



UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY AT NESSEBAR, ANCIENT MESAMBRIA (BLACK SEA), BULGARIA

Course ID: ARCH 365AL

May 25 - June 15, 2024

Academic Credits: 6 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 9 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR:

Dr. Nayden Prahov, director of the Bulgarian national Centre for Underwater Archaeology; Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Archaeology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Co-founder and Head of the Advisory Board of Balkan Heritage Foundation (naydenprahov@yahoo.com)



This program requires students to have Open Water Diver Certification, DAN diving insurance & complete Medical Approval Form prior to the beginning of the field school.

Tuition covers accommodation, general health insurance, instruction, 8 semester credit units & breakfast on workdays. Students are responsible for all other meals.

OVERVIEW

This field school provides experience and training in underwater archaeology through participation in an ongoing research project – investigating the submerged heritage of ancient Messambria – present day Nessebar – on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast. Training will include various underwater archaeology and interdisciplinary practices such as underwater reconnaissance surveys and archaeological excavations, underwater photography, photogrammetry and 3D modeling, mapping and recording of submerged archaeological structures and monuments, marine geophysical survey, study of graffiti of ships in Medieval churches, etc. Our research aims to fill the gaps in scientific knowledge of coastal landscape changes and the Black Sea level fluctuation in Antiquity and the Medieval Age, as well as the human reaction and adaptation to such changes. This field school is suitable for beginners in the field and aims to broaden knowledge, refine skills and thus propel students to further their career in Maritime and Underwater Archaeology.

A key component of the project is raising public awareness of the local archaeological heritage in order to facilitate and gain support for its protection, study and presentation. This component will be achieved through developing a project for the establishment of an underwater museum of archaeology (diving sightseeing tour) and showcasing the submerged heritage and landscapes. Students will help with the development of such program think-tank actions, individual idea

proposals (student assignments), communication with local people, diving centers, tourists and local archaeologists.

Nessebar and its Cultural Heritage

Founded at the end of the Bronze Age by a Thracian tribe, Nessebar is one of the oldest towns on the western Black Sea Coast. Its name, which was originally Melsambria, originates from the Thracian words “Melsas”, the name of the legendary founder of the settlement and “bria”- the Thracian word for town. It is situated on a small peninsula (today about 0.5² km) that is connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus. According to ancient sources, Nessebar had more than one harbor, which favored the prosperity and the development of the town. Messambria’s first Greek colonizers were of Dorian origin who settled there at the end of the 6th century BCE. The town grew quickly and became one of the most powerful Greek colonies along the western Black Sea Coast. It had several temples, a gymnasium, a theater, massive administrative buildings and corresponding infrastructure. Messambria was also gradually surrounded by massive fortification walls. It reached the peak of its prosperity in the 3rd – 2nd centuries BCE, at which point it even minted its own gold coins. Commercial links connected it to towns from the Black Sea, Aegean, and Mediterranean coasts. Numerous imported precious artifacts now displayed in the Archaeological Museum of Nessebar provide material expression of the site’s rich economic, cultural, and spiritual life in this period.

In 72 BCE, the town was conquered by Roman armies without resistance. After a temporary occupation in the beginning of the 1st century CE, it was included permanently within the borders of the Roman Empire. After the capital was moved to Constantinople in 324 and Christianity was accepted as the official religion of the Empire in 313, favorable conditions arose for the renaissance of the town. New Christian basilicas, fortification walls, and water supply lines were built in the following centuries.

The city was besieged and taken for the first time by the Bulgarians in 812 CE. It was in a border region between the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian Kingdom and periodically changed hands between the two powers. During the 12th and 13th centuries, active trade links were developed between Nessebar and some Mediterranean and Adriatic towns, such as Constantinople, Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Ancona, and Dubrovnik, as well as with the kingdoms north of the Danube region. During almost its entire Christian history, Nessebar was the seat of a bishop. Many churches and monasteries were built in the city and its surroundings reflecting its prosperity and richness.

Nessebar fell under Ottoman rule together with the Byzantine capital Constantinople in 1453 CE. During the following centuries, the economic and spiritual life did not stop and Nessebar’s harbor continued to be an important import and export center. The shipyard’s production, one of the main subsistence of the town, served the Ottoman fleet and the local merchants. In 1878 Nessebar was liberated from the Ottomans and included into the borders of Bulgaria.

