

*What will our time together in Ecuador be like? In order to travel successfully, learn maximally, and generate knowledge and stories that last a lifetime, you should:*

- Be flexible—in your expectations, in the timing of your meals, in accommodations. Everyone will be physically uncomfortable some of the time. Some of you will be physically uncomfortable the entire time we are in the Amazon, for instance—it is a fundamentally hot, wet place, and many people don't tolerate it well. Unless you plan quite well, there will be days when you really, really wish that you had access to a dry pair of socks (pants, shirt...), but wishing does not make it so.
- Embrace serendipity—some things that are planned may not happen, but other things that weren't on the agenda may be surprising and amazing. Taking opportunities that were unforeseen is one of the best routes to experiencing new things, seeing animals, and becoming a broader and deeper thinker.
- Be courageous, but aware of your own limitations, and responsible for your own risks. It is a fine line to walk (run, climb...). Assessing risk is a different calculation when you're far (sometimes very far) from medical help. Lawyers have not gone through the environments we'll be traveling in and made them safe—in that truth lies both much of the fun, and much of the danger, of the journey.
- Not be on auto-pilot. Things in your life for which there have never been any variance may suddenly be very different (e.g. food availability, cultural norms). We will be guests in another country, so as much as possible, we need to exist within their expectations, not ours.
- Be physically fit, enough to slog through mud in the Amazon, ride a mule up a mountain at the coast, hike around a volcano at 9,000 feet. Most days for the many weeks that we are together will be active ones.
- Know that you will be away from electronic communication for some lengths of time, and plan to a) not dissolve as a result, and b) embrace the here and now. Tropical field work allows for a kind of Buddhist "be here now," in which you interact entirely, or nearly entirely, with those whom you are physically present with in the moment—this is incredibly freeing in many ways, but can be challenging if you are accustomed, for instance, to frequent social media updates.
- Be the kind of person who tends to want to solve their own problems. We will be traveling as a group, and will have responsibility for each other. We will all certainly solve some problems of others at various points on the trip. That said, if your typical reaction, when something needs fixing, is to wonder *who to ask*, that is going to be a problem. Your first instinct should be: *how do I solve this myself?* Self-sufficiency, or at the very least a tendency towards self-sufficiency, is necessary when traveling and researching away from the comforts, economic structures, and laws of the United States.
- Be responsible, and take responsibility. Follow through on commitments and expectations, and act in such a way that your faculty and fellow students have less to keep track of as a result of your behaviors, rather than more.
- Be fundamentally interested in the good of the learning community—of the physical safety, psychological well-being, and intellectual integrity of everyone, while allowing for individual personality differences to exist and flourish. We will be a team—a large team, but a team nonetheless. Individual success depends on collective good will, action, and intention by all.