This program was great! All of the field trips and small towns we visited were the best part. I love how the program wasn’t concentrated in one city, but instead we rotated around the UK. I do wish we would have had more time in London and maybe less in Hull; even if it were only a couple days. We hadn’t really gotten to know each other in London and looking back, it would have been nice to have extra days to do things as a group. Hull was so much better than I anticipated; we were all scared from what people in London had told us about the city. Hull was a good choice because it was close enough to do daytrips to York and Beverly, which were both really great. Having the cars was completely worth it! Without them, we would have been lost, plus it made for a good adventure. At Loch Lomond, we were all initially upset with our accommodations. We didn’t like the idea of having no internet or having to share one huge room. However, within a day, our opinions had changed. This program wouldn’t have been worth it without Loch Lomond because we did hands on field work and grew closer as a group. Hopefully, when the program is run again, they will have already built the new field station! Loch Lomond did bring us all together more because we were forced to hang out all day and all night, which is something we all appreciate now that we are in Edinburgh. Although we are not forced to hang out, we still do things as a whole group, which is nice. My main criticism of the trip is that it seems like we had one class (Prof. Taylor’s) and then another (Prof. Graham). I wish that we could have had both classes at the same time throughout the program. Then, it would be easier to relate topics on the spot. It is hard to think back and try and relate the information from the EA and EIA to what we have been talking about in Prof. Graham’s class. I think that it would have been better to run both at the same time. In regards to the work, I think that the posts and journals were a good way of allocating assignments. We had a little homework every night, but not enough to overwhelm us. Overall, this program has been so much fun and I can’t believe that we are leaving soon! Thanks so much!

Sorry for such a late post. I was waiting for the entire program to be over to give it a proper overview. I really enjoyed this study abroad and I am very happy that I went on it. I wasn’t so comfortable with the hotel we stayed in, in Hull. But from what I had heard it was our only option. That is something I can understand and deal with. I would possibly suggest finding something in a less shady part of town. A lot of the activities we did in the program were very strongly related to the fisheries aspect of the program, but it was hard for me to adjust to the sudden change from fisheries and some policy to all policy. I feel that all the professors should be on the trip the whole time to continuously show us what they are looking for throughout the entire program. It’s been hard for me in the latter half of the program because I now have to think back to all of the lectures and classes from the first half of the trip to write the essays and papers for the second half of the trip. We had a lot of things crammed into one week in Edinburgh and I feel that if we had been covering all aspects of all the classes throughout the entire trip it would be a lot easier for me to think of the different aspects of the trips versus having to think back about what we learned already and trying to pull a new message out of what I was hearing. I’m currently struggling to write the second essay for ISS 315 because I have to think about everything we already went over in a different point of view to write this essay and I didn’t think to think about these things this way because I didn’t know at the time that I would need to think about it in that context. Other than those few things, the program was a lot of fun. Having a small group like this was very nice, and majority of us got along very well.

The first time we went out into the field I was a little wary because I wasn’t sure if I was going to like it very much— I mean, I am not a fisheries and wildlife major, and I have little interest in that area, but I
actually really enjoyed it! Getting out of the classroom and doing hands-on things really made it interesting, and I really enjoyed all the field work/hands on things we did! Plus I feel that it really helped us apply it to what we were learning about in the classroom/helped us fully grasp what the speakers were talking about.

Being a criminal justice major, I really enjoyed the speakers that had the criminology aspect to them (EIA, EA etc.) but the other speakers such as SNH and Galloway Fisheries Trust were pretty interesting too. I suppose the reason I enjoyed a lot of the speakers is because they seemed to be so passionate about what they talked about, and that really got me interested in the subject. None of the speakers were boring.

One small suggestion is I would have liked to stay in London a little longer because there is so much to do there. I liked the fact we basically had free reign and didn’t have class so we could explore. I also liked how in Hull and Loch Lomond where there really wasn’t much to do that we were constantly going so we were never bored.