Due to its unique landscape, rich cultural heritage, and the large number of well-preserved monuments (esp. churches from the 13th – 14th centuries), modern-day Nessebar is an archaeological and architectural reserve. In 1983 the Old Quarter of Nessebar was included in UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites.

Underwater heritage of the town

Underwater studies in the region of Nessebar began in 1960 as a continuation of excavations on land. Fifteen underwater archaeological campaigns were conducted in total (until 1983). During these studies, it was found that significant parts of the ancient town today are below sea level. Ruins of fortification walls, towers (including a hexagonal one), staircases, gates and other structures from the pre-Roman era, Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, were traced in various sectors around the peninsula – northwest, north, northeast, southeast, and south. The tracked layout of the fortification

walls of Messambria leads us to conclude that due to sea transgression, landslide activity, sea abrasion and a series of earthquakes, Nessebar has lost a significant intramural part of its territory. Today it lays underwater at a depth between 1.5 and 6 meters.

Since 2017 the Bulgarian Centre for Underwater Archaeology at the Ministry of Culture conducts annual regular underwater surveys and excavations in the sea off Nessebar peninsula discovering and documenting the cultural heritage of the ancient town.

Research and Heritage Preservation Objectives

- To reconstruct the evolution of the coastline of the peninsula.
- To search for, localize, identify, map and record the submerged structures around Nessebar and to clarify the defense systems of the town in Antiquity and Middle Ages.
- To date the different structures and to document the stages of relative sea level fluctuations, coastal changes and human adaptation through building new fortification systems.
- To search and identify the ancient harbors of the town.
- To study and record Medieval graffiti of ships in Nessebar's churches.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 6 semester credit units (equivalent to 9 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see assessment, below). This field school provides a minimum of 270 hours of experiential education. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

REQUIREMENTS AND PREREQUISITES

- Open Water Diving Certificate (any worldwide recognized training organization)
- Proof of DAN diving insurance policy
- Complete Medical Approval & Physician Approval Form
- At least four dives within the year before the field school (logbook). Students may choose, at their own expense, to participate in four dives in Bulgaria before the field school begins with our diving partner.
- This field school will host students and professionals from across the world. With such an international team, it is vital that all students respect the IFR Student Code of conduct, each other's cultures, local cultures, and local rules and laws.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce students to basic underwater excavation methods and practices, including preparation and work with ejectors, trowels, identify artifacts, features and structures.
2. Develop capabilities to perform underwater documentation tasks using measuring and documentation devices, creating written, graphic, photographic, photogrammetric records.
3. Teach students how to recognize and evaluate stratigraphic relationships and contextual information, generate and test site formation hypotheses.
4. Introduce students to basic finds processing methods – initial desalination, cleaning, sorting, labeling, drawing, photographing and description.
5. Introduce students to advanced underwater documentation techniques – photogrammetry and 3D modeling of underwater structures.
6. Introduce students to the basic principles of artifact conservation from salty water environments.
7. Introduce students to geophysical prospection techniques – scanning with multibeam echosounder, side scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler as well as data processing and results interpretation.
8. Introduce students to remote sensing prospection and documentation techniques using ROV, bathymetric aerial LIDAR and aerial photography (theoretical), etc.
9. Introduce students to Reflection Transformation Imaging (RTI) technique for documentation of epigraphic monuments (theoretical).
10. Train students in developing diving skills in a manner that allows scientific research – establish and maintain neutral buoyancy, work upside down, avoid contaminating the water and use proper communication signs.
11. Present Bulgarian underwater archaeology to students, in the context of world maritime archaeology (history, sites, main research topics, concerned institutions, legislation, etc.).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students participating in this field school will gain basic knowledge and experience in various underwater archaeology and interdisciplinary practices: underwater reconnaissance survey, archaeological excavations, underwater photography, photogrammetry and 3D modeling, mapping and recording of submerged archaeological structures and monuments and marine geophysical survey leaving them better prepared for any future underwater archaeological fieldwork projects. They will have certain knowledge in the history and archaeology of Nessebar and the Black Sea coast. During the outlined activities participants will learn skills transferable outside of excavations, such as analytical thinking, teamwork, the ability to meet deadlines and adapt to outside conditions, which will aid them when seeking employment in any work in the field.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be graded based on their work as follows.

