

course number. For each additional 11 minicourse units completed, they could be credited at the same letter-grade level achieved on the required portion of the course with a single semester credit-hour of Biology 195. All they needed to do was to add the course to their programs, either the same semester or the next semester, to obtain the grade and credit. Twenty-three students did complete enough extra units to obtain an extra hour of credit, and some others will complete a few more additional units next semester, although they may not necessarily be enrolled in Biol. 108 or 109, to obtain credit for one hour of Biol. 195. A few students completed 22 extra units and will enroll next semester in two hours of Biol. 195 to obtain credit, and one student completed every optional minicourse and will enroll in three credit hours next semester (he came close to earning four credit hours of credit, but ran out of available optional minicourses—perhaps it is time to discuss with the registrar the awarding of 3.653 semester credit hours?).

Options for All

The flexibility and versatility of the minicourse format has permitted Biol. 108-109 to offer the student (i) some options, (ii) extra credit for additional work, (iii) a voice in which instructional packages are made available, (iv) a chance to design and develop an instructional package, (v) instruction of a specialized nature specific to his major option or interests, and (vi) topical instructional materials which otherwise might not be made available (Op 11, 32, 36, 44, 45, and so on).

The optional minicourse format has afforded those who work in the course (i) an outlet for special instructional interests, (ii) the chance to develop and test topical minicourses and instructional strategies, (iii) the opportunity to test out instructional packages produced elsewhere, and (iv) a reservoir capable of holding any new and potentially valuable instructional idea that ought to be tried out. In line with the last point, during the fall semester, 1974, two minicourses on topics of great interest to me were developed and made available in a video format, and two that involved printed materials only were introduced.

Though the management of options in a course can be a bit burdensome, the educational advantages are too numerous to enumerate. Most instructors in most courses would probably feel liberated enough to try some things they've always wanted to do if they would but back off a bit on the "required" portion of their courses and consider offering options.

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Smithsonian-Peace Corps Environmental Program

A wide variety of biology skills are among professional and scientific disciplines now in demand among a number of developing countries through a recently initiated Smithsonian Institution-Peace Corps Environmental Program.

Malaysia, at the southern rim of the South China Sea, is seeking a conservation education specialist to develop a plan for country-wide conservation education programs, including a wildlife biology and management course for game department personnel. Nepal has requested six wildlife biologists to study the various Nepalese ecological systems and to determine hunting potential and regulations for various protected and proposed reserve areas.

Types of assignments vary and include research and administration as well as teaching. Disciplines in which positions are available include zoology, entomology, fisheries and marine science, wildlife biology, ecology, and others. Countries in which these skills are being sought include Botswana, Colombia, Seychelles, Brazil, Malawi, Venezuela, and Morocco, with further requests anticipated from additional countries in the coming months.

The Smithsonian role in the program is threefold. First, Smithsonian officials work with officials of the Peace Corps and the developing country to plan projects and individual assignments in the various environmental fields. Second, the Smithsonian identifies qualified individuals interested in serving for two years in a developing country and, finally, matches the skilled applicants to the overseas projects for which their training and interests are best suited.

Once accepted into the program, the volunteer is assigned to a host country agency under the auspices of the Peace Corps. For further information or application forms, contact Robert K. Poole, Office of Ecology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

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