Instructors:

Business:

Dr. Cynthia Newman
Marketing
Sweigart Hall 352
895-5512
cnewman@rider.edu

Science:

Dr. Jonathan Husch
Geological/Marine Sciences
Science Hall 323D
896-5330
husch@rider.edu
**Introduction:** This interdisciplinary course seeks to provide a unique educational experience for students to examine the relationship among economic, legal, biological, geological, marine and environmental processes and concerns. Using Belize as our focus, we will study the special environment and ecosystems there (barrier reef and tropical rainforest) and examine the ways in which this environment is threatened and protected. Belize contains not only a diverse range of ecosystems, flora, fauna and geology, but also an equally wide range of policy responses in an attempt to protect and conserve the natural environment as well as cultural heritage sites related to the Mayan culture. We also will examine the tourism industry in Belize from financial, marketing and sustainability perspectives. We will begin our exploration of these topics in four three-hour pre-departure classes at Rider during the Fall 2015 semester. We will continue our studies in Belize in January 2016 and will meet once during the Spring 2016 semester for three hours for debriefing and student presentations of their research projects.

**Course Objectives:**

- Examine the relationship among economic, legal, biological, geological, marine and environmental processes and concerns.
- Understand the unique environment and ecosystem of Belize
- Evaluate the ways in which the natural environment is threatened and protected by business and regulatory practices
- Understand the tourism industry in Belize from financial, marketing and sustainability perspectives.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Attendance, Participation and Homework: Attendance is mandatory at all pre-departure classes and at all scheduled activities in Belize. Students who fail to attend all of these classes and activities will NOT receive credit for the course. You are expected to have read, and be prepared to discuss, all assigned readings. You must also complete the written homework assignments for each class session. Your attendance and participation in all scheduled classes and activities and your homework will constitute 20% of your course grade.

2. Individual Case Analysis and Presentation: To gain a better understanding of the business and environmental protection/sustainability issues in Belize, each student will be responsible for analyzing a business case set in Belize. Each student will write a formal case analysis based on the guidelines provided below and share this analysis with the entire class in a 10-minute presentation. The written analysis will constitute 20% of the course grade and the oral presentation will constitute 10% of your course grade. Presentations will be on November 6th and December 4th.

3. Trip Participation, Personal Reflection Paper and Journal: While in Belize, you will keep a daily journal in which you will reflect upon your experiences and respond to directed questions that we will pose (see sample journal guidelines). You will also be expected to participate in all discussions. At the end of each business/science/cultural site visit, as appropriate, you will complete a Site Visit Questionnaire (see guidelines below). Upon the conclusion of the travel portion of the course, you will complete a Personal Reflection Paper (see guidelines below). Your journal, personal reflection paper and participation will constitute 25% of your course grade. Journals and Reflection Papers will be due on February 15th.
4. Thesis-driven Research Paper: You are responsible for writing a 10 - 12 page (typed, double-spaced) thesis-driven research paper on a business topic related to the course content. The specific topic for the paper should be submitted to the course instructors for approval prior to the travel portion of the course. A commonly accepted reference style should be used throughout the text for in-text references and at the end of the paper for a reference page. At least 12 recent articles obtained from a library database such as ABI Inform, Business Source Premier or Factiva should be included as references. The paper will be due on March 28th. Final papers should be uploaded to Canvas. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the assignment. The research paper is worth 25% of your course grade.

Course Logistics: While in Belize, we will experience different accommodations and modes of transportation including airplanes, boats, buses and walking.

Please also be aware of a few important characteristics of the travel associated with the class that should be considered in light of each student’s individual medical and physical conditions. First, during the trip there is significant, although not overly strenuous, physical exertion as a part of the daily routine. Students will be walking, hiking, swimming, and climbing (light). While most of this activity is not strenuous, even the most moderate activity can be significant given high temperatures. Furthermore, while on the water, students should be aware that the boat may experience moderate seas. You may want to take medication appropriate for travel sea.

Students will be expected to respect any natural environment we will be traveling through.

Schedule of Classes

First Pre-Departure Session: (Newman) Friday, September 25th: 6:00-9:00 PM Introduction to Belize: History, Government, Economy and People; Conservation in Belize

Reading Assignment:


http://tropicalconservationscience.mongabay.com/content/v1/08-03-03-Young.htm

Second Pre-Departure Session: Friday, October 11th: 6:00 – 9:00 PM (Husch) – The Marine Environment of Belize

Reading Assignment:


Third Pre-Departure Session: (Newman): Friday, November 6th: 6:00-9:00 PM  
**Belize as a Tourist Destination; Marketing the Mayans; Ecotourism; Student Presentations**

**Reading Assignment:**


*Ecotourism: A Brief Introduction* (Harvard Business School Case) - to be distributed in class


Fourth Pre-Departure Session: (Husch): Friday, December 4th: 6:00-9:00 PM  
**The Geology & Tropical Rainforest of Belize; Student Presentations**

**Reading Assignment:**

*This Dynamic Earth, Kious & Tilling, Preface, Historical Perspective and the associated sidebars entitled “Inside the Earth”, What is a tectonic plate?, “Understanding Plate Motions, Hotspots, and Plate Tectonics and People”.*


**POST-TRIP SESSION:**

April 4th, 2016: 6:00-9:00 PM — Dinner, Debrief and Student Presentations of Research Papers
KEEPS A JOURNAL

Below are some guidelines for your journal. Remember that your journal, personal reflection report and site visit questionnaires will comprise 20% of your final grade. Take time each day to write in your journal; otherwise, the task may become too overwhelming.

