TROPICAL BEHAVIORAL ECOLOGY
MAY 13-JUNE 10, 2019
CHIRIQUÍ, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA
CQ01
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT CONTACTS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMICS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC MATTERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTORING RESOURCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE DEPARTURE AND PROGRAM SPECIFICS</td>
<td>3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASSPORT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISA REQUIREMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLIGHT INFORMATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN TRANSIT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARRIVING IN PANAMA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL TRAVEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIMATE AND PACKING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONICS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAIL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELL PHONES AND COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPUTERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENCY AND BANKING</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPENSES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRENCY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANKING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INOCULATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALCOHOL AWARENESS AND ILLEGAL DRUGS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICIES AND SAFETY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFETY AND SECURITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIPS AND RESOURCES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE RESOURCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUGGESTED READING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE
A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. Box 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2420

PHONE 850.644.3272
1.800.374.8581
FAX 850.644.8817
850.645.4659
EMAIL IP-Info@fsu.edu
WEBSITE international.fsu.edu
HOURS 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. EST, Monday - Friday

FSU-PANAMA CAMPUS
Calle Jacinto Palacios, Building 227
Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge)
Clayton
Panama, Republic of Panama

PHONE (011) 507-317-0367
(011) 507-317-0366
FAX
WEBSITE http://panama.fsu.edu
HOURS 8:00A.M. to 5:00P.M., Monday - Friday

IMPORTANT FSU - PANAMA CONTACTS
Dr. Emily H. DuVal, Program Leader
Office (850) 644-2467
Panamanian Cell To be determined – information will be given to students at the pre-departure orientation
Email ehdual@bio.fsu.edu
ehduval@gmail.com

Dr. Kevin Dixon, Program Faculty Member
Office (850) 645-8813
Email dixon@bio.fsu.edu

Dr. Carlos Langoni, Resident Director, FSU Panama
Phone (011) 507-317-0367, ext 228
Cell (011) 507-6674-2545
Email clangoni@fsu.edu

Maria Elena Puerta, Inter. Programs/Housing Coordinator
Phone (011) 507-317-0367, ext 224
Cell (011) 507-6676-4296
Email mpuerta@fsu.edu

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergency Services 911
Ambulance (011) 507-236-5050
Code: 13417
Police (011) 507-317-9290/104
Fire Department of Balboa (011) 507-228-2837
Fire Department of Clayton (011) 507-512-6152
(Central Dispatcher 103)
Red Cross Emergency *455

U.S. EMBASSY AND CONSULATE - PANAMA
Building 783
Calle Basilio Lakas
Clayton, Panama
Republic of Panama

PHONE 507-317-5303
AFTER HOURS/EMERGENCIES 507-317-5000
WEBSITE http://panama.usembassy.gov/

INTERNATIONAL CALLS
Making international calls from the U.S. to Panama: First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “507” (the country code), then the location number. If you call Panama campus staff or emergency contacts, drop the “011-507.”

Time Differences: Panama time is the same as Miami and Tallahassee except when the States are on Daylight Saving Time. Panama does not observe Daylight Saving Time, thus they will be one hour behind during our Daylight Saving Time.
ACADEMIC MATTERS
This program is first and foremost an academic one, so you should be prepared to invest as much time, effort and thought into your coursework as you do on your home campus. Since classes are small, you will have more interaction with your fellow students and with faculty than you have on main campus. There will be a greater emphasis on participation in class discussions. This means you must be prepared to maintain a high level of performance by being an active and committed participant in your class.

FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD
FSU students are encouraged to get involved with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society and the Global Citizenship Certificate program. These two resources provide special recognition as global-ready graduates.

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society program facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of Leadership, Internship, Service, International, and Research. A student who has met the criteria in three of the five areas is eligible for consideration. All study abroad programs organized through the International Programs Office qualify for the international experience portion of the International Area. Visit http://garnetandgoldscholar.fsu.edu/ or email GarnetandGoldProgram@fsu.edu to learn more.

The Global Citizenship Certificate program helps undergraduate students develop invaluable cross-cultural skills and global competencies needed to be a global-ready graduate. Students who enroll in the certificate take 2 required courses, Global Perspectives and Global Citizenship, and 2 electives. Both required courses count toward FSU Liberal Studies X, E-series, and writing requirements. In addition, students participate in 8 intercultural events on campus and a sustained international experience abroad, which you are about to complete! Enroll in the Global Citizenship Certificate before you study abroad to ensure your experience counts toward the certificate. Visit cge.fsu.edu/globalcitizen or contact an advisor at globalcitizen@fsu.edu to learn more.

