

Summer



Study Abroad in Sustainable Communities

Brazil

Permaculture at Ecocentro IPEC

Study abroad in South America's most extensive and tropical endangered savannah ecosystem and investigate new ways of creating sustainable human habitats at Ecocentro IPEC – a grassroots ecological institute in tropical Pirenopolis Brazil. Learn permaculture principles, and create your own unique ecological design as you study and apply sustainable community development theory in a real-world environment. The course offers a unique opportunity for students to gain environmental and green-design experience, and the inspiration to adapt appropriate technologies and sustainable agriculture techniques to their own climates and cultures.



Using the transit level in site planning, design and natural building.

Program Highlights

- ☀ Become a Certified Permaculture Apprentice and create a permaculture garden that will benefit the local community
- ☀ Visit a World Heritage Biosphere, home to endemic rare flora and fauna
- ☀ Experience Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art that is a mix of dance, acrobatics, and musical expression
- ☀ Get hands-on experience in natural building and contribute to a permaculture project based on community needs
- ☀ Picnic at neighbouring tropical waterfalls



Expert faculty and outdoor classrooms facilitate learning about sustainable living and ecological design.

Academic Credit and Program Dates

Earn 4 transferable credits through the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Course: Permaculture (Natural Resources Conservation 398A)

Summer – 3 weeks (see Website for dates)



Living Routes is an independent, non-profit educational organization whose academic programs are accredited by UMassAmherst.

*Students may extend their stay and participate in **Bioconstruindo**, a renowned natural building course that attracts students and professionals from all over the world. The workshop is offered by IPEC (in Portuguese) directly following the permaculture course at an additional cost. Upon acceptance to the Living Routes course, students will be given information to contact IPEC about Bioconstruindo.

Brazil



Ecocentro IPEC and the Region

Ecocentro IPEC (Permaculture Institute and Ecovillage of the Cerrado), is dedicated to sustainability education by fostering a profound understanding and direct experience of the natural world. Ecocentro IPEC serves as a model of viable rural settlement, incorporating appropriate technologies, living systems, and sustainable community life from a holistic perspective. The community is a dynamic place where residents and students take part in community activities, including Portuguese instruction, yoga, meditation, Women’s Food Cooperative events, and Capoeira, a Brazilian mix of sacred dance, acrobatics and martial arts. IPEC is also host to a yearly Green Building Workshop called Bioconstruindo, which has transformed the community into a showcase for ecobuilding and design.



The Cerrado ecosystem, home of IPEC, is an important transition zone near the Amazon.

Brazil’s Cerrado, home to IPEC, is the second largest ecosystem in South America and represents the ecological transition zone between the Amazon and the Atlantic Rainforest. It is a tropical savanna with fauna and flora, and high levels of endemic speciation. The remaining Cerrado forests, which are dangerously threatened by the use of fire, are classified as a World Heritage Biosphere by the UN.

Application Deadline

(Rolling admissions—contact us for late availability)

March 15

Cost

Tuition, room & board, travel insurance,
and in-country travel see Website
UMassAmherst credit included



Students study and practice natural building and ecological design techniques.

Faculty

Lucy Legan, M.Ed. Science and Environmental Education, Deakin University, Australia

Legan is an experienced environmental education teacher and permaculture designer. She has been working in Brazil since 1997, and is the co-founder of IPEC. More recently she has published an environmental educators manual called *Sustainable Schools - Eco-literacy and the Environment*. She has developed several permaculture programs for training centers in Australia and Brazil.

Andre Jaeger Soares, M.A., (cand.), Environmental Education, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Soares, a Brazilian national, is a cofounder of Ecocentro IPEC, a trilingual teacher, natural builder and permaculture designer. He founded the Permaculture Institute of Central Queensland in Australia, and, with the United Nations Development Program, Soares taught permaculture design to over 2000 people. Recipient of the Casa Claudia Award for innovative design in natural construction, he is acknowledged as one of the 50 most important people in environmental development in Brazil. His leadership in sustainability has attracted a partnership with the Swiss foundation AVINA creating new projects in low impact architecture and social development throughout South America. Soares holds a diploma from the Permaculture Institute of Australia.

Course Topics

Sustainable Shelter

Concepts and themes of design, natural building and architecture, renewable energy, and appropriate technologies

Aquaculture

Water technologies, earth movement, dry composting toilets, water harvesting, storage and distribution, recycling water, and desertification and the salting of soils

Community Development

Indigenous, intentional, alternative and traditional communities, economic strategies, globalization, and visits to various communities in the region

Cultivated Ecosystems

Organic gardening, food forests, small animal systems, tropics and sub-tropics, dryland strategies, and cold climate systems

Portuguese Language (optional)

Learn the Portuguese through music, enacting and conversation.