



FrontiersAbroad

EARTH + ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMMES

Engaging with Aotearoa

Course brief

Aotearoa (New Zealand) culture is rooted in a love for the outdoors, a concern for the environment, and a village-like infrastructure where personal responsibility is coupled with social accountability, as epitomised by the 'Team of 5 million people' referred to by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in her response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an interdisciplinary course that seeks to peel back the layers of Aotearoa culture through engagement in a post-colonial setting where the Team of 5 million are raising the bar on bicultural awareness, and aiming to meet global scale challenges underpinned by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

In this course, students will engage in authentic and immersive experiences and activities that challenge their worldview and are transformative in nature (i.e. life-changing). The course will begin with a pre-semester 4-day field trip where students are welcomed onto Māori tribal land and participate in environmental restoration projects and outdoor activities designed to not only challenge themselves but explore indigenous values and concepts around reciprocity, environmental guardianship and wellbeing. This is followed by a series of active seminars during the semester that delve deeper into foundational aspects of Aotearoa culture, ranging from how grass root community efforts are tackling climate change to why 10,000 University of Canterbury students mobilised to form a relief army in the wake of the devastating 2011 Christchurch Earthquake.

This course uses Constructive Alignment (see Biggs and Tang, 2011, 'Teaching for quality learning at University') to closely track learning outcomes through the course activities and assessment.

Course Program

2023 Pre-semester 4-day field trip

This is an immersive and place-based learning experience. Students will engage with a local Māori tribe, participate in service/volunteering activities, and explore breathtaking natural landscapes. The field trip will include

- A traditional Māori welcoming ceremony (powhiri) onto tribal land
- Introduction to basic Te Reo Maori (Language) and Tikanga (Maori Practices and Customs)

- Learning aspects of Māori history/genealogy (whakapapa), indigenous knowledge (Mātauranga Māori) and environmental guardianship (kaitiakitanga)
- Introduction to colonial history and how post-colonial history has evolved in Aotearoa
- Learning practices in environmental restoration and monitoring that could include native tree planting, terrestrial pest management, or stream invertebrate, bird population, marine ecology surveys
- Experiencing the outdoors through adventure- students may participate in hiking, surfing, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, paddle boarding or another activity

2023 Semester Active Seminars

Seminar	Activity	Leader
Rebuilding post-earthquake Christchurch	Paddleboarding/kayaking through the Central City learning about the Student Volunteer Army (SVA) relief effort and how a city is rebuilding itself	Assoc Prof Billy O'Steen
Multi-generational programme to improve the health of Lyttelton Harbour (the port to Christchurch)	Coastal hike looking at regional government to community-based efforts to restore the pre-European health (mauri) of the harbour- land and sea species restoration (mahinga kai)	Dr Karen Banwell
Keeping the Planet warm and exploring the outdoors through sustainable clothing products	An afternoon with some of the leaders in New Zealand Merino wool- a sustainable and renewable product behind a global brand	Mons Royale
Feeding the Planet: the future of Sustainable Farming	Hands-on farm experience and discussion with the farmers inspiring change and sustainable farming techniques at Crater Rim Farms	Crater Rim Farms
New Zealand story-telling through music	An afternoon with a folk musician- performing and sharing stories of community resilience in the face of disaster (2011 Christchurch Earthquake and 2019 Mosque Attack)	Adam McGrath
Being a conscious ambassador- Our	An afternoon of sharing cultures and exchanging ideas with New	US Embassy Education Advisor, Billy O'Steen,

future leaders in a globalized and multicultural world!	Zealand students on the US Embassy's ambassadorial leadership programme	Darren Gravley
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Learning Outcomes

By completing the activities and assessment in this course, students will be able to:

- Explain your understanding of Māori concepts/values of mātauranga, kaitiakitanga, mauri, and mana as they pertain to a different worldview perspective
- Demonstrate an understanding/knowledge of biodiversity and conservation through the lens of an ecologist
- Link new ecological knowledge to environmental sustainability practices in a global context
- Demonstrate cultural awareness through ambassadorial practices and the concept of reciprocity
- Identify and compare similarities and differences in the socio-political structure behind New Zealand's Team of 5 million with the United States and/or home State
- Affect positive change elsewhere in the world by implementing knowledge, tools, skills, engagement, and experiences in Aotearoa
- Better reflect and tell stories about experiences and challenges with a variety of media formats

Assessment Tasks

- Produce a video of yourself about your 4-day field trip experience, focusing on your understanding of Māori concepts/values as they pertain to global scale issues (i.e. SDGs), and any transformative experiences.
- Complete a native tree identification exercise in a remnant old growth forest located in an urban setting.
- Write a short story on a challenging or exciting experience you have had socially or in the New Zealand outdoors.
- Participate in the online forums discussing an article or piece of media to prepare you for each active seminar during the semester
- Capstone task- In a 48 hour format (<https://www.48hours.co.nz/>), as a team, make a film that embraces the theme 'What would you like to take home with you from Aotearoa'.

Teaching team

Billy O'Steen- Associate Professor of Community Engagement and Experiential Education (University of Canterbury)

Darren Gravley- Associate Professor of Volcanology and Director of Frontiers Abroad (University of Canterbury) and Research Fellow (Skidmore College)

Dan Hikuroa- Senior Lecturer in Maori Studies and Indigenous Knowledge and Co-Director of Frontiers Abroad (University of Auckland)

