Human Origins

Director of Turkana Basin Institute and Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins

Academic Programs Coordinator
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Degrees Awarded
Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins

The Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins is a 15-credit field education program in Kenya that can be taken after completion of a bachelor’s or other advanced degree. It is a good option for anyone who would like to hone critical thinking skills, increase personal knowledge, and gain field experience in sciences relating to prehistory. The program addresses the place humans occupy in the natural world and how we came to occupy that place. It is comprised of five sequential two-week 500-level graduate modules in ecology, archaeology, paleontology, physical anthropology, and geology.

Participants will gain hands-on experience in field survey and excavation methods, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, taphonomy, and will take field trips to important paleontological and archaeological sites, diverse ecological settings, and remarkable geological features throughout the Turkana Basin. It combines the excitement and hands-on experiential learning of a field school with the immersion of a full semester study abroad.

Admission to the Advanced Graduate Certificate

The Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins is a stand-alone semester-long program. Students can apply as a non-matriculated graduate student between receiving their Bachelor’s Degree and entering other graduate programs, or during their Masters or PhD program. The only official requirement for admission to this program is having a GPA of 2.5 or higher in the applicant’s previous Bachelor’s Degree or current graduate coursework. There are no course or experiential requirements, as this program is designed to take students from a broad range of backgrounds, quickly get all of them up to the same high level of foundational knowledge in the core human origins disciplines, and advance from there to mastery.

Facilities of the Advanced Graduate Program in Human Origins

The Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins program is based at TBI’s Ileret and Turkwel research facilities, built respectively on the east and west sides of beautiful Lake Turkana. Students live in comfortable, safe, dormitory-style quarters. There is clean water, showers, flushing toilets and electricity. Mosquito nets, towels and bedding are provided. Food is plentiful, fresh and varied. Internet and cell phone service is available.

TBI built its state-of-the-art campuses on both sides of Lake Turkana to reduce the enormous logistical challenge of accessing many of the most important sites in the vast and remote Turkana Basin, allowing year-round research to take place. As a field school student, you’ll be living, working, and studying where many of the top scientists in the have made, and continue to make, groundbreaking discoveries that have shaped the way we understand our origins.

TBI-Ileret is situated about 3 miles from Ileret village, close to the Kenya-Ethiopia border, on the east side of the lake. TBI-Turkwel is situated on the west side of Lake Turkana, near the village of Nakechichok on the Turkwel River. Both campuses have large laboratories with fossil preparation and storage areas, spacious, breezy classroom areas, and dining areas with beautiful views of the Lake Turkana landscape and fossil exposures.

Please see http://www.kenyastudyabroad.org/facilities/ for more details.

Requirements for the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins

Completion of the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Human Origins requires 15 credits. Students must complete the Turkana Basin Institute Origins Semester program in its entirety via the following courses:

- ANT 504- Ecology of the Turkana Basin
- ANT 505- Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoecology of the Turkana Basin
- ANT 506- Human Evolution in the Turkana Basin
- ANT 507- Archaeology of the Turkana Basin
- GEO 504- Geology of the Turkana Basin

Faculty for the program

Faculty information for this program can be found at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/anthropology/faculty/tbi.html and http://www.kenyastudyabroad.org/about/instructors/
NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.