TUTORING RESOURCES
There are a number of tutoring resources available at Florida State University to assist you academically, both in Tallahassee and abroad. Online tutors are available through the following programs:

- **Reading & Writing Center (RWC)**
  [http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online](http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online)

- **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**
  [http://ace.fsu.edu/](http://ace.fsu.edu/)
  ACE provides free tutoring in many subject areas, including accounting, biology, chemistry, economics, math, statistics, and physics.

- **University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services**
  [https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning](https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning)

STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (SDRC)
SDRC provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities and accommodations vary in nature, and though the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 do not apply extraterritorially, we do our best to accommodate our students. If you anticipate needing to request accommodations for a documented disability, please **schedule an appointment with the SDRC** by calling 850-644-9566 (Voice) or 850-644-8504 (TDD) and provide appropriate information on your Special Needs form. For more information, visit [http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc](http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc).
VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Because your summer program is under 90 days: you are NOT required to obtain a visa. However, please review the following passport and flight restrictions:

- **Passport:** You must hold a U.S passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your return.

- **Flight/ Immigration Restrictions:** Due to airline restrictions, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NON U.S. CITIZENS AND U.S. CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD:

If you are a non-U.S. citizen or U.S. citizen living abroad, contact an International Programs’ Immigration Specialist at IP-Visas@fsu.edu. You may be required to apply for a visa on your own or you may have additional visa requirements and expenses.

All visa information is correct at the time of publication, but terms, fees, and guidelines are subject to change without notice.
BEFORE DEPARTURE & PROGRAM SPECIFICS

FLIGHT INFORMATION
There is no group flight for this program and your Program Fee does not include airfare. **Traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed due to airline restrictions. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.**

You should make arrangements to arrive in Panama City on the start date of your program, **May 13, 2019** and depart Panama City no earlier than the end date of your program, **June 10, 2019**. All orientation/welcome activities that take place upon arrival are mandatory.

Program Leader, Dr. Emily DuVal, will already be in Panama when you arrive. She and faculty member Dr. Kevin Dixon will arrange airport pick-up times with the FSU Panama staff based on student arrival information. **Therefore, it is crucial that as soon as you purchase your airfare that you send it via email to IP-Info@fsu.edu.**

**Note:** We advise against the Spirit Airlines flight(s) that arrive in Panama City late night or early morning. These flights may be cheap, but it is not the safest time to arrive in Panama and you would incur additional costs for taxis to and from the airport. If, however, you choose to disregard our advice and take a flight arriving late at night/early morning, you must advise the FSU-IP Office of this (in addition to submitting your travel itinerary).

Your housing will not be available until the official check-in day of the program, **May 13**. If you arrive earlier, you will need to look for accommodations in town for the extra nights.

You must check out of program housing on the morning of the last day of your program, **June 10**. You will be responsible for getting yourself to the airport in time for your departure. After your official check out date of the program, you will need to book other accommodations if you are extending your stay.

Once you have completed your travel arrangements, you must email your flight arrangements to the IP Office (IP-Info@fsu.edu). Your flight arrangements will be provided to the program staff and it is very important that they receive this information in order to monitor student arrivals.

You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance when booking your flight. Travel insurance typically covers flight cancellation fees, lost luggage or other losses incurred while traveling, etc. Speak with your airline for more information.

If your flight is canceled, delayed, or you miss a connection on your way to your study abroad location, contact the International Programs staff via email or phone.

IN TRANSIT
- **Domestic flights.** In general, arrive at the airport ticket counter **two hours** before your departure time. Check with your specific airline to find out the recommended pre-flight allowance.
- **International flights.** Arrive at the airport ticket counter **three hours** before your departure time.
- **Keep your boarding pass.** Some airlines require it for baggage claim. Also, it will help if your luggage gets lost.
- Have your **passport** accessible.
- **During your flight,** drink lots of water and get up and walk during your flight. Try to sleep; it will help you combat jet lag. Wear layers as the temperature on the plane and in airports may vary.

