GEOGRAPHY 494: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

EARN UNITS FOR PARTICIPATING IN FACULTY RESEARCH!

Do you need some units to complete your Fall schedule? Would you like to gain some research experience that could help you in your career path and give you an opportunity to interact more closely with professors and graduate students in our department?

If so, talk to your professors about the possibility of arranging a research experience that could earn you 1–3 units of credit in Geography 494: Undergraduate Research Experience. Geography 494 consists of supervised participation in active research projects in the department. Opportunities may be available in several areas of human and physical geography and geographic information science. Watch for announcements on the undergraduate listserv and bulletin boards, and talk to faculty members whose research programs are of interest to you.

One current Geography 494 opportunity is to assist Dr. Sally Horn and graduate students with a study of fire and ecosystem history in the Cuatrociénegas valley of Mexico — an area of high biodiversity in the Chihuahuan desert that has been called the “Galapagos of North America.” Land managers are evaluating the possible use of fire to control invasive shrubs in the valley, but to develop fire management plans they need information on long-term fire history. Graduate students Matthew Valente and John Eads are working with Professor Horn to provide this information by studying charcoal particles and other small fossils in sediment cores that reach back to the last glacial period. There is scope to involve one or two Geography 494 students in this project, based in the Department’s Laboratory of Paleoenvironmental Research in the Science and Engineering Research Facility.

The 494 students who work with Dr. Horn and graduate students assist with particular research projects, but also learn about other ongoing studies of past global change. A variety of readings complement the laboratory experience. Contact Professor Sally Horn (shorn@utk.edu) if you are interested in the above or other possible opportunities to participate in research!

Geography 494 students examining charcoal samples in the Department of Geography’s Laboratory of Paleoenvironmental Research for studies of fire history in the Florida Keys and highland Costa Rica.