Another great thing about the program is during our free time we got to see a lot of really neat historical places of England and especially Scotland. I’m a really big history buff, so this stuff was fascinating to me (maybe to others it wasn’t so great, but I loved it!)

All and all I thought the program was great, and I really enjoyed it. I definitely hope this program continues in the future!

This study abroad ended up being considerably more organized than I expected it to be. So that’s cool.

**General Comments:** There really weren’t any activities I hated, but there were a couple that didn’t really seem worth it considering how long it took to get there, such as the beavers and the Galloway Fish Trust. I just feel like that time could have been spent doing something more productive that wouldn’t have cost so much in gas. I felt like all of the speakers we had were very informative, and very interested in what we had going on. I really wish we had been able to talk to someone who was very pro-fishing, pro-profits. I feel like that would have been a crazy hard meeting to set up, but it would have been interesting to actually get that perspective from them, not from a “they’re terrible people” perspective all the time. It’s not essential; it would just be nice to have. I really would encourage you to keep this trip this small, maybe with one or two more people, but I don’t think this trip would be anywhere near as informative or fun with a group of fifteen or so.

**Important General Criticisms:** It really seemed like our time was completely monopolized by the science aspects until we got to Edinburgh, which is completely understandable since PG wasn’t here, but I feel like if it had just been slightly touched on during our time in Hull or Loch Lomond it would have made the transition to Edinburgh a lot easier. This seems like a terrible thing to say, but I think it warrants a quick mention. Katie needed a guide. It wasn’t fair to any of us, professors included, to be expected to help her at all times. Aaaanyway, I think it would have been a lot more enjoyable if all the professors had been able to stay for the entire trip. I feel like it would have made everything we learned progress together, instead of in blocks. That made sense in my head, not sure if it does on paper.

Location specific stuff:
London: Regent’s College was incredible; definitely try to stay there again the in future. I think spending another day or two in London would be beneficial. I think it’s a really good place for people to get to know one another and begin to bond. The bus tour would have been great if we hadn’t been rerouted because of Obama. For those of us who got here early, there wasn’t really that much of a point to it, but it gives you a great overview of the city and its possibilities. I think the EIA was an awesome group to go to, but I’m not sure they should have been the first group just because of their GreenPeace esque vibe they gave off.

Hull: Vale Hotel was a little scary, but it was nice staying near town. I think I still would have preferred to be near the University and not have to worry about getting engulfed in a random pub fight every time we walked past that place. I really liked everything we did in Hull, except I wish we had found something to do in the evenings. It seemed like we all came back, went to our respective groups and got on the Internet. This is where I think spending more time in London getting to know each other would be really beneficial. I don’t know if Hull would be worth it without Ian though. He really makes or breaks that part of the trip.

Loch Lomond: Initially viewed with extreme hostility by many members of this group ended up being phenomenal. The only issue I had with Loch Lomond is it seemed like they were stretching to make it so we were really busy every day, (Galloway and beavers). It would have been really cool to have one day fully to ourselves in Loch Lomond to go hiking, or just check out the distilleries. Having Rona and Jen in Loch Lomond was awesome, it wouldn’t have been the same without them. Once the girls got over not having WiFi, it was incredible and I would definitely recommend going back there.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh has been my favorite place so far. The city is just awesome and I think is definitely the best way to end the trip. It was very different from the rest of the trip in how fluid the planning was. In some ways, this was frustrating, but at times it worked out extremely well. For instance, I asked the group if they would have any interest in touring Parliament together at some point over the weekend, and the next day Professor Graham had arranged a tour for us. It was cool that he was able to arrange what we wanted to do on our interests. The speakers were both very interesting, but you could definitely tell who the policy kids are and it was a very different dynamic from our prior speakers. It was crazy weird not having PT and Abby here though.

I haven’t once regretted coming on this trip and I’m sad it’s coming to an end.

