

Agenda for the Brazil Field Experience pre-departure meeting (Dec 12th 2016)

Time and location: USC 245, 3:30pm

Attendance is **mandatory** for everyone who is going on the Brazil Field Experience. You can bring family and/or loved ones. The alternate orientation date is January 3rd, with another professor in USC 240. You can then fly down (at your own cost) after that orientation and join us wherever we are in Brazil by then. There are no exceptions to this whatsoever.

Here is what will be discussed:

1. Pre-departure procedure. Our flight to San Paolo (LATAM FLT 8081) departs JFK (terminal 8, subject to change, check airline website a day prior to departure) at 5:15 pm on January 1st. This means that everyone must be at the airport by 2:15 pm. We are flying LATAM (used to be TAM and LAN, two separate airlines that merged). I know that some of you have never been on an international flight, so we will go over the rules and procedures. If you do not have WhatsApp yet, get it now and add me (352 514 6379). Everyone must join the trip group on WhatsApp. This is how we will communicate prior to departure, and when we get to Brazil.
2. Packing list. See the list on www.brasilaexperience.weebly.com. I'll go over a daily itinerary and discuss what you need to wear and when. This will help you when you pack.
3. One final check on every airline ticket reservation (pay attention to birth date and passport number) in case someone missed something from the emailed confirmations. One final check on important things like antibiotics prescriptions, antimalarial medications, money belts (bring your undergarment pouch to the meeting) vaccination etc. You must bring proof of vaccination and your body glove for the passport. We will also check our travel insurance policies for accuracy. Lastly, we will register for the STH website together (links to your health cards will be posted on the course website).
4. Field trip activities, including day by day reading lists for your blogs. Possible topics for term papers, with examples from previous years, will be covered. Take good notes, I will not be repeating this in Brazil. You must start thinking about this before we leave.
5. Room allocations for each place we stay (flexible but we have to start with something). Please note that sometimes you may be required to have two roommates of the same gender in places where we have triple rooms (there will be three beds or a king bed and single). Our university actually allows genders to mix in rooms, so I am not opposed to those who want to share with people from the opposite gender. However, I will not ask you to share rooms with people of a different gender (let me know if your roommate situation is not working out).
6. Presentation schedule, what to include and how you will be graded. Remember, I will have a laptop and a projector, so you can do your presentations in powerpoint. I would like to see your presentations by December 27th (post by midnight on December 26th). Because some people have not even talked to me about their topics, I will not enter any grades for the prep course till after we come back from the trip. That way, your grade will reflect everything you did in preparation for the trip (presentations are one of the things you are supposed to prepare before we leave).

7. Speaker schedule and what to expect from those speakers. We are lucky to have at least three very knowledgeable guides for this trip. That limits the need to travel long distances to listen to an hour long talk.

8. Reminders about gear, especially hiking shoes. Everyone needs hiking shoes. It's everyone's duty to make sure that all your classmates have hiking shoes, otherwise we will not hike anywhere. I do not have an official chaperon on this trip, so we cannot split the group into a hiking party and a non-hiking party. If you show up without the proper gear that lack of preparation will be reflected in your course grade (I can do this because this is a field course that requires such preparation).

9. Budgeting – I will go over every meal we (the school) will cover or which hotels or excursions include meals. That way you can plan accordingly for the trip. Remember, I will now pay for the lunches in Manaus (after the first day).

10. Field trip policies, etiquette, safety, communication methods (get WhatsApp, I can never overemphasize this) and discipline related issues. I have a satellite phone (881632659309). We will test it during that meeting to make sure it works. I'll do the same thing before we depart. Every hotel we stay in has wifi, so you can use Facebook messenger or Whatsapp to communicate with family and friends on the road. The syllabus I will distribute electronically give you will discuss policies (including timeliness and professionalism – these two parts constitute about a third of your grade). The most common problems I have on this trip is with students who stay up too late and fail to show up for meetings or rides on time. The second most common problem is with students who stay up all night and pass out when guest speakers are giving their talks. In short, whether you have fun on this trip or not largely depends on you. If I can count on you and trust you to do things I will treat you like mature adults. If you lose my trust anytime during the trip then you will find yourself watching documentaries at the hotel a lot instead of exploring Brazil. I'll bring a lot of documentaries, just in case (don't say you were not warned!!).