

Second Year Field Course September 2018
SWITZERLAND

(Please read and take this field course pack and other briefing material with you to Switzerland. It is very important that you have read and understood all this information. Likewise it is also important that you spend a few hours looking at the Field course CD before going to Switzerland)

1) Introduction

This briefing pack contains important information on administrative, safety and academic matters. It should also be read in conjunction with the briefing notes previously distributed to all students. **It is essential that you read all the information and fully understand it before the field course.** It is also essential that you read again the briefing sheets in this pack for each day before the activity happens. Further sheets may be added to this pack in Switzerland.

This residential field course forms an integral part of a 30 credit Semester A/B module called Real World Research. ALL Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography, Environmental Management and Ecology, Human Geography and Environmental Studies (GE) level 5 students are expected to take this module. Besides this the group will be joined by direct transfers into Level 5 and at least one student from level 6 who couldn't for various reasons make the trip during their year 5. Please try your hardest to integrate with these people. Attendance on the residential field course is **compulsory** in order to undertake the module. Lectures, workshops, etc. will take place once back at the University. Module guides will be handed out in induction week.

The module has been devised for all degree pathways. There will be some days that all students are together whilst on other days there will be separate teaching for the different degree pathways. See the Programme in this pack. Resource packs and other material will be taken on the field course for you to consult and read whilst there. This material will also be available once back at the University.

If for any reason you fall ill, injure yourself or for any other personal reasons you cannot attend the field course, you must make every effort to tell the Swiss Field Course Coordinator Dr Darren Crook (d.crook@herts.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Failure to do so without very good reason could mean you having to pay not only the student contribution but also the University contribution (because the University will still have to pay for your booked place).

2) Staff, to include Darren Crook– Coordinator (E-mail: d.crook@herts.ac.uk Tel: 01707 284240), Tim Sands, Phil Porter, Alla Mashanova, Jamie Cecil, Alexander Buckland-Stubbs, Robert Beer

3) Accommodation

We will be staying in small, friendly, family guest house in Saas Grund on a full board basis (Bed, breakfast, packed lunch and evening meal). Alternative accommodation is not permitted under any circumstances. The guest houses have a range of 3-5 bedded rooms available (not ensuite). They are comfortable with plenty of hot water for showers and seconds are usually available at meal times. The first meal will be at dinner (6.30pm) on Sunday (i.e. on the day we arrive in Switzerland) and our last meal will be the evening meal of Friday, just before we depart for the UK.

Please remember that we are guests in Switzerland and at these guest houses in particular. We have been taking groups to these guest houses for a number of years and always get a friendly welcome. We will be served typical Swiss meals. There is choice at breakfast and for your packed lunches, but one

choice only is served for dinner. The food is good and healthy but may not be your favourite on every night. If this is the case please be understanding and eat what you can. You can always buy extra if you need to.

Haus Alba (Owner Julia Abgottspon)
3910 Saas Grund, Valais, Switzerland
Tel: 0041-27-957-2813

Ferienhaus Venezia
Im Moos 5, 3910 Saas Grund, Valais, Switzerland
+41 27 957 19 25

(Guest house phones only for emergency in-coming calls NB: a phone card can be purchased from local shop to be used in much cheaper public phones)

If you are **vegetarian** or have **special dietary requirements** you should have already notified us of this, but do please remind staff when we arrive at the guest houses. Whilst we ask for vegetarian meals for those that want them, this concept is not well understood in Switzerland and so students must be prepared for the occasional problem and be understanding as we are guests in this country. **If you have a special diet it is very unlikely that the guest houses will be able to cater for your needs so please be warned.** Vegetarians and those with special diets may therefore like to take supplements/vitamins with them and there are shops in Saas Grund where you can buy additional food/drinks.

Please note that smoking and the drinking of alcohol is not permitted in the guest houses.

4) Dates/Times

We will travel overnight by coach from Hatfield Campus (Tates coach). You should ensure that you are at the Hatfield Campus well in advance of the departure time – we suggest 40 minutes before as a minimum – remember the coach can't wait for you if you are late – we must make Dover on time for the ferry or channel tunnel.