% Of Grade	Activity
30 %	Exam (test)
10 %	Excavation work
10 %	Keeping a field journal and filling in documentation sheets
20 %	Student assignments (paper) about establishing an underwater archaeological tour or museum of Nessebar maritime cultural heritage
10 %	Photography & Photogrammetry
10 %	Underwater field survey
10 %	Diving skills

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of the field school is 85% of the course hours. Any significant delay or early departure from an activity will be calculated as an absence from the activity. An acceptable number of absences for medical or other personal reasons will not be taken into account if the student catches up on the field school study plan through additional readings, homework or tutorials with program staff members.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This Field School has four modules:

MODULE I – Methods and theory. Consists of following components (25 hours):

1. Lectures and instructions concerning underwater archaeological methods and practices for excavation and documentation, marine geophysics, artifact processing and documentation.
2. Lectures about sea level fluctuations, evolution of coastal landscapes, coastal geomorphology in the context of the Black Sea Coast and archaeology.
3. Lectures about the history and archaeology of Nessebar, the Western Black Sea Coast, Bulgaria and the Balkans.

MODULE II – Practicum (130 hours; min. 10 dives). Consists of two components:

1. Fieldwork: Basic practices of underwater archaeological survey, excavation and documentation. Marine geophysical survey (Optional, depending on sea conditions).
2. Workshops: Processing of data and information: creating 3D photogrammetry models, photomosaics, etc.; Finds processing and documentation (drawing, photographing, desalination).

MODULE III - Excursions accompanied by lectures, presentations and behind-the-scenes visits to sites of historical/archaeological significance (app. 20 hours):

1. Sozopol – ancient Apollonia Pontica
2. Nessebar – ancient Messambria
3. Museum of the Anchor in Ahtopol
4. Exposition “Secrets from Underwater” in Kiten

MODULE IV – Student assignments (app. 25 hours) will include work on:

1. Field journal
2. Feature drawings (optional)
3. Photogrammetry data processing
4. Writing a proposal for establishment of Museum of Underwater Archaeology / Diving sightseeing tour in Nessebar

All IFR field school begins with a safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review of the IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Date	Morning	Afternoon
Day 1 May 25		<p>- Early afternoon – pick -up from the airport (optional) and transfer by a shuttle to Emona Guest House in Nessebar.</p> <p>- by 7.00 pm – Arrival in Nessebar and check-in.</p> <p>- 8.00 pm - Traditional Bulgarian welcome dinner.</p>
Day 2	<p>Orientation panel</p> <p>Preparing of personal diving equipment</p> <p>Safety instructions.</p>	<p>- Nessebar sightseeing tour and visit to Museum of Archaeology in Nessebar</p> <p>- Lecture: History and Archaeology of Nessebar</p>
Day 3	Practicing basic underwater diving techniques.	- Lecture: Underwater Cultural Heritage of Nessebar.
Day 4	Underwater field survey	- Lecture: Overview of the Bulgarian Underwater Archaeology – Part 1
Day 5	Fieldwork.	- Lecture: Overview of the Bulgarian Underwater Archaeology – Part 2
Day 6	Fieldwork.	- Lecture: Challenges before the underwater cultural heritage
Day 7	Fieldwork.	-Lecture: Ship graffiti in Medieval churches as historical source – Part 1
Day 8	Excursion to Sozopol, ancient Apollonia Pontica.	
Day 9	Day off	
Day 10	Fieldwork.	-Lecture: Ship graffiti in Medieval churches as historical source – Part 2
Day 11	Fieldwork.	-Workshop: Documentation of underwater sites and artefacts
Day 12	Fieldwork.	-Workshop: Documentation of underwater sites and artefacts
Day 13	Fieldwork.	-Lecture: Marine Geophysics
Day 14	Marine Geophysics demonstration.	-Lecture: Conservation of artifacts from marine environment
Day 15	Visit to Museum of Underwater Archaeology in Kiten and Museum of the Anchor in Ahtopol	
Day 16	Day off	

Day 17	Lecture: Underwater photogrammetry	- Workshop Underwater photogrammetry
Day 18	- Workshop Underwater photogrammetry	- Workshop Underwater photogrammetry
Day 19	- Workshop Underwater photogrammetry	- Workshop Underwater photogrammetry
Day 20	Fieldwork and / or - Workshop: - Workshop Underwater photogrammetry	- Evaluation of the field school; Exam; Discussion
Day 21	Fieldwork (not diving) or excursion / workshop; Taking care of the gear;	- Free afternoon - Dinner and farewell party
Day 22 15 June	Departure – return home or further travel	

Course structure may be subject of change upon directors' discretion and weather conditions.

