd or 3rd place adds)
- date of enrollment for the coming year, the earlier the better
- long-term demonstrated interest that might be career oriented
- ensuring reasonable gender ratios
- behavioral issues that could restrict access to some ECSs