ARRIVING IN PANAMA
When filling out your landing card, your address will be the address of the Florida State University Panama Study Center – Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge) in Clayton listed in the Contact Information section of this packet. Have your luggage checked all the way to Panama City. When you land in Panama, you will go through Immigration before you receive your checked baggage, and will need to show your passport and plane ticket. **Have your passport readily available—not packed in your checked luggage.**

If you miss the group pick-ups, we recommend you do the following:
As you exit the Panama Customs area on the ground floor of the airport terminal with your baggage, walk towards a small kiosk located inside the terminal area and located in between the automatic sliding exit doors called “Autoridad de Turismo Panama” (Panama Tourism Authority). Tell the agent (in English or Spanish) you need to take a taxi to go to Florida State University located in the City of Knowledge (Ciudad del Saber) building 227 in Clayton.

The agent will ask you a few questions to better serve you and direct you to a waiting taxi outside the doors behind the kiosk. The taxi fare for transporting you to CLAYTON should be between $30.00 and $40.00. **ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI!** The taxis in Panama are small and only two people per taxi are recommended when there is luggage.

Although there are plenty of taxis waiting outside to take passengers, there is better control over the taxis that the Autoridad de Turismo recommends. So, we recommend that you do not just jump in any taxi you see. When you reach the City of Knowledge, request to be taken to the location indicated in the email from International Programs.
BEFORE DEPARTURE & PROGRAM SPECIFICS

Recommended cab companies:

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<tr>
<th>Cab Company</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America Libre</td>
<td>800-8294 224-0122/221-1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Nacional</td>
<td>224-1132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Concordia</td>
<td>236-7848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton Taxi</td>
<td>317-0386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Taxi</td>
<td>264-8569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Taxi Panamá</td>
<td>224-4390</td>
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HOUSING
At the beginning of the program, students will be housed Panama City in the dormitory buildings in the City of Knowledge from May 13 to May 16 for welcome and orientation activities. Then, students and instructors will travel to Isla Boca Brava, Chiriquí, where they will be housed and conduct fieldwork until May 31. Students will then travel to the Los Quetzales Lodge until June 3. On June 6, students and instructors will return to Panama City for the remainder of the program until it comes to a conclusion on June 10.

If you have any special needs, please advise us accordingly by submitting your Housing Preference form and your Special Needs form.

Rooming assignments and locations will be made based on a combination of factors such as type of program, housing preference, and special needs as indicated in the information you provide International Programs. Roommate assignments are made by our staff and cannot be changed.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the Housing Rules & Regulations. Violation of any of the housing policies is grounds for dismissal. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the housing rules and regulations for your specific program. Refer to the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement and the Housing Terms and Conditions for details. You are required to sign the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

We cannot guarantee that each residence will have the exact same amenities. Each student housing facility has safety and security measures. They may vary by location.

TRANSPORTATION
The safest and ultimately cheapest way to travel in Panama City is by cabs, which are readily available. The fare from FSU-Panama to the heart of downtown Panama City should be no more than $7-$10 (one-way). A tip is not necessary.

ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI!

Travel outside Panama City requires plane, bus, or car. Most in-country flights depart from Albrook Airport, located only two miles from the FSU-Panama campus. Express buses leave from downtown Panama City to all parts of Panama frequently every day. The Bus Terminal is only a 10-minute car ride away from the FSU Panama Campus.

Riding the local buses is also a great cultural experience and a very economical way of going places. The new bus system (Metrobus) requires the use of a card which can be purchased at most supermarkets. One of the Metrobus lines goes through Morse Street, only a block away from the dormitory complex, and takes you to the bus terminal at Albrook where you can connect to other areas of Panama either by bus or by the subway. A bus ride currently costs 25¢. Routes that connect to the suburban areas of Panama City cost $1.25. We suggest you start riding the city buses only when you are familiar with the different places and have a better sense of the distances. Avoid riding the bus at night unless you know exactly where you are going and you are certain about the bus routes.

In addition, City of Knowledge has a free internal shuttle system which provides free transportation service within the City of Knowledge from 7:00 a.m. thru 6:15 p.m.

While in the field on Isla Boca Brava, all transportation arrangements to and from activities will be provided for students.
PERSONAL TRAVEL
Due to the intensive academic nature of this program, as well as the location while on site in Isla Boca Brava, personal travel is not permitted during this program. If you wish to travel around the country of Panama, or to other locations in Central America, please plan to do so either before the official start date of the program, or after the official end date of the program. If you have questions, think alternative arrangements may need to be made, or have a special scenario that you would like to discuss, please contact the Program Leader.