TYPICAL WORKDAY

7.30 - 8.00 am	- Breakfast
8:00 am - 2.00 pm	- Fieldwork
2.00 - 4.30/5:30 pm	- Lunch and siesta
4.30/5.30 -7.00/7:30 pm	- Lectures and workshops

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of the mandatory reading will be posted on a shared Dropbox folder. Enrolled students will get access to this folder.

Agisoft LLC 2023. Agisoft Metashape User Manual: Professional Edition, Version 2.0.

Bowens, A. Underwater Archaeology: The NAS Guide to Principles and Practice, Second edition, 2009, Portsmouth, Blackwell Publishing, 15-169.

Plets, R., J. Dix, R. Bates. Marine Geophysics Data Acquisition, Processing and Interpretation. Guidance Notes, English Heritage, 2013, 12-40.

Ognenova-Marinova, L., H. Preshlenov. Past and Future of the Underwater Archaeological Research in Nessebar, Bulgaria. – In: F. Maniscalco (ed.). *Mediterraneum. Tutela e valorizzazione dei beni culturali ed ambientali. Tutela, Conservazione e Valorizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale Subacqueo*, 4. Napoli, 2004, 263-269. ISBN 88-87835-50-0

Pacheco-Ruiz, R., Adams, J. & Pedrotti, F. 2018. 4D modelling of low visibility Underwater Archaeological excavations using multi-source photogrammetry in the Bulgarian Black Sea, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 100, 120-129.

Preshlenov, H. Withdrawing Coasts. Geomorphology, Bathymetry and Archeological Cartography in Nessebar. – In: Iv. Karayotov (ed.). *Bulgaria Pontica Medii Aevi, VI-VII. Mesambria Pontica*. International seminar Nessebar, May 28-31, 2006. *Studia in honorem Professoris Vasil Guzelev. Byprac*, 2008, 51- 67. ISSN 1313-3535

Preshlenov, Chr. Morphodynamics of the coastal zone of the Nessebar Peninsula (Bulgaria): archaeological and geological benchmarks. – In: R. Kostov, B. Gaydarska, M. Gurova (ed.). *Geoarchaeology and Archaeomineralogy. Proceedings of the International Conference, Sofia, 29-30 October 2008*. Sofia, 2008, 305-307. ISSN 978-954-353-085-4

Preshlenov, H. Coastal Instability and Urban Changes – the Case of the Nessebar Peninsula – *Geologica Balcanica*, 39, 2010, 1-2, 325. ISSN 0324-0894

Radić Rossi, I., Casabán, J., Yamafune, K., Torres, R. & Batur, K. 2019. Systematic Photogrammetric Recording of the Gnalić Shipwreck Hull Remains and Artefacts. 3D Recording and Interpretation for Maritime Archaeology.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Catsambis, A., B. Ford, D. Hamilton. *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Green, J. 2004. *Maritime Archaeology, A Technical Handbook*, Elsevier Academic Press.

Prahov, N., Zborover, D. The Ancient Mesambria Field School in Underwater Archaeology: Synergy in Benefit of Bulgarian Cultural Heritage.- In: *ACUA Underwater Archaeology Proceedings, 2020*, An Advisory Council of Underwater Archaeology Publication, Society for Historical Archaeology, 49 – 56; ISBN: 978-1-939531-38-4

Reich, J., Steiner, P., Ballmer, A., Emmenegger, L., Hostettler, M., Stäheli, C., Naumov, G., Taneski, B., Todoroska, V., Schindler, K. & Hafner, A. 2021. A novel Structure from Motion-based approach to underwater pile field documentation, *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 39.

PART II: TRAVEL, SAFETY & LOGISTICS

INSURANCE

The Institute for Field Research (IFR) will purchase general health insurance for all eligible participating students. This insurance does not cover diving activities and students need to purchase a DAN diving policy insurance and present proof of coverage to the IFR. Policies may be purchased from the Divers Alert Network (diversalertnetwork.org/insurance) or DAN Europe (daneurope.org/insurance).