When we first started the program, I was pretty skeptical in regards to how much ‘stuff’ we were actually going to be doing. So, I was pretty surprised during the 2 week period where we pretty much worked nonstop. The majority of the programs I found very interesting. I liked how a lot of the speakers blended pretty well together. I thought that we could have been in London for a little longer than we were there for, but I understand that price probably played a role in this. With a bigger group I would suggest more time in London, or even a day trip to somewhere in Southern England. I thought that while Hull itself was not the most interesting city, the stuff we were doing there was pretty cool. I would definitely recommend a more central location next time – either closer downtown or closer to the university. I also think it would have been cool to have been able to work or interact with some of Hull’s students. It would have been nice to meet with British students studying things similar to us, and even traveling around with them (This also could have been done in Glasgow). I thought Colin, the SNH
speaker, was particularly important because it set the stage for the rest of Scotland. I don’t know if we needed to spend more time than we did in Glasgow, but it would have been nice to venture off into civilization more than we did –perhaps a trip to Aberdeen or Inverness so we could see more of Scotland. With three different disciplines combining to make the program there are obviously things some liked more than others, so I wouldn’t really recommend removing any of the things that James Madison kids might not have found as interesting (like studying macro-organisms) in the same way I wouldn’t recommend removing things that some Fisheries and Wildlife kids might not have found as interesting.

Some things I would recommend adding would be something about Renewable Energy. A lot of speakers mentioned Scotland’s role in the sector but it would have been cool to see turbines up close, or even see some of the off-shore turbines and learn about their impact in fisheries. I would also recommend a couple of talks with people who represented the opposite side of the spectrum. While it would be difficult to speak with a tiger trader, I don’t think it would be as difficult to speak with a fisherman who does not believe fish stocks are in danger.

Overall, I was very pleased with the activities and content of the course as a whole. I was very surprised how smoothly things ran for the program’s first year of operation. I really hope this program remains in place because I definitely had a lot of fun. As far as recommendations go, since there are a variety of different majors among the participants, it would have helped to have a little more preliminary instruction about fishery and wildlife terminology and perspectives aside from our readings. For example, this would have been helpful in regards to river restoration methods. I enjoyed being very busy for the first few weeks of the program but it was definitely nice to have a less rigorous schedule once we reached Edinburgh. Although I believe more preliminary conceptual lecturing may have been helpful, I really enjoyed the balance between field work and lectures with more of the former and less of the latter. I believe I learned more from experiences in the field than I did from lectures but the lectures were a good supplement to my field experience. My favorite activities on the trip were the fish processing plant, the animal forensic lab, the Bridlington shellfish harbor, and the water activities such as electrofishing and kicking for larva. I thought journals were a great idea to help us remember our journey. However, I think doing journals and posts became slightly redundant because I found that my journals and posts were often very similar. I would recommend doing either journals or posts instead of both or developing a way to integrate posts in with our journals. I thought the aquatic culture facilities were interesting but it was a little disappointing due to the lack of variety of species. I thought the animal forensics lab was very interesting and in my opinion, should not be eliminated from future programs if at all possible. I enjoyed getting to work closely with Ian, Jennifer, and the research station staff because they provided us with lots of great information relating to our course but also relating to our tourism as well. From a personal perspective, if there are any participants with disabilities on this program in the future, I would highly recommend meeting with them to discuss in detail, any concerns you may have with their ability to participate in certain activities. This will make you and the participant feel more comfortable about the situation and give you time to establish an alternative plan if necessary. Obviously all situations that may arise cannot be planned but I believe this would help instructors understand a participant’s capabilities and limitations which can provide them with a sense of comfort and security. Professor Taylor and Abby, I believe you both did a wonderful job assisting me to make sure I got the full experience of our field work. I felt both of you were very understanding and accommodating regarding my wanting to participate in each and every activity. Despite your concerns, I am glad you gave me the opportunity to get in the water with waders to feel the sensation of the
current. I know this may not seem like much to you but it really meant a lot to me. Thus, I would recommend this program to anyone interested in fisheries and wildlife or environmental policy because it was a wonderful learning experience. Since this was the first year, I am sure this program will only continue to grow and get better and better in the years to come.