You will be a participant/observer in several small towns. What do you see going on? How are the people dressed? Are people friendly to strangers? How do people interact? Notice the architecture, the way the streets are laid out, the traffic patterns, and the natural environment. Would you be comfortable as an American studying or living here? What kinds of problems are you having if you don’t know the language?

At the end of your visit in each location…

- How did you spend your free time? Do you feel that you got to know the place?
- What was your opinion of the food, the hotels, and the transportation?
- Would you like to visit these places again? Why or why not?
- Analyze our tour operators in terms of their “eco” practices. Were we good “eco-tourists”—why or why not?

At the end of the trip

- How do residents of Belize view their relationship with their natural environment? Do they have a different perspective than many Americans?
- How did it feel to be an American in another country?
ORGANIZATION/SITE VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please review this Questionnaire prior to our site visits and complete one Questionnaire for each visit.

Your Name: ___________________________________________________________

Organization/Site Name: ________________________________________________

Date/Time of Visit: _____________________________________________________

Name(s) of Presenter(s)/Guide: ___________________________________________

1. What did you learn about this site?

2. What were the site’s biggest challenges?

3. What procedures, if any, has this site instituted to limit its “environmental footprint”? 
PERSONAL REFLECTION PAPER

Upon our return, you will draft a Personal Reflection Paper (no more than 3 typed, double-spaced pages) in which you will respond to the following questions:

a. What amazed you?
b. What disappointed you?
c. What concerned you?
d. What struck you emotionally?
e. What did you think of the people you met? Socially? Professionally?
   1. Did you like them?
   2. Trust them?
   3. Feel comfortable with them?
f. How did your social, moral, religious, and personal values compare with the culture of Belize and with the people that you met?
g. How did this trip impact your understanding of the trends and forces affecting sustainability and environmental protection efforts in the world today?
h. What are the major forces of change in Belize and what do those forces signify for the future?
i. What do you envision your professional role to be over the next 20 years? How has this trip impacted your vision of your career and/or personal future?
WRITTEN CASE ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

To gain a better understanding of the on-going tensions between business and environmental protection/sustainability issues, each student will be responsible for analyzing a case study. Each student will write a formal case analysis based on the guidelines provided below and share this analysis with the entire class in a 10-minute presentation. The written analysis will constitute 20% of your course grade and your oral presentation will constitute 10% of your course grade.

CASE ANALYSIS GUIDE

• Central Issue

Describe the central issue(s)/problem(s). Also, discuss decision criteria and/or constraints for the analysis and decision making process.

• Environmental Analysis

Prepare a table that lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats confronting the organization. Critically present the relative importance of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats to organizational success and goal fulfillment.

• Alternative Solutions/Strategies

Prepare a detailed description of at least 3 comprehensive alternative solutions/actions for each issue/problem identified for the case. Discussion of each alternative should not only include a description and the primary advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solution but also should include clear linkages to established business concepts and practices as well as references to environmental analysis factors.

• Recommended Solution(s)/Strategy(ies)

Identify and then justify the alternative solution/strategy recommended by the team for each issue/problem. Justification should include relevancy to key internal and external factors as well as to organizational mission, goals and objectives.

• Implementation & Evaluation

Discuss how the recommended strategy/solution(s) should be implemented by the organization, including timing, involvement of key stakeholders, and responsibilities of the organizational leadership. Discuss how management will evaluate whether the recommended strategy/solution(s), once implemented, is(are) achieving the desired result(s). Also, present any likely or anticipated effects on leadership, existing
policies or practices, organization culture, organization structure and employee behavior.

**Summary of Course Costs**

**Travel costs:** The total cost of the trip is $3,540. Travel costs include: Airfare (from EWR airport), 8 nights lodging, breakfast daily, 6 lunches, 7 dinners, ground transportation, air transportation in country between mainland and Ambergris Caye, $15,000 supplemental (secondary) medical insurance, $50,000 emergency medical evacuation insurance, all lectures, site visits, park and cultural site admissions, and gratuities for all included meals as well as for guides and drivers.

**Not included in the travel costs:** personal expenses (for example: transportation to/from Newark International Airport, fees for passports, telephone, fax, email, souvenirs, 1 lunch).

A deposit of $300 is to be made to Rider University and may be made by personal check, Visa, Mastercard or Discover. The balance of the trip cost is paid directly to the travel provider, WorldStrides.

**Tuition:** For undergraduate students, the cost for the three credits is included in the spring tuition charge assuming 18 or fewer credits total are being taken. For graduate students, the normal tuition fee for a three credit graduate business course will be charged in addition to the above stated travel costs.