CLIMATE & PACKING
All airlines have different policies regarding the number, size, and weight of bags allowed on domestic and international flights. Fees for having too many bags or exceeding size and weight limits are steep, and also vary by airline. It is important that you determine the restriction on your particular airline before you pack. Please be aware that you will be responsible for carrying your own bags, packs, etc. Restrictions regarding carry-on baggage are different for each airline and sometimes vary depending on your originating, transferring and/or terminating airport. Also, requirements change based on current events. It is imperative that you check your specific requirements just prior to your departure and plan accordingly. Use the IP luggage tag you received to ensure your bag is marked in capital letters with your name, address, and final destination both on the inside and on the outside of the bag. It is recommended that you pack 1 or 2 outfits in your carry-on in case of flight delays/cancellations or lost luggage.

Panama City is warm, averaging around 80 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit in the day and cooling down in the evenings. The “dry season”, usually between December-April, brings little rain. Tropical rains are common the remainder of the year. So be prepared be occasionally caught in the rain. We recommend carrying an umbrella or poncho with you in the field, that can cover not only you but also your backpack. Pack accordingly—and conservatively. As one student said, “Pack half the clothing you think you will need...” Temperatures will be chilly in the highlands, so bring a few layers (i.e. a fleece jacket) for that portion of our trip. Buildings in Panama City tend to have really cold air-conditioning, but we will be outside for as much time as possible.

For updates on weather conditions, visit https://www.accuweather.com/en/world-weather.

PLAN TO BRING TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS WITH YOU. YOU WILL RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE WHEN IT IS TIME TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES WITH DETAILS ABOUT TEXTBOOKS. AS A REMINDER, TEXTBOOKS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM FEE AND WILL MOST LIKELY NEED TO BE PURCHASED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. FORMER STUDENTS HAVE USED WEBSITES SUCH AS CHEGG.COM TO RENT TEXTBOOKS FOR THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAM AT A LOW COST. WE RECOMMEND RESEARCHING WAYS TO ACCESS A TEXTBOOK AS AN EBK (ELECTRONIC BOOK) THROUGH THE FSU BOOKSTORE, CHEGG, AMAZON, OR OTHER ONLINE SITES. KEEP IN MIND THAT NOT ALL TEXTBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AS EBOOKS. IF YOU WISH TO SHIP TEXTBOOKS OR OTHER COURSE MATERIALS TO YOUR STUDY ABROAD LOCATION, REFER TO THE MAIL SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT AND CONTACT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

You should not bring any valuable or sentimental items such as jewelry, expensive watches, expensive cameras, or keepsake items you would regret losing. You also don’t want to bring any electrical appliances such as hair dryers, heaters, etc. The electricity in many countries is twice as powerful as in the U.S. and will cause those items to burn out.

MATERIALS TO PACK
It is highly recommended that you bring no more than one bag of personal belongings and one additional day pack that is appropriate for use in the field (i.e. of a size that would qualify as a “personal item” on an airplane).

REQUIRED TO PACK
- **Snake Gaiters** (we recommend the Whitewater brand, now called ScentBlocker) the cheapest price I’ve found is from this website ($49.50): https://www.forestry-suppliers.com/product_pages/products.php?mi=42241&itemnum=23003&title=ScentBlocker%C2%AE%20SnakeGaiters  The Forestry Suppliers company also often has coupons for free shipping or better on RetailMeNot.com. We will wear these whenever hiking off-trail. You may use tall rubber boots as an alternative to the snake gaiters but they are heavy and bulky to pack.
- **A sturdy backpack/day pack** that can carry a clipboard, 3 liters of water, and snacks. For example, Dr. DuVal uses an old North Face Borealis daypack that’s about the right size (according to the web, it’s 19x13x8”)
- **A money belt** to safely carry your passport, credit cards, etc. An example: https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-N-Clark-RFID-Blocking-Anti-Theft/dp/B0088LONB0/ref=sr_1_3?&ie=UTF8&qid=1485296094&sr=1-3&nodeID=7141123011&keywords=money+belt&refinements=p_n_feature_eighteen_browse-bin%3A14630392011
- **Avoid bright clothes** (yellow, red, neon colors, etc) for times when we’re supposed to be unobtrusive in the field. The animals can spot us no matter what: we just don’t want to make things any worse.
- **Sturdy hiking boots** with ankle support, as well as sandals for wearing around living areas.
• **Travel-sized umbrella**: something that will fit in your backpack and be useful in sudden downpours

