

F8013A Tropical Rainforests: Biogeography and Conservation

Convenor: Dr. Mika Peck

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Assessment Mode: 40% Coursework, 60% Exam

Teaching Methods: Lecture, Seminar

Credit: 15

Available to: Biology (Stream B), Ecology, Zoology, Geography

The module aims to develop an understanding of tropical rainforest (trf) ecosystems and the consequences of their great antiquity, present rapid destruction and uncertain future. Students will examine and evaluate the many hypotheses attempting to explain the astonishing species richness of trfs and explore their complex ecological organization. Sustainable use of trfs is contrasted with their ever-increasing destruction by peasant farmers, timber companies, cattle ranchers and other commercial interests. Students will learn about the impact of trf destruction on world climates, global biodiversity, and natural resources. Future prospects for conservation and management are assessed, including less damaging methods of timber harvesting, ecotourism, the potential of a new 'carbon market' (REDD++) and the role and contribution of scientist and international conservation organisations. The coursework and seminar series associated with the module will introduce skills of practical use to students deciding to follow a career within conservation - the main focus being the development of an original grant proposal to the Royal Geographical Society.