- **Depart University ~2.45pm on Wednesday 5th September – Please ensure you arrive outside the Forum at 2.15pm**
- Arrive approx 1:00pm on Tuesday 11th September
- **Return 6.00pm on Tuesday 11th September**
- **Arrive University approximately 12.00 noon on Wednesday 12th September**

NB1: Bring some food and drink with you for the journey, though it will be possible to get a meal on the ferry, and we shall probably stop for breakfast the next morning in France and lunch in Switzerland (as well as other comfort/snack stops). Bring Euros and Swiss currency for the journey. How much to take? Possibly £5-10 worth of Euros for France and say £30-50+ of Swiss francs, but this does entirely depend on you and what you want to spend. There are cash points in the village we stay in (Warning: do not use these as you would in the UK it is better to take out a single large amount rather than multiple small amounts).

NB2: Remember that all times might vary for a whole range of reasons, such as bad weather, road accidents etc. However, you must assume, unless told otherwise, that the departure date/time is as above. If you are arranging pick-ups, trains, etc. please keep this in mind. We will keep you fully informed of any changes so long as we have an up to date address/tel. no. Students by prior arrangement can pick up the coach in Kent either at Dover or the service station just before the Channel Tunnel (depending on what the coach company has booked for us). Likewise students can be dropped off in these locations upon return to the UK, but only after prior arrangement with the coach drivers

NB3: We will be travelling overnight on a coach. It is a long way and conditions will be fairly cramped so please be prepared for a little discomfort (although we will do our best to make it as comfortable and enjoyable as possible). A pillow or travel neck rest is recommended, and a toothbrush, toothpaste and

flannel to freshen up on the journey along with your **passport**. The **front two rows of the coach must be kept free for staff and drivers**.

5) **Alternative travel arrangements**

– e.g. fly (Easy Jet recommended) into Geneva from Luton, then take the train to Visp, then post bus to Saas Grund. Only those students that have already notified Darren Crook should be doing this. Normally no reduction can be given to the overall cost of the trip, however, there are individual exceptions to this rule that must be discussed and agreed with Dr Crook prior to booking. If students do make their own way there they must be available to start work on the field course by 3 pm on the Sunday, and cannot depart before 2.00pm on the Friday. Severe mark penalties will be imposed if students do not adhere to these dates/times (whatever the reasons e.g. flight delays, etc.).

6) **Car Parking on Campus**

There is no secure parking on Campus if you wish to leave your car whilst away on the field course. However, you may contact Security who will advise where the most secure areas are (e.g. near CCTV, etc.). Unfortunately, the University cannot take any responsibility whatsoever for any loss or damage to your car if left.

7) **Cost – the cost of this trip is included in your student fees 8) Cable Cars and Buses**

We will take cable cars on one/two of the days (paid for by the University) but you may also want to budget for additional journeys (rather than walking) – if so you may need about 30-40 Swiss francs.

In addition, you may want to use the post bus on some days between Saas Grund and Saas Fee. A single journey will cost about 4 Swiss francs. NB: The coach drivers cannot drive us at all on the last day because of driving regulations as they will be driving us overnight later that day/night.

9) **Insurance**

Students are fully insured whilst following the formal arrangements of the field course (i.e. coach there/back and in Switzerland). Separate cover is required for the travel if you make your own way there/back. The insurance covers a) Medical and Emergency Repatriation b) Personal Accident c) Personal Liability d) Personal Baggage and Money

If a European citizen you will need to obtain and take with you an European Health Insurance Card (EU medical insurance). These are free and can be obtained on line at the URL below <http://www.e111.org.uk/>

Any queries on insurance must go through Darren.

Student Behaviour and the Student Charter

The Student Charter, which forms part of the University regulations, states:

“Students following taught programmes are expected to:

- ii) behave in an acceptable and considerate ways during lectures, tutorials and all other activities concerned with the learning experience held either at the University or elsewhere, for example, field trips or clinical or practice placements.”

It is important that all students take note of this regulation concerning behaviour. This particularly relates to the use and abuse of alcohol. You are going to Switzerland to work and so you are strongly advised against excessive alcohol consumption throughout the field course – this may also be a safety issue and you will not be allowed to go into the mountains if hung over (with mark penalties as a result). **PLEASE**

TAKE NOTE OF THIS AS SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST ANY STUDENT WHO BEHAVES IN AN UNACCEPTABLE MANNER AT ANY TIME DURING THE FIELD COURSE (Which could involve being sent home early, at your own expense!).

10) Behaviour in bars in Saas Grund

You are ambassadors for the Subject Group and the University. Good behaviour is expected at all times when you are spending your free time in Saas Grund. Please note that the bars are in residential areas and those people smoking outside pubs should also keep the noise down.

