

Earth Education International

Costa Rica Culture Immersion

Universidad de San José credit: BE 116; Educación Sociedad y Cultura

Spring 2016

DRAFT

Course Overview

Class Times	Mon & Wed, Session IIb/IIIa (4:30-7:35pm)
Instructor	Juan Manuel Villalobos
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Office hours	By appointment

Course Description

An exploration of Costa Rican society and culture in the Central American context: Analysis of associated historical regional & global trends, cultural behaviors & patterns, and culture contrasts with Nicaragua and North America. Includes cultural activities, guided field immersion, contrast of regional & home-culture variations, and practical ethnographic field work. No prerequisite. Three units.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze Costa Rican cultural foundations, behaviors, and patterns.
2. Contrast Costa Rican culture with regional & home-culture variations.
3. Accurately interpret socio-cultural situations in Costa Rica/Central America
4. Demonstrate the acquisition of above-mentioned cultural knowledge.
5. Acquire practical cultural knowledge through ethnographic fieldwork.

Course Materials

I. Required Reading

Wallerstein, Claire. 2007. Culture Shock! Costa Rica: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette (or 2011 Kindle version). Singapore: Cavendish Square Publishing.

II. Other Materials Included in Course Packet

Booth, J. A., Wade, C. J., & Walker, T.W. 2010. Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change. (5th Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Molina, Iván & Palmer, Steven. 2000 The History of Costa Rica, Second Ed. San José: Editorial Costa Rica

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance/Participation.** In order to achieve stated course objectives, attendance and active participation is essential. Evaluation in this category will thus consist of both your *physical presence* in the classroom as well as all associated field trips/cultural activities, and *active participation* (quantity & quality of verbal interaction) during discussions, in-class activities, and field work. *Note:* showing up late on multiple occasions is considered equivalent to missing an entire class period. See absences' under course policies for more information. Please feel free to check with the instructor periodically throughout the semester regarding your progress in this category. *Value:* 100 points (20%). *Late Policy:* Not applicable (no make-up's for missed classes).

2. **Culture Reports.** In order to facilitate an in-depth analysis of different aspects of Costa Rican/Central American culture, six written reports on varying themes associated with course topics/activities are required. Each report must be at least one page in length (double-spaced, 8½" x 11" sheet or equivalent), provide a thorough but concise summary of observed cultural behaviors/norms, and include associated personal reflections. In order to successfully complete these assignments, it will be necessary to pay close attention to, and interact with, the local culture & contrast observations with your home culture. Please note that all entries must be directly related to program-related experiences in Central America, rather than personal or anecdotal events. Reports may be written by hand, but *must be legible*. Alternatively, they may be composed in a Word document and printed (one page of paper maximum, double-sided if need be) to turn in. All culture reports will be due at the beginning of class on most Mondays (see course schedule). *Value:* 25 points (5%) each, 150 points (30%) total. *Late Policy:* 10% deduction per day late.

3. **Quizzes.** Two quizzes will be given during the course, one approximately mid-term, and the other upon completion (see course schedule). They will cover both topics presented in class, and associated course readings. *Value:* 50 points (10%) each, 100 points (20%) total. *Late Policy:* Not applicable (no make-up's for unexcused absences).

4. **Research Paper.** Students must develop an in-depth research project that will serve as a final evaluation of performance in the course. The written research paper should be at least 5 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, size 10 Times New Roman font), and include an introduction, development of the theme, a conclusion, and a bibliography with a minimum of five references. Possible topics include, but are not limited to the following: Sex roles, dress, the women's movement, religion, economy, the educational system, sexual/medical tourism, drug consumption/commerce, ethnic/indigenous groups, Nicaraguan/Columbian immigration, conflict along the Rio San Juan, etc. Other topics may also be selected, but require instructor approval. *Value:* 100 points (20%) total. *Late Policy:* 10% deduction per day late.

5. **Research Presentation.** Once the research paper has been completed, students will be required to present the results of their research to the class. Oral presentations should be approximately 15 to 20 minutes in length, and include materials from the written paper as well as a description of the procedures employed in data collection. A PowerPoint presentation or any sort of creative way for presenting the project is a plus. *Value:* 50 points (10%). *Late Policy:* Not applicable (presentations must be given on the assigned date unless alternative arrangements are made ahead of time).

Student Evaluation

The final letter grade for the course will be based on a maximum possible of 500 points according to the following University of Redlands standard grading scale:

95-100% = 475-500 pts. = A	73-76% = 365-384 pts. = C
90-94% = 450-474 pts. = A-	70-72% = 350-364 pts. = C-
87-89% = 435-449 pts. = B+	67-69% = 335-349 pts. = D+
83-86% = 415-434 pts. = B	63-66% = 315-334 pts. = D
80-82% = 400-414 pts. = B-	60-62% = 300-314 pts. = D-
77-79% = 385-399 pts. = C+	0-59% = <300 pts. = Fail

Course Policies

Attendance. With the exception of illness, participants are expected to attend all program functions, activities, field trips, service-learning activities, guest presentations, etc. There are a variety of reasons for this including receiving academic credit for associated activities, facilitating program dynamics, assisting with personal adjustment issues, and contributing your effort toward group assignments. Students will be held responsible for knowing the class schedule and making alternative arrangements ahead of time for any missed assignments. For further detail regarding participation, see 'course requirements' above.