NOTICE OF INHERENT RISK

Traveling and conducting field research can involve risk. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety. Participants should also take every reasonable step to reduce risk while on IFR programs, including following the safety advice and guidelines of your program director, being alert to your surroundings and conditions, letting someone know where you will be at all times, and assessing your personal security.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We strongly encourage participants to consider purchasing this insurance, as unexpected events may prevent your participation or cause the program to be canceled. Insurance is a relatively small cost to protect your educational investment in an IFR program. When comparing trip cancellation insurance policies, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by unforeseen circumstances, including weather, revisions by local permitting agencies, or conditions onsite. While this schedule represents the intentions of the program, adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research, and necessary alterations to the schedule may happen at any time.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

This field school includes physical work underwater at archaeological sites. To avoid health problems and injuries, a strict discipline will be maintained, especially on diving days. Students will have to adhere to a regime of structured diving schedule, diet restrictions and rest periods. Although the depth of diving will be fairly shallow – 2-8 meters– dive masters and program staff will monitor diving times and intervals and students will not be able to dive without strict supervision and report to directors.

Students are required to immediately report any health problems, physical discomfort or any other issues that may impact diving schedules. Project directors hold the full discretion to prevent students from diving if they deem that a student's health and/or safety may be threatened by (continued) diving.

Be aware that in May and June days are hot (25-35°C) and nights are chilly (15-25°C). Although rare in this region and season, rainy days are a possibility. The Black Sea is usually calm at this time of the year, but diving will be halted during windy days, when waves are high, currents too strong or water too muddy. Diving decisions will be made and are at the sole discretion of the project directors.

Proper protection from the elements, both during dives and on terrestrial settings, will be required and enforced by project staff members.

Many Bulgarians speak English, but cultural differences should be expected. Although many signs include Latin characters, expect street signs and most public signs to primarily use Cyrillic alphabet.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult the project director / program staff, as appropriate.

STUDENT HEALTH

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place.

We recommend that students adopt best-practices for arriving in a good state of health to protect themselves and their peers' readiness to set about the work of the field school. A thriving field camp environment is a constant exchange of energy, patience, effort, respect, and service. Arriving healthy is every student's first act of service — their first opportunity to behave in a way that respects the safety and wellness of one another.

IFR programs follow the health requirements and guidelines of local health authorities. You may also wish to consult recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control at:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>

For current Bulgarian entry requirements as per Health order of the Bulgarian Ministry of Health please check the websites of the [Bulgarian Ministry of Health](#) and the [US Embassy in Bulgaria](#) for most up to date information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Safety and health orientation will take place at the beginning of the program.
- Underwater Fieldwork will be supervised by dive masters.
- Students will always be supervised and accompanied by field school instructors and/or dive masters underwater.
- Nessebar is a major Bulgarian summer resort location and offers medical facilities, first aid, and numerous pharmacies. The nearest decompression chamber is in the city of Burgas (35 km).
- Underwater Fieldwork will be performed at 2 – 8 meters depth. The diving time underwater as well as the diving requirements will be strictly adhered to in order to avoid any risk of decompression sickness.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of EU, EEA, USA, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand do not need a visa to visit Bulgaria for up to 90 days. Citizens of all other countries may need a visa. The Balkan Heritage Foundation can send an official invitation letter that should be used at the relevant embassy to secure a visa to the program. For more information visit the Balkan Heritage Foundation web site at <http://www.bhfieldschool.org/information/visa-help> and the links provided there.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

Please frequently consult the website of the US Embassy in Bulgaria for the most up-to-date travel restrictions/protocols <https://bg.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

If a student is held at the border for any reason, they should contact the program director or appointed staff member for their field school at the numbers provided in their orientation materials.

On May 25 in the early afternoon, an **optional** pick-up and transfer by a shuttle from Sofia Airport to Emona Guest House in Nessebar might be organized. The shuttle cost may vary between 70 EUR and 110 euro (approx. 75 to 120 USD) depending on the number of travelers.

Students are able to get general information, essential travel basics and tips concerning the project location and the country at <http://www.bhfieldschool.org/countries/bulgaria> (**for Bulgaria**) and <https://www.bhfieldschool.org/program/underwater-archaeology-in-the-black-sea> (**for the project / see the map on the bottom of project web site**). All students will receive a travel info-sheet with specific travel details prior to departure.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director / project staff immediately (email: bhfs.admissions@gmail.com). A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will stay at the family hotel [Emona Guest house](#) in the Old Town Quarter of Nessebar in rooms with two to three beds (bathrooms with shower and WC, TV, air-conditioning). Cheap laundry service and free Wi-Fi is available. Participants are not expected to bring any additional equipment, bedclothes or towels. Single rooms may be available upon request for the supplement of 160 EUR (approx. 175 USD) per week. Staying an extra day at the hotel costs 40 EUR (approx. 44 USD) per night per person. The distance from the hotel to the sites and the beach is approx. 200 / 400 m and it takes approx. 2 / 5 min to walk. Diving gear will be transported by a car.

