

## Botanizing the Alps and Mediterranean

BIOL 3954 (CRN XXXX)

*Summer I, 2009*

*(TENTATIVE)*

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May 21	Th	Depart from Dulles Airport, Washington, D.C. at 6:35 PM (BA 216) to Rome, Italy. <b><u>(NEED TO BE AT AIRPORT no later than X:XX PM)</u></b>
May 22	Fr	Arrival in Rome then Bus trip to Siena: orientations with IES <b>Late afternoon:</b> to be decided <b>Evening:</b> dinner together
May 23	Sa	<b>10 am:</b> Get acquainted with Siena: Lecture on Siena at IES!! followed by visit to landmarks
May 24	Su	Free day
May 25	M	<b>9 am – 12 pm:</b> Lectures on plant biodiversity (Hilu, at IES) <b>Afternoon 2-4:</b> Term paper presentations
May 26	Tu	<b>9-12 am:</b> visit to the Department of Botany of Siena University; lectures by faculty <b>2-4 pm:</b> Tour of the botanic garden
May 27	W	<b>9 am:</b> Trip to Florence- Organized visit to the Science History Museum and the famous Uffizi Museum <b>pm:</b> Tour of the city and some of its landmarks
May 28	Th	Day trip to Petrolo Winery & Olive Groves in Tuscany: tour of vineyards, lecture on wine making, and exploration of Chianti Tuscan biodiversity
May 29	F	<b>10 am-12 noon:</b> Lectures on Mediterranean flora and vegetation (Dr. Baldini, at IES) <b>2-5 pm:</b> Videos and discussions on selected world ecosystems (at IES)
May 30	Sa	Optional day trip to Rome
May 31	Su	Free day
June 1	M	<b>9 am:</b> Visit the Boboli Gardens and Pitti Palace in Florence <b>pm:</b> free time in Florence

June 2	Tu	Field trip to a farm in Tuscany and a study of farming practices, crops and disturbed ecosystem
June 3	W	<b>9 am – 1 pm:</b> Term paper presentations <b>Afternoon:</b> Preparation for leaving Siena
June 4	Th	Travel to Grosseto and Maremma National Park (stops in Tuscany)
June 5	F	Maremma National Park
June 6	Sa	<b>Morning:</b> Travel to Giglio Island- Check in the hotel; lunch <b>Afternoon:</b> Lectures on Island Ecology and biodiversity; Hike to explore the biodiversity in Giglio Island
June 7	Su	<b>Morning:</b> Visit the Medieval Town and hike back to the hotel <b>Afternoon:</b> Free
June 8	M	Departure for Pisa to spend the night (by train)
June 9	Tu	<b>Morning:</b> Departure for Riva Sant Vitale, Switzerland (by train)
June 10	W	<b>Morning:</b> Field trip to Mt Generoso (cable car and hike) - study of disturbed vegetations and pine community; <b>afternoon:</b> Exploring Riva
June 11	Th	Field trip to Versaca Valley and a study of meadow and riverside Vegetations; Stop at castles in Bellinzona on way to Riva
June 12	F	Hike of Mt Georgo – An example of Southern Alps vegetation

#### **DUE DATE FOR TERM PAPERS**

June 13	Sa	Daytrip to Lucerne or Milan by train
June 14	Su	Visit to Villa Carlota Museum and Botanical Garden on Lake Como, Italy ( <a href="http://www.villacarlotta.it/Horari.htm">http://www.villacarlotta.it/Horari.htm</a> )
June 15	M	<b>Morning-7 am:</b> Field trip to cross the Alps and study alpine Vegetation <b>Afternoon:</b> Hike and cable car ride toward the <i>Matterhorn</i> (night spent in Zermatt)
June 16	Tu	Return to Riva with stops in the Alps
June 17	W	A visit to Lugano (optional) Preparation for departure
June 18	Th	Return to the US from Milano or other airports ( <b><u>see your ticket</u></b> )

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**Course home page:** There is a link on Dr. Hilu's home page (under Teaching, then Botanizing the Alps). Home page address is:  
<http://www.biol.vt.edu/faculty/hilu/>

**Textbooks:**

**Optional Text:** Christopher Grey-Wilson and Marjorie Blamey. 1995. Collins Pocket Guide: Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe. Harper Collins Publishers.

**Required Text** 1996. Collins Pocket Guide: Wilde Flowers of Britain and Northern Europe. Harper Collins Publishers

**Course objectives:** There are two objectives to this course: 1) Academic and 2) Cultural. The academic objective will focus on understanding the biodiversity in the Alps. We will learn about the geological history of the Alps, type of plants, vegetation structure, and ecological factors that influence the region. We will compare the Southern Alps with the nearby Mediterranean vegetations in terms of vegetation and environment. Culturally, the course will expose the students to both academic and nonacademic environments in Switzerland, Italy and Germany. Students will interact with German students and faculty, and be taken on field trips and excursions to numerous regions and cities in those countries. We will discuss and exchange views about the cultural richness and diversity in these areas.

**Course requirements and grading:** Prior to the summer session, students are required to attend the meetings and should start working on the term paper. During the term, students are required to attend all classes and field trips at Virginia Tech and all classes and field trips overseas. There is a term paper required on one of the topics presented to students, or on a different topic agreed upon by the instructor. In addition, each field trip, two students are expected to present a report to class summarizing the findings of that trip. Grading will be based on the quality of the term paper and power point presentation to class (40%), the reports (20%), and attendance, quizzes, involvements, and contributions to the classes and field trips (40%). Close to the end of the trip, each student will provide a 1-2 page report on their impressions and thoughts about academic and cultural aspects of this international experience. This report will be placed on the course web and is to be handed to the instructor *after* assignment of grades.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Virginia Tech Honor System will be followed in this course. The use of commercially purchased notes (selling or buying) will **NOT** be permitted in this class. Any violation of this policy will be considered as Honor Code Violation. Each student is subject to the Virginia Tech rules and regulations including the Study Abroad Code of Conduct (see the signed package).