

Spend Spring Break on a Caribbean Island

Coastal Biology

A field and lecture course

Field trip 7 – 14 Mar 09



- visit coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves
- conduct field research on tropical marine ecosystems
- study, learn and relax on a tropical island
- Curacao is a beautiful, tropical island in the southern Caribbean.



Biol 482 is a combination lecture and intensive field course designed to introduce participants to the Caribbean coral reef biome and other near-shore environments such as rocky shores, mangroves and seagrass beds. Students will learn through theoretical and practical exercises how environmental and biological factors interact to sustain near-shore ecosystems. We will discover and describe the amazing diversity of coral reef, seagrass and mangrove systems, explore the physiological and behavioral adaptations that enable organisms to live in these environments and deduce the basic ecological principles that underlie the function of near-shore ecosystems. Students may choose to focus on current issues in marine conservation science as part of their class projects. Topics may include but are not limited to connectivity among marine populations, metapopulations-dynamics, adaptation to climate change, and conservation genetics.



A field trip during spring break will take us to the beautiful island of Curacao, part of the Netherland Antilles in the southern Caribbean. Healthy coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds are easily accessible from shore and we will study them by snorkeling (students may SCUBA dive in their free time). The colonial past and economic realities in Curacao provide an instructive backdrop to understand the complexity of marine conservation issues today. This course requires strong participation and thus is most suited for highly motivated students.