This is the first study abroad program I have taken so I did not know what to expect. I think the best part about this program was our mobility. It would have been nice to have a few more students on the trip but being able to travel everyday was awesome. I like how we were actually out in the field doing work and collecting data. The fact that this wasn’t just class time in another country is something that makes this program great. I can honestly say that we met with enough people in the environmental profession and did enough hands on work to justify this trip counting as field experience. I don’t think the beaver trip is something that needs to be included. It was a lot of driving for something that isn’t all that informative. I would say the driving times were the worst part of the trip. Granted we saw a lot of cool areas but there were some occasions, like the beaver trip, where the time spent driving didn’t seem worth it. Also I would say less time in Hull. It just wasn’t that great of a place plus the hotel was dodgy. Maybe try to stay on campus because Ian was amazing but either way I would do maybe, 4 days in Hull. I think the workload was actually appropriate. The journals felt like busy work a bit but they are a good way to remember what we learned each day. Everybody at Loch Lomond was great and helpful. I’m glad we had our own Scottish tour guides. I liked the speakers but I think it would be cool to try and find somebody who is really against environmental protection and hear from them. For the most part we heard similar viewpoints maybe there is an organization that really doesn’t like to see funding go to environmental agencies. Just to get a different perspective. Overall it was a great trip and I would recommend it to anybody regardless of their knowledge of fisheries.

The thing I liked the most about this program was the variety of the different activities we did. I really enjoyed getting out on trips to many and varied places with different groups of people. I thought the variety of speakers which talked to us and the people we visited was great and helped distinguish this from an ordinary class. I thought this emphasis on talking to professionals and visiting locations relevant to the topics was great and was very conducive to learning. I particularly enjoyed when we visited places such as the fish processing plant and the fish farm, and also when organizations took us out to look at things as they explained them, as with the river restoration field trips. Seeing this kind of thing actually being done and hearing from people who are actually doing it really provides greater insight into topics than the classroom ever could. So I really liked the variety of things we did, the visits to the field way, and the variety of the people who we met.

The speakers I most enjoyed were those who had a specific project they were working on and were discussing with us (most of our speakers were like this, actually, I think—but in particular, the EIA, the Galloway Fisheries Trust, the Chalk River Trust, etc.) because they have so much passion and expertise about that specific topic that they can really explain it well and help get you interested in it too, as well as allowing you to learn from their experience. I also really liked visiting the variety of local groups and NGOs, so we could see how conservation work is carried out in various settings.

The main suggestion that I have for the course is that more direction and explanation of the program should be given out in the beginning, perhaps with lectures explaining the themes of the courses, the.
course topics, and so on, and some kind of overview of what we will be doing and why. This might have helped to put all the speakers in context together sooner, though I did also think the independent nature of the learning was good. Just a little more of an idea ahead of time would have been helpful.

One other thing I really liked about the course was that we were able to visit historic sites after class visits. Partly just because I love history anyway and really enjoyed seeing these places, but also because it helps give a greater understanding of the place that we are and its history, and makes it feel that we are truly somewhere different than normal. This was particularly nice in places like Hull and Loch Lomond, where we couldn’t have reached much of anywhere by ourselves.

I didn’t really dislike any of our activities or our speakers, I thought there was something interesting in all of them (I know that’s not that helpful, but it’s true!). But I particularly enjoyed, as I mentioned above, activities where we could actively see the things we were talking about, and where we were talking to professionals or experts about their work out in the field where they are doing it. I really liked the small size of the class, I don’t think it would work well if it was much bigger (10 or 12 maybe). I liked the small group and the accessibility of the instructors and the speakers. The only big suggestion is more explanation of the course at the beginning. And to keep the format with the variety of speakers and the field visits, because that was good. It was a lot of fun and I learned a lot - so thank you for a great program!