• **A hat** with a brim wide enough to protect your face and neck (the tropical sun is very strong)

• **Long pants that are not jeans** (we will hike off trail through lots of areas with spines and sawgrass; jeans are terribly uncomfortable when you’re very sweaty, and we will be very sweaty)

• **Digital watch**

• **A reliable flashlight** and/or headlamp

• **Binoculars** – we will check out a pair of binoculars to you before you depart for the course, and you will return them to us on the FSU campus at the end. Please wrap these carefully in clothes and/or bubble wrap to protect them in transit.

• **Bathing suit** and **towel** for snorkeling trips. Microfiber/quick dry towels work quite well in the tropics, but a small normal towel will suffice. Other linens are not needed.

• **A water bottle** or hydration bladder (Dr. DuVal recommends Platypus) for hikes.

**SUGGESTED PERSONAL EQUIPMENT TO PACK**

• Raincoat/poncho—Dr. DuVal prefers just using an umbrella, but bring what you’d like!

• Your favorite insect repellent (you can’t bring aerosols on the airplane, so plan to purchase this in Panama City if necessary or pack a pump-style spray)

• High-SPF, sport (waterproof) sunscreen

• Long pants for town (Panamanians are snappy dressers, and shorts are frowned upon as far too casual in most restaurants, banks, etc.)

• Bring a full supply of all prescription and other medications you need.

• Any required/desired hygiene products (note: there will be no easy access to stores for much of the course, and stores in most rural areas do not stock tampons – bring what you will need)

• A compass with mirror

• A camera and adequate memory to store lots of pictures.

• Ziploc bags – useful for storing specimens and also for storing extra clothes to keep them dry.

• A notebook (bound or ring), some loose leaf paper, pens and pencils, a small calculator, a thumb drive, Portable entertainment (novels, cards, electronic, etc.)

• Dry bags with rechargeable silica gel if you plan to bring cameras, computers, or other humidity-sensitive items. ([An example of silica gel](https://www.amazon.com/Packets-Dry-Premium-Desiccant-Rechargeable/dp/B00J0J5ZFW/ref=sr_1_7_ccp_nc?ie=UTF8&gid=1547672325&sr=8-7&keywords=silica+gel+reusable) can be seen here: https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_nr_n_4?fst=as%3Aoff&rh=n%3A10208136011%2Ck%3Adry+bag+waterproof&keywords=dry+bag+waterproof&ie=UTF8&gid=1485296451&rnid=2941120011)

• Light weight cotton clothing or quick dry synthetic fabrics are best for the field. Long pants should be worn in the forest. Many people wear a light weight long-sleeved shirt over a t-shirt for protection against insects and/or sun. Laundry will be done but there may be gaps so be prepared to hand-wash essentials. Good places to purchase quick dry clothes include REI or Sierra Trading Post (online) or Bass Pro Shops (locally) or a sporting goods store (look for sales). You do not need to invest in a full high-tech hiking wardrobe, but a few quick-dry items will make life more comfortable.

Reference the **International Programs packing list** for more packing tips!
MAIL
Given the nature of this program being based in fieldwork, this is no practical way for students to receive mail during the program. Please discourage family members and friends from planning to send any mail or packages.

CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION
Staying connected to your family and friends while you are abroad is extremely important. Establish a communications plan prior to departure. Whether it’s setting up a Skype meeting every Sunday night, sending them messages over WhatsApp, or checking-in with them on social media, make sure you keep in touch!

Though it is not mandatory to use your cell phone abroad, consider one of the following options. Do your research to see which option is the best fit for you:

Add an international plan through your current service provider. This tends to be the most expensive option. Talk to your service provider for details. Each provider offers varying international plans. Keep in mind that if you have a US number, it can be very expensive for your classmates and instructors to call you if they have a Panama number.

Purchase a sim card in-country for your current phone. You will need to unlock your phone and make sure your phone is GSM-capable before departure. You can buy a prepaid Italy SIM plan, either for phone calls only or for calls and data.

Purchase an inexpensive phone with a local plan in-country and pay for more minutes/data as needed. Local stores will sign you up with the carrier who is offering the best rates available at the time of your purchase.