11) Music, Smoking and Alcohol on the Coach

Smoking on the coach and in the hotel is prohibited. You also cannot consume alcohol whilst travelling on the coach (at any time). If you wish to listen to music on the coach or in the hotel please bring along your own personal player. Playing your own music on the coach's stereo system is discouraged.

12) Luggage

Only 1 large piece of luggage under the coach is permitted and 1 small piece of hand luggage carried on the coach. Make sure your **passport**, food and other essentials for the journey are in your **hand luggage** on the coach.

13) Passports

You will need a full, valid passport. This is entirely your own responsibility but please remember, no passport, no go! (We will check this before we depart). If you have a non-EU passport please check early with the relevant authorities to see if you need a visa (s) for France and Switzerland.

14) Damage to the Guest House

Please treat the guest house carefully as we would like to go back next year. If you do happen to break or damage something in the guest house please tell a member of staff as soon as possible. If you don't, the whole group may be required to pay for the item. Your bedrooms must be left tidy (ish) each morning as the rooms are cleaned every day.

15) Emergency Pre-field Course Telephone Numbers

Department Office 01707 284502 (there is an answer phone if outside office hours)
Jamie Cecil 01707 28 1366 (work) j.p.cecil2@herts.ac.uk

16) Essential Equipment and safety

You must take with you:

Proper walking boots (broken in), fully waterproof jacket and over trousers, small rucksack, warm sweaters, long sleeved cotton shirts, thick woollen socks for boots, warm hat and sun hat, high factor sun cream/sun block/after sun lotion, **sun glasses (compulsory on the glacier)**, your own personal first aid kit (to include any of your own medications, including headache pills, etc. – Staff are not allowed to dispense any medications to students), towels (these are not provided by the hotels but sheets/duvets are), proper water bottle, sandwich box, field note book (a hard backed A5 note book which won't disintegrate in wet weather), clear polythene bag (to put your note book in if it rains/snows), pens, pencils, ruler and calculator.

Coffee/tea is not available in the evenings in the Astoria guest house. You may therefore want to think about bringing a travel kettle (including an adaptor) if you are staying in this guest house.

You will not be allowed to go without vital equipment. Make sure your boots are well broken in – blisters can ruin the field course for you. Remember, during the week you will be walking at high altitudes

in rugged country, sometimes in potentially dangerous conditions. You must be prepared for hot, cold, rainy, snowy weather – we have experienced all of these on the field course (in the same week, sometimes on the same day). You will be out in the field for at least 6 hours each day.

There are separate safety briefing notes included in this pack, which you must read and understand. You must also reread your Safety book carefully, particularly the section on field courses.

17) Shopping

There are a number of small supermarkets in Saas Grund so that you can buy additional food or things you might have forgotten e.g. soap, toothpaste. We normally have breakfast at 8.00am and a briefing at 8.45am before we leave for the day at 9.00am so you will have a very limited amount of time each day to pop to the shops. There may also be some time at the end of the day before the evening meal, but this cannot be guaranteed.

18) Medical

Please ensure that your medical form, which you should have already submitted, is completely up to date before we go. You must disclose any information that may be important for your own safety (which will be treated in confidence and only known by the staff team) as well as the rest of the group's safety. This is not to stop you going, more to make sure that when you are there we know about and can deal with any problems safely. If you are on medication make sure you bring sufficient supplies for the week.

19) Fitness

A general level of fitness would make the week feel much easier and allow you to get much more out of the work. At times we will be walking in rugged conditions over reasonable distances for up to 6 hours. You may want to think of ways of getting fit. We are not suggesting 'commando' style training but more walking, cycling, etc. in your spare time (this is general advice from students who have been on this field course – many have said they wished they had taken this advice and been fitter – you still have time to do something about it).

20) Work

You will normally be out doing fieldwork from about 9.00am to 5.30/6.00pm. In addition, after dinner, you will be required to work again until 9.30/10.00pm. Of course, these times might vary but you should be prepared for hard work. However, there will be some free time and we are sure that the whole experience, as in past years, will be of tremendous value to you.

21) Progression

In order to progress from the 1st year to the 2nd year (and so be allowed to go on the Switzerland Field Course) you need to have sufficient credit points. You will therefore need to have passed at least 90 credit points after referral. Progression is an Exam Board decision.

To get the best out of the week DON'T over indulge in alcohol!! You need to be fit and alert.

Footnote: If you are in doubt about anything to do with this field course itinerary please contact Darren, but if about the travel and accommodation ask Jamie. As in previous years we are sure you will have a tremendous time in this beautiful part of the Alps.