Meals. Breakfasts on workdays as well as the welcome and the farewell dinners are covered by the tuition fee. Students are responsible for their daily lunch and dinners and all meals on days off.

Nessebar offers a variety of restaurants that can meet everyone's preferences and dietary requirements – from fast food options to cozy gourmet restaurants. The average meal price (soup/salad, main dish and dessert) can cost between 10 to 20 USD. The project team will recommend restaurants for different preferences (cuisine, cost, dietary needs) and will arrange discounts for the students.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Bulgarian dialing code: +359

Time Difference (Summertime): UTC/GMT +2 hours (April through September).

Measure units: degree Celsius (°C), meter (m.), gram (gr.), liter (l)

Money/Banks/Credit Cards: The Bulgarian currency is the Bulgarian LEV (BGN). You cannot pay in Euros or other foreign currency, except in casinos and big hotels (where the exchange rate is really unfair)! Since 1997, the Bulgarian LEV has been pegged to the EURO at the exchange rate of 1 euro = 1.958 lev (usually sold for 1.94 lev). Bulgarian banks accept all credit cards and sometimes travellers' checks. Usually banks open at 8.00-8.30 am and close at 17.00-18.00 pm. They work from Monday to Friday. Shopping malls, supermarkets, and many shops in Sofia and/or bigger towns and resorts will also accept credit cards. This is not valid for smaller "domestic" shops throughout the country where the only way of payment is cash! You can see Bulgarian notes and coins in circulation at: <http://www.bnb.bg/NotesAndCoins/NACNotesCurrency/index.htm?toLang= EN>

Exchange of foreign currencies is possible not only at banks but also at numerous exchange offices. Note that most of these don't collect a commission fee and have acceptable exchange rates (+/- 0.5-1,5% of the official rate). However, those located in shopping areas of big cities, resorts, railway stations, airports, etc., can overcharge you in varying amounts. Ask in advance how much money you will get!

ATMs are available all over the country and POS-terminals are in every bank office.

If you plan to use your credit/debit card in Bulgaria, please inform your bank of your travel before departure. Otherwise, it is very possible that your bank will block your account/ card for security reasons when you try to use it abroad. Unblocking your card, when abroad, if possible, may cost you several phone calls and a lot of money.

Electricity

The electricity power in the country is stable at 220 - Volts A.C. (50 Hertz). Don't forget to bring a voltage converter, if necessary!

Outlets in Bulgaria generally accept 1 type of plug:



two round pins. If your appliance's plug has a different shape, you will need a plug adapter.

Emergency

National emergency number is 112.

EQUIPMENT LIST (What to bring)

- Diving gear – Diving weights and tanks will be provided by the field school. Students are responsible for equipment listed below. If you do not wish to bring your own diving gear, you may rent such gear from a local Diving Center at a price of up to 30 Euros per day (depending on items rented). You will need:
 - Wet/dry suite 5mm thickness or more **with a hood (or with separate hood)**
 - Dive boots
 - Fins
 - Mask
 - Snorkel
 - Regulator
 - Buoyancy Controlling Device (BCD)

- Diving knife
- Belt without the weights (weights will be provided by the program)
- Diving gear bag
- Optional: dive computer, writing slate board.
- A laptop (powerful one) with Windows, macOS or Linux.
- A set of walking or hiking shoes for the excursions and the fieldwork.
- Clothing suitable for outdoor activities (weather conditions from hot & sunny to rainy & chilly).
- Wide brim hat.
- A small backpack (for your food, bottle of water, wet wipes, camera, papers etc.)
- A light raincoat for possible rainy and windy days.
- Medication - It is not necessary to bring over-the-counter medicine since you can buy all common types in Bulgaria (e.g., aspirin, anti-insecticides, sunscreen, etc.) It is recommended, however, that you bring any individual prescription medicines at sufficient quantities for the duration of this program.
- A converter for an EU type electricity wall-plug.
- A good attitude for work, fun, study, and discoveries 😊