We strongly suggest that you do not buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone in the U.S. to take to Panama. Students who have done this in the past have frequently found the phones do not work. It is far cheaper and more efficient to buy the pay-as-you-go phone in Panama.

Use Wi-Fi while the phone is in airplane mode. Make sure to turn off roaming before you leave, just in case. Otherwise you might end up with a very large phone bill when you return to the U.S. Apps you can easily use while connected to Wi-Fi include Skype, FaceTime, Viber, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel abroad so you will be able to activate the account.

We generally recommend that students do not plan to use their U.S. cell phones in Panama. You can also buy cell phones in Panama at very low prices, approximately $40.00.

COMPUTERS
The housing in Panama City, Isla Boca Brava, and Los Quetzales will all provide free access to Wi-Fi. You are free to bring a laptop computer with you, but please think carefully about doing so. Balance the risk of breakage, damage from humidity, or theft against the convenience of having it with you. It is not uncommon for laptop computers to be stolen or broken while abroad, so please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk. Note that our plan includes a full-day hike between two towns, during which our luggage will be carried to our destination by truck. If you bring a laptop, you will have to decide whether to send it with the luggage (possibly risky) or carry it with you (which would be heavy and also risky as we may be caught in the rain, will be crossing rivers, etc.).

If you want to bring your laptop, we recommend doing the following:

- Bring a surge protector to plug into, as electricity surges are common. Voltage in Panama in theory is the same as the US, but in practice the fluctuations are much more extreme.
- Please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk. Check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that it is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you may want to check into laptop insurance through http://www.safeware.com/, a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.
- Do NOT pack your laptop or laptop charger in your checked luggage.
EXPENSES
While the program is in Panama City, or during travel days, students should budget approximately $25 per day for expense. There will be a total of nine days either spent travelling or spent in Panama City. While in Boquete, basic expenses will be another $25-100 if taking part in optional recreational activity options, with cost determined by the activities chosen. While staying at the fieldwork site on Isla Boca Brava or while at Los Quetzales, all basic expenses will be covered by the program fee. However, students may wish to budget additional funds if they choose to purchase additional snacks, drinks, souvenirs, etc.

CURRENCY
Panama’s medium of exchange is the U.S. dollar. Know that bills larger than $20 are rarely accepted (carry lots of singles and fives, though most stores can break a $20 bill).

BANKING
We recommend you set up online banking for your bank accounts prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account while overseas. The easiest way to access money abroad is with an ATM card. You can use a Debit Card at any ATM to withdraw cash whenever you need it though there will often be a withdrawal fee.

Bring or have access to at least one credit card in the event of an emergency. If you need to visit a doctor or hospital, you will likely have to pay prior to the service, and then submit an insurance claim afterward. Credit cards are also useful for everyday purchases and offer excellent exchange rates.

For those who receive financial aid, ensure that any student loans you have requested will be available for disbursement during the term you are abroad. Disbursement usually occurs after students have left the U.S., so make arrangements for your check to be deposited, if that is your chosen method of disbursement.
HEALTH

FOOD AND WATER REMINDERS
It is important to be aware of the food and drink that you consume while you are in Panama. In general, in tropical countries you should be wary of tap water. However, the tap water in Panama is perfectly safe to consume. If you prefer it, you may wish to make the choice to drink bottled water. It is a good idea to bring medication for an upset stomach, such as Imodium, Tums, or Pepto Bismol, in case any food or water brings mild stomach discomfort while abroad. Tap water in the town of Boquete is NOT safe to drink. Plan to drink bottled water during that short portion of the trip.

IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS
Florida State University requires certain immunizations prior to your registration for classes. All newly admitted degree-seeking students (freshman and transfer) and non-FSU students must complete the required Student Immunization Form. The form must be mailed or faxed directly to Florida State University Health Services, Health Compliance Office, 960 Learning Way, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4178, fax (850) 644-8958.

In addition to a tetanus booster (tetanus booster would be needed only if you have not had the vaccine in the last 10 years), we recommend Hepatitis A and B and Typhoid vaccinations (at least six weeks prior to departure) to protect against viral infections. Malaria prophylaxis is only required for those students that plan to travel to the Caribbean coast after the program ends. In addition, Panama is a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. Although the yellow fever shot is not necessary for your entrance to the country you may wish to discuss getting it with your local doctor, especially if you are planning on visiting other Latin American countries that do require the vaccine or in the event that you will be traveling outside the urban area of Panama. You will need to bring your International Certificate of Vaccination to Panama. The Health and Wellness Center provides consultations and immunizations through their travel clinic. To make an appointment, phone 644-4567 or view their website: http://www.tshc.fsu.edu/.

