

## ANTH 2114/EES 2114 – Above and Below the Surface: The Caribbean between Climate Change and Tourism



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**Location:** Utila, Honduras

**Dates:** TBA

Scuba diving is often described as opening a completely new world for humans. What lies beneath the surface provides us with hard-to-forget impressions that often provide inspiration for tales and stories woven around the mystery of the sea.

Yet, the oceans provide more than just impressions and tales to tell. They not only nourish our imagination, but provide the basis for all life. They do so directly through food cycles and the provision of oxygen, as well as by controlling the earth's climate.

Human use of the oceans includes the harvesting/breeding of sea-life, use of seaways for transportation around the planet, as well as tourism and offshore drilling. Cruise ships and resort hotels bring tourists in contact with local populations as well as the (under) water world, places and people to be imagined, visited, and transformed.

The Caribbean provides one of the prime target for tourism as much as for our imagination of a romantic past (think *Pirates of the Caribbean*). With its blue warm waters and the famous coral reef, we often fail to understand Caribbean islands as fragile ecosystems that have been shaped and transformed through intricate interactions of human political forces within a wider ecological setting.

This course intends to raise understanding and awareness of ecologies as wide, interrelated webs of interactions—reaching beyond the water's surface. Students will be immersed in the history, culture, and development of contemporary Caribbean, as well as its famous underwater world.

Above the surface, we will explore the history of Utila (Honduras), targeting the developments of both socio-economic and ecological conditions. We will explore insects, reptiles, bats, mangroves, and turtles, as well as waste treatment, tourism, below the surface, students will acquire scuba skills and (PADI) certificates, steadily improving their competence as safe divers. They will explore the underwater world, investigating the health of coral reefs and fish populations, while also reflecting on the historical developments and their direct and indirect effects on subaquatic life. Our observations will be

complemented through meetings with local stakeholders, as well as through hands-on activities (hiking to pumpkin hill, kayaking through the mangroves, beach clean-ups etc.). Through readings, presentations, observations, and discussions students will develop a thorough understanding of the complex interactions of humans with their environment, including the interaction of local and global forces (such as tourism and global warming).

Check the Video: <https://youtu.be/SX83kSmgZ5k>

**FEES: Cost is approx. \$13,816.67**

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