



## Outer Banks Field Site (OBXFS)

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institute for the Environment's Outer Banks Field Site (OBXFS) welcomes students during each fall semester to a strong grounding in public policy and management; extensive hands-on learning through gathering, analyzing and presenting data; and memorable experiences outside the classroom.

The OBXFS is hosted by the UNC Coastal Studies Institute, located on Roanoke Island, which is an inter-university institute dedicated to research, education, and outreach.

The OBXFS curriculum has been re-oriented for 2013 to provide an enhanced focus on the social and policy sciences as applied to decision-making about coastal environmental and natural resources. This makes a semester at the coast ideal preparation for graduate school in public policy, natural resource management, planning, and law. The individual classes are integrated to provide multiple lenses on understanding and solving complex policy and management problems. A semester at the OBXFS will give students a total of 17 UNC credit hours.



The OBXFS is situated in northeastern North Carolina, amid the ocean, sounds, beaches, and salt marshes of one of the world's most beautiful and dynamic settings. Northeastern North Carolina is also



a region with strong cultural traditions intertwined with life in the outdoors, including an economy based on the area's natural resources. Our location provides a rich and varied natural laboratory for observing and analyzing the way that public policy, management decisions, and the natural environment interact and respond to a wide variety of changes.

The OBXFS location also provides access to a rich set of cultural and recreational experiences. From Ocracoke Island to the Pocosin Arts Folk School in the Inner Banks

town of Columbia, students meet and learn from residents about their lives and livelihoods. On their own time, students have access to one of the world's best locations for fishing, surfing, kayaking, and numerous other outdoor activities.

## LOCATION



OBXFS students will explore the Outer Banks and other parts of northeastern NC through OBXFS activities, but the majority of classes will be held at the new UNC-Coastal Studies Institute UNC-CSI facility on Roanoke Island. The UNC-CSI features a new, state of the art campus that overlooks the Roanoke Sound. It is only a few miles from downtown Manteo and the Atlantic Ocean.

Students will live in the Roanoke Island Festival Park guest house in

Manteo (also on Roanoke Island), which is within walking distance of downtown Manteo and biking distance of UNC-CSI. The guest house offers shared bedrooms that are arranged in suites and ample common space, including living areas with couches and televisions, a fully-equipped kitchen, and a laundry room.

## COURSEWORK

Students typically spend two days per week in classes, two days per week at internships, and one day per week participating in an extended laboratory exercise, field work, or field trip. Courses at the OBXFS include:

**ENST 351/Coastal Law and Policy** (3 credit hours) – This course focuses on the regulation of common coastal resources, coastal zone management at the federal, state and local levels and the creation and implementation of a sustainable coastal development framework. This study includes an overview of current federal and state laws and regulations, local ordinances and case law as mechanisms addressing coastal challenges. The course includes discussions of current issues in coastal management and features select guest speakers with expertise in North Carolina coastal law and extensive knowledge of state coastal issues and policies. Recitation is included and contributes one credit hour to the course.

**ENST 489/Ecological Processes in Environmental Systems: Coastal and Estuarine Ecology**

(4 credit hours) – This course will give students a basic background in ecology and coastal ecosystems and both theoretical and applied knowledge in the ways that ecological research and monitoring affect policy formation and management. The course will be structured in such a way as to engage students in critical thinking about multiple roles of science



in determining environmental outcomes, and the associated laboratory period includes several data-gathering experiences in the ecosystems of northeastern North Carolina. Laboratory/field work/recitation is included and contributes one credit hour to the course.

**ENST 490/Economics of Coastal Resources** (3 credit hours) - This course gives students a strong grounding in economic analysis of environmental and natural resource use and management. Particular attention is paid to issues that affect the coast, including fisheries, climate change sea level rise, and shoreline protection. A **recitation in social science research methods** is included and contributes one credit hour to the course. This hands-on recitation provides students with direct experience in collecting and analyzing social data to aid in decision-making. Survey-based research, qualitative research techniques, geographical information systems, and natural resource valuation methods will all be covered at both conceptual and practical levels. This recitation content will contribute directly to students' capstone research.

**ENST 698/Capstone** (3 credit hours) – Place-based, multi-disciplinary problem solving; team-based research into a complex management and/or policy question. (More information is available in the *Student Internships and Capstone* section.)

**ENST 395/Internship** (3 credit hours) – Professional experience through research or work. (More information is available in the *Student Internships and Capstone* section.)

**ENST 204/Seminar on Coastal Issues** (1 credit hour) – A field trip and discussion based course that exposes students to unique aspects of northeastern NC's natural and policy environments, as well as aspects of history and culture. It will rely on field trips, readings, and guest speakers to illuminate particular aspects of science, history, and culture at the coast.

## **STUDENT INTERNSHIPS AND THE CAPSTONE**

Student internships provide hands-on experience in positions of interest or relevance to students. Each



OBXFS student will be placed in an internship that allows them to learn from a professional and to gain experience in working in a policy and/or research environment. These internships give students the opportunity to contrast academic approaches to policy with the demands of real-world workplaces.

OBXFS internship partners include town and county planning departments; state and federal conservation and natural resource management organizations; non-profit organizations; informal education facilities; and UNC-CSI researchers.

The capstone project will be oriented toward a management and policy question directly relevant to communities in northeastern North Carolina. Students will use the research techniques, analytical methods, and policy and scientific knowledge from the OBXFS curriculum to assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative policies for managing a real-world natural resource issue. In addition to producing a publicly-

disseminated document, students will present their work to community members and leaders in a public forum at the end of the semester.

## **FACULTY**

Primary course instructors include OBXFS Director, Andy Keeler; Associate Director, Lindsay Dubbs; and attorney at law, Lee Leidy. Dr. Keeler holds a Ph.D. from Berkley and is the UNC-CSI program head in Public Policy and Coastal Sustainability and Professor of Economics at East Carolina University. Dr. Keeler directs the OBXFS and teaches the Economics of Coastal Resources course. Lindsay Dubbs, Research Assistant Professor at the UNC Institute for the Environment with a Ph.D. from the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, teaches Coastal and Estuarine Ecology and oversees internships, the Capstone, and seminar. Coastal Law and Policy is taught by Lee Leidy, the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust Region Director and Staff Attorney and UNC-IE Adjunct Assistant Professor. Professor Leidy received her law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill. The Social Research Methods

Recitation is led by Dr. Adam Gibson, a Colorado State University graduate in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources who has extensive social science research and university teaching experience. Dr. Gibson is also a key contributor to the Capstone effort. The OBXFS also benefits from a strong Community Advisory Board that meets frequently with students and provides access to residents' perspectives on issues, which enhances students' social and cultural experiences.



For more information go to [http://www.ie.unc.edu/for\\_students/field\\_sites/](http://www.ie.unc.edu/for_students/field_sites/), view our Facebook page (UNC Institute for the Environment Outer Banks Field Site) or contact us at [dubbs@email.unc.edu](mailto:dubbs@email.unc.edu)