It is very important that you make yourself aware of specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Additional information is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site: www.cdc.gov/travel/. Please note that some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past location(s) the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure previous travel has not triggered additional requirements.

- A tetanus booster shot is suggested if you have not had one within the past 10 years.
- Specify every health concern you have on your medical self-report form.

- We highly recommend that you bring sufficient quantities of your medication with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor and be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available or legal elsewhere. In particular, Adderall and Concerta are not available in all countries. Don’t postpone discussing your medication needs with your doctor. After discussing medications with your doctor, students will need to work with their insurance company to cover the vacation prescription. Students who experience difficulty in obtaining a vacation prescription should seek assistance from our office.

- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair and/or the prescription.

- Complete routine medical and dental care before you leave.

The CISI insurance provided is included in your program fee and the policy is available on our website: http://international.fsu.edu/Documents/HealthSafety/CISIInsurancePolicy.pdf. You will want to familiarize yourself with the coverage details.

Although the insurance plan works on the basis of claims, whereby you need to pay first and then fill out the form to receive reimbursement, our Panama City, Panama campus has an agreement with a Panama City first-class hospital (Hospital Nacional—www.hospitalnacional.com) that will receive IP students in case of a medical emergency without requesting a deposit or credit card. Additionally, the campus is covered by a 24-hour ambulance service.

While in the field in Chiriquí Province, payment prior to health services may be required. Students requiring hospital care will be taken to the Hospital Chiriquí but ambulance services are greatly limited in rural Panama. Therefore, transport may occur by boat or car and transport times will be considerably slower than in the U.S.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Panama is 18. This means that you will likely have the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol legally. It is in your interest to recognize that this right carries a great deal of responsibility. FSU Panama has a strict code of conduct relating to the use of alcohol, violations of which will likely result in a judicial hearing with the possible sanction of being dismissed from the program. In short, know your limits and drink within moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in FSU study abroad programs. Violation of this
policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program and disciplinary action onsite or upon return to campus. International Programs’ policies follow either the U.S. law or local law, whichever is more stringent with regard to drug use. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim’s rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code at: http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/.
RULES, POLICIES & PROCEDURES
Florida State degree-seeking, transient, and special students are bound by the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the FSU General Bulletin and Student Handbook. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these before you leave. You may locate the FSU General Bulletin online at http://registrar.fsu.edu/ and The Code of Student Conduct at https://dos.fsu.edu/srr/conduct-codes/student-conduct-codes. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities updates any changes to the Code of Student Conduct.

SAFETY & SECURITY
Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students apprised of any new information. For more information on IP's security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at 850.644.7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

- **Resources.** Even though students are not on the main campus, they have access to many resources should they encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support students in a variety of ways, including connecting students with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.
  - **Victim Advocate Program.** The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu.
  - **University Counseling Center.** The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit https://counseling.fsu.edu/ for more information.
  - **Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness.** The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages students to make healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to life-long health and wellness. For more information, visit http://chaw.fsu.edu/.

- **The U.S. State Department** maintains a web site of information for Americans studying abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: http://studentsabroad.state.gov/.

- **The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: https://step.state.gov/step/.

- **Waivers.** All IP participants will be given a Waiver of Liability via email. It must be signed and submitted to IP.

- Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

- Always carry a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport with you. Keep another copy in your room separate from your passport. Leave one copy at home in the U.S. with your family or a relative.

- Use the buddy system—try to travel with friends as much as possible and always tell your roommates or friends where you are going and when you expect to return. Bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.

- **Valuables.** Students should not take sentimental valuables on their program. Students should not leave cash, passports, or other items of value unattended in their rooms. If a locker or safe is provided, students are strongly encouraged to use it to store anything of value at all times. Students should plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in their rooms. Students are responsible for ensuring their rooms are left secure at all times – do not prop open doors, do not leave doors and windows unlocked, do not give keys to anyone. If students notice others in the building leaving the main entrance door unsecured, they should notify the IP staff immediately, even if there are others living in the building who are not FSU program participants. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance that will cover their belongings while abroad, whether a standard homeowners or renters policy. The International Programs insurance policy does not cover loss or theft of participants’ possessions.