Absences. In accordance with general program policies, course absences will subject grades to being lowered. Unexcused absences from *class meetings* will subject the final course grade to a reduction of 1% (for 1 days missed), 2% (for 2 days missed), and 5% per day thereafter (for three or more days). Also note that excessive tardiness to class may be counted as missed class. Missed *field study/volunteer work days* will result in a 5% reduction in the final grade (1 day missed), and a 10% reduction per day thereafter (this is also considered class time). This means that if you are late and miss a departure for a field trip, you not only miss the trip, but also the equivalent amount of class time. For SPECIAL circumstances (beyond your control) where you are unable to attend, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DIRECTLY CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO CLASS TIME, regardless of the reason for the absence. Otherwise, all policies previously outlined will be in force and there will be NO make-ups.

Appropriate Behavior. The following guidelines for appropriate behavior will apply to this course, and the program:

- Cell phones** may NOT be used during scheduled class time, whether we are in a formal classroom or in the field.
- Laptops, tablets, or similar devices** are to be used ONLY for taking notes, not for connecting to the internet for any other purpose. If this policy is disrespected, WiFi service at the university may be discontinued for all.
- Email** is the official means of communication throughout the program. As such, all students will be responsible for checking email at least once daily. Thus, please be sure we have the best email address for you during your time in Costa Rica, as not receiving/reviewing emails is no excuse for not knowing appropriate information. Accordingly, all communications with professors related to academics shall be via email (or phone, if during regular working hours). Texting is not an appropriate means for questions about course assignments.
- Homework questions** that are within 24 hours prior to the due date are subject to a non-response. Though students often choose to complete assignments the night before it is due, questions that may arise at that point do not constitute an

urgent situation for the professor. In particular, texting or calling at the last minute--particularly outside of working hours--is not appropriate, nor a substitute for advanced planning.

e) **All other policies** identified on the program web site, and presented at the beginning of the program, also apply to this course: <http://www.earthedintl.org/Policies.htm>.

Course Outline

I. Central America: An Overview

- a) Regional trends (Understand C.A., Ch. 1)
- b) Global forces (Understand C.A., Ch. 2)
- c) Common history (Understand C.A., Ch. 3)

II. Costa Rica: Historical Context

- a) Early history: Costa Rica from the 18th Century (***Culture Text, Ch. 1&2***)
- b) Modern politics & economics (Understanding C.A., Ch. 4)
- c) Land use & cash crops
 - 1. Agricultural expansion (History of C.R., Ch. 5)
 - 2. Coffee & society (History of C.R., Ch. 6)
 - 3. Diversification & the banana republic (History of C.R., Ch. 7)

III. Costa Rican Culture

- a) Survival skills (***Culture Text, Ch.5***)
- b) Events, hobbies & sports (***Culture Text, Ch. 7***)
- c) The people (***Culture Text, Ch.3***)
- d) Social customs & attitudes (***Culture Text, Ch.4***)
- e) Business customs (***Culture Text, Ch. 9***)
- f) Food & entertainment (***Culture Text, Ch. 6***)

IV. Culture Contrast: Nicaragua

- a) Historical background (Understanding C.A., Ch. 5, p.81-88)
- b) The revolution (Understanding C.A., Ch. 5, p.88-97)
- c) Present day (Understanding C.A., Ch. 5, p.97-108)

V. Summary & Conclusions

Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENTS/DUE DATES
1	Wed, 18 Feb	- Course introduction	Read Understand C.A., Ch. 1&2
		- Central America: Regional trends & global forces	
	Sat, 21 Feb	- Cultural Activity: Feria del Agricultor visit	Read <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch. 1&2;
2	Mon, 23 Feb	- Cultural report discussion #1	Cultural report #1 due (trends/global forces) Read Und.C.A., Ch. 4; <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch.5)
		- Central America: A common history	
	Wed, 25 Feb	- Costa Rica in perspective	Read <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch. 7
		- Survival skills	
3	Mon, 2 March	- Cultural report discussion #2	Cultural report #2 due (history)
		- Events, hobbies & sports	
	Wed, 4 March	- Cultural Activity: Popular dance class	Read History of C.R., Ch. 5&6
4	Mon, 9 March	- Cultural report discussion #3	Cultural report #3 due (events, hobbies & sports)
		- Quiz #1	
	Wed, 11 March	- Agriculture expansion & coffee	Read Understand C.A., Ch. 4
	Fri, 13 March	- Cultural Activity: Coffee farm visit	--
5	Mon, 16 March	- Cultural report discussion #4	Cultural report #4 due (agriculture) Read History of C.R., Ch. 7
		- Culture contrast: Nicaragua	
	Wed, 18 Mar	- <i>Nicaragua field trip (no class)</i>	--
6	Mon, 23 Mar	- Cultural report discussion #5	Cultural report #5 due (Nicaragua) Read <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch. 3
		- The banana republic	
	Wed, 25 March	- Cultural Activity: Centro Cultural Figueres/Museo	Read <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch. 4
		- The people	
7	Mon, 30 Mar	- Cultural report discussion #6	Cultural report #6 due (politics) Read <i>Culture Text</i> , Ch. 9&6
		- Social customs & attitudes	
	Wed, 1 April	- Business customs	Research papers due
		- Food & entertainment	
8	Mon, 6 April	- Research presentations	Research presentations due
	Wed, 8 April	- Quiz #2	
		- Summary & conclusions	