

# Costa Rica: Field Research in Tropical Ecosystems

## Summer 2024

Visit <http://meredith.edu/oip> for Study Abroad 101, Study Abroad Advising, and Funding Workshops.

### Application Deadline

Early Decision program applications accepted until **December 1, 2023**. Apply early decision for study abroad or study abroad *and* scholarships and receive a decision by mid-January 2024. Regular Decision program applications accepted until **February 15, 2024**. Click "[Apply to Study Abroad](#)" to begin your application.

### Dates

May 12 - 26, 2024

### Location

Participate in hands-on workshops on wildlife monitoring and field techniques at Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Preserve, Pacuare Nature Reserve, and Veragua Rainforest.

### Student Voices

*"Studying abroad in Costa Rica is an extraordinary opportunity that allowed me to apply my knowledge of environmental science to the real world. My adventures abroad brought me closer to my learning and closer to the lifelong friends I made while in Costa Rica. I would encourage everyone at Meredith to Study Abroad!"*-  
Ashton-Bret Rusthoven, Summer 2022

### Courses: 6 credits required

**BIO 215: Tropical Ecosystems** (4 credits, required)

Fulfills Global Perspectives, Natural Science Elective, Cultural Elective

An interdisciplinary field biology course with focus on tropical ecosystems, natural history, and conservation. The ecological complexity of the tropics, the patterns of species diversity and the types of species interactions that characterize these systems are discussed, as well as how these ecological processes are affected by human activities. The approach is experiential, with emphasis on developing scientific skills of observation, analysis, and critical thinking, and applying them to field research.

**BIO 499: Field Research in Costa Rica** (2 credits, required)

Fulfills Information Literacy, Oral Communication, and Experiential Learning

A research and seminar course in which students conduct original laboratory, field, or library-based research. Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of research, analytical, analysis, and communication skills that are used in biological research. Students will be required to present their research orally and in written form.

## Faculty

**Co-Director: Dr. Carolina Perez-Heydrich**, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences and Director of Undergraduate Research, [cperezheydrich@meredith.edu](mailto:cperezheydrich@meredith.edu)

**Co-Director: Dr. Maria Pickering-Villa**, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, [mpickering@meredith.edu](mailto:mpickering@meredith.edu)

## Program Overview

Costa Rica boasts one of the richest diversities of flora and fauna in the world! This course involves two weeks of study in cloud, coastal, and wet forests, and experiencing “pura vida,” the pure life that makes up the culture of Costa Rica. This program partners with the Tropical Science Center, a local organization focused on conservation, research, and education in Costa Rica, to provide students with a “Mountains-to-Sea” experience that explores the cloud forest, lowland rainforest, and Caribbean Sea through the lens of local biodiversity experts. Throughout the program, students will engage in academic activities that range from hiking rugged trails to listening to lectures on biodiversity and conservation, and participate in hands-on workshops on wildlife monitoring and field techniques led by local scientists.

This Costa Rican adventure begins in the mountains at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. The group will spend several days experiencing biodiversity of the region through nature walks with local experts in the cloud forest and surrounding areas, as well as connecting with community efforts to farm sustainably and restore habitats. The group will then travel down into the lowland rainforest of Veragua. Here we will get hands-on experience with field techniques that involve the monitoring of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and insects for conservation research. Following Veragua, the group will travel to Pacuare Reserve along the Caribbean coast, and spend the next few nights working with field researchers on a sea turtle census project.

## Cost

### **\$3,700 includes:**

- \$100 non-refundable application deposit
- Tuition for 6 credits
- Housing and most meals at all field stations
- Academic excursions & program activities

### **Additional expenses include:**

- Round-trip airfare estimate – \$1,500
- Passport (if needed) – \$165
- International health insurance – \$55
- International cell phone plan – \$50
- Personal spending money – \$200-400

**Note:** Estimates are based on previous student reports. Your spending habits may differ.

## Scholarships and Financial Aid

Additional study abroad funding is available. Register for a Funding Workshop and access the scholarship application at <http://meredith.edu/oip>. **Early Decision scholarship deadline: December 1, 2023 (with study abroad application).** **Regular Decision scholarship deadline: February 15, 2024.**

## COVID-19 Protocols

The Office of International Programs strongly recommends all program participants arrive vaccinated against COVID-19 and up to date with all recommended boosters. The OIP will continue to implement ongoing COVID-19 mitigation and response measures in faculty-led study abroad programs.

*Meredith College Office of International Programs reserves the right to make changes to the program itinerary, program capacity limits, schedule, cost, academic program, etc., as necessary.*