- **Pickpocketing.** In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. While traveling in some areas beware of beggars who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or excessive body movements. Coats and purses are often stolen in crowded areas. Keep them close to you and lock your pack zippers with a combo lock. Secure your valuables if you are traveling on an overnight (“sleeper”) train.

- **Weapons.** Students are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Furthermore, mace and/or pepper spray may be illegal in the countries that you visit. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.

- **Safety in the Field.** In general, you will be safe at your fieldwork site in Isla Boca Brava. Please pay attention to and adhere to all regulations given to you by your instructors and other persons working with us. Avoid behaving recklessly while on boats and obey the instructions of the boat operators with regard to where you sit, wearing life jackets, etc. Swim only in areas that you are told are safe. An extensive list of potential hazards was distributed before course enrollment. This list is based on 20 years of field experience at the site, and each of the listed hazards is a real and possible danger. Review this list and ask Dr. DuVal if you have any questions.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search.

http://www.tripadvisor.com (online travel guide)
http://www.letsgo.com/ (on-line travel guide, check out the “HotLinks” button)
http://cnn.com/WEATHER/ (daily weather forecasts)
https://www.roughguides.com/ (travel guide)
https://nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Google Translate (instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages)
Dark Sky (With down-to-the-minute forecasts, you’ll know exactly when the rain will start or stop, right where you’re standing)
Mobile Passport (authorized by U.S. Government to get through customs upon your return to the U.S. Allows you to use the dedicated mobile passport line in 21 participating airports).

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

Connect with International Programs on social media
International Programs Facebook
International Programs Twitter
International Programs Instagram

TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
• “I wish I had brought a smaller notebook that was more weather resistant than mine. I did bring snacks for the trip and I think it was a good idea because they lasted me awhile and it was good to have especially when we were hiking. The only other thing was I wish I had brought more cash, I brought $250 and was out by the end”
• “I really appreciated being able to live in conditions other than what I am usually used to – considering the vast majority of people live the way we did on Isla Boca Brava (limited resources, electricity, hot water, etc.) and it really helped me open my eyes to the opportunities I have that I may have taken for granted before.”
• “Since we were such a small group it allowed me to discuss topics and ask for help without feeling rushed for time. Outside of our class time, I loved that I could mingle with my own classmates and people who lived in Panama. It helped me see how Panamanians live and interact, which was very different from the U.S.”
• “I was actually amazed by how much more I learned on that one month of school than on other classes.”
• “I think I learned more Spanish on this trip than in an entire semester of Spanish on campus!”
• “The amount of schoolwork was not very evenly distributed and seemed to pile up.” [instructor note: we’ve worked to address this, but be aware and ready to ramp it up as your projects finish and you have to prepare presentations!]
• “Finding scientific literature on my phone was very difficult.”
• “Field proof notebooks and pens made life so much easier.”
• “I learned the most when we were out in the field, it was awesome being able to connect the concept with a living example right in front of us. I also feel much more confident in research after this course.”

Last updated 2/2019
EXPLORING THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

ATTRACTIONS

- Panama Canal / Panama Viejo
- Casco Viejo / Ancon Hill
- Biomuseo
- Sabores del Chorrillo
- Taboga Island
- Contadora Island
- Embera Village

Metropolitan Natural Park
Amador Causeway
Avenida Balboa – Cinta
Costera 2 and 3
The Fish Market
Albrook Mall
FOODS TO TRY
- Empanada
- Piñones Fritos
- Ceviche
- Ropa Vieja
- Tres Leches
- Sancocho

BASIC SPANISH
- Hello: Hola (OH-lah)
- Goodbye: Adiós (ah-dee-OHS)
- Please: Por favor (POUR fah-VOUR)
- Thank you: Gracias (GRAH-syahs)
- You’re welcome: De nada (DAY NAY-dah)
- Pardon me: Perdón (PEHR-dohn)
- English: Inglés (een-GLAY-sas)
- Yes: Sí (see)
- No: No (noh)

QUICK TIPS
1. Time is perceived with fluidity. Panamanians may show up an hour or two late to a dinner party. Lunch and dinner can extend for hours.

5. Waitstaff, taxi drivers, tour guides, and bartenders will appreciate tips of 10%. Baggage handlers value $1 per bag.