ALS 5905: International Studies
Costa Rica – Tropical Ecosystems Study Abroad
Spring Break, 2024
March 9-16, 202

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Course Objectives

To actively experience the natural resource management, agricultural practices, and ecotourism programs in Costa Rica. Students will observe the rich cultural and natural resources Costa Rica offers and how the country plans and manages those resources to benefit its citizens and environment.

Grading

			Final Percent	Grade
Pre-trip Participation	5%		96.7 – 100	A+
"Things-to-Know Review	10%		93.4 – 96.6	A
"Things-to-Know" Worksheet	15%		90.0 – 93.3	A-
Trip Journal	10%		86.7 – 89.9	B+
Ecotourism Exercise	10%		83.4 – 86.6	B
Worksheets	10%		80.0 – 83.3	B-
Course Paper	25%		76.7 – 79.9	C+
Participation	15%		73.4 – 76.6	C
Total	100%		70.0 – 73.3	C-
			66.7 – 69.9	D+
			63.4 – 66.6	D
			60.0 – 63.3	D-
			Less than 60%	E (Fail)

Course Tasks

Pre-Trip Participation

Throughout the first half of the semester, we will meet as a group to discuss Costa Rica, aspects of the trip, and course subjects. Readings, in-class activities, and outside exercises will be assigned. We will attempt to find times when you can all participate in class meetings but be aware that there are many students in the class, and we likely won't get all of you at any one time. If you do miss a meeting, then you'll need to work with Drs. Stein or Andreu to get the information presented at that meeting and complete assigned work.

"Things to Know" Review

The undergraduate students will be writing 2–3-page papers regarding various aspects of Costa Rica. You will not be required to write a paper. However, you will be reading these papers, grading them for quality (we will allow students to improve papers based on your comments for improved grades). You will submit electronically marked copies with your comments to Dr. Stein by the deadline.

"Things to Know" Questions

After reading the "Things to Know" papers, you will develop ten multiple choice or fill in the blank questions based on those readings (avoid true and false and questions that require more than one or two word answers). These questions will be incorporated into worksheets that the undergraduates will complete to ensure they read all the "Things to Know" papers. Do your best to write challenging questions, but make sure they are answerable (i.e., 1 correct answer and 3 incorrect answers).

Submit your questions in an MS Word file. You will write three to four questions for each paper assigned to you (ensuring you write a total of ten questions). In your document write the name of the paper and author for each paper assigned to you, and then list the questions below the name of each paper.

Trip Journal (Due: Every day of the trip)

All students will write a summary of what you learned each day of the trip. This can be both personal observations, as well as, information you will need to write your Course Paper (see below). You should take notes while visiting the locations, listening to guides, and observing situations throughout the trip. You will then use that information in your final paper. Although we will check your journal every night (or morning) to ensure you are writing, we will not be looking for you to write about specific information. This is your opportunity to record information you think is important.

Ecotourism Exercise

Ecotourism is a major part of Costa Rica's economy, use of natural resources, and your current experience on this study abroad program; therefore, it's beneficial that you have a basic understanding of the concept. To gain this understanding, you will review two articles related to ecotourism and answer a series of questions related to ecotourism and the articles while on the trip. You will be able to answer the questions through written text, taking pictures, drawing diagrams, or any other creative way you find to answer the questions. The questions will come from the readings and will ask you to identify or describe elements from the trip that relates to those readings that you observed or learned about while traveling.

Worksheets (Due: Depends on worksheet)

Prior to and during the trip you will receive worksheets that you will need to complete using information you receive on the trip. Some of these questions will require you to provide factual information (in other words, there is a *correct* answer), and other questions require you to provide an *informed* opinion. Other questions will be a mix of both types. Responses will be graded based on the quality (not length) of the response. Although you can share information among each other, **YOU MUST answer the questions in your own words. Copying is not accepted and will result in a 0 for that worksheet.**

<u>Course Paper</u>
You will write a paper that answers a question about something you learned while on the trip. You will be free to choose any topic of interest to you, as long as it directly relates to tropical ecosystems or Costa Rica in some way. You should have a topic chosen by March 3, but you can adjust your topic during the trip if needed. If you want to change the topic, discuss your change with Drs. Stein or Andreu or Andres Leon. Unlike the undergraduate students, you will be free to use literature when writing your paper. However, I must see some direct connection between information you learned on the trip and your final paper. The paper should be between 12 and 18 pages, double spaced.

<u>Participation</u>
You are expected to actively participate in all aspects of this trip. Since this course does not rely on exams and lectures, it is dependent upon you to take part in organized activities and do your best to contribute to assignments, presentations, and discussions.

We will meet several times before we travel to Costa Rica. These meetings will serve to educate all students about the country, but we will also provide important information about the trip. Please do your best to attend these meetings. If you cannot attend, please let me know and arrange another time to meet.

The quality of this trip depends on the behavior of the participants. *This is a study abroad tour – not a spring break vacation.* We often have to get up early, follow tight schedules, and visit areas where you must act courteous and professional. Participating in any disruptive behavior or failing to follow the schedule impacts, the entire group and your ability to benefit from the tour. Actively listening to tour guides and experiencing the diverse places we visit are imperative to enjoying and getting a good grade in this course. Although you will have free time, these requirements still apply during your free time, and you are required to stay with the group and act appropriately. Please carefully read all agreements and waivers you have signed to participate in this class.

<u>Policies and Requirements</u>

Late Submissions and Make-up Requests

It is the responsibility of the student to access on-line lectures, readings, quizzes, and exams and to maintain satisfactory progress in the course. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Computer or other hardware failures, except failure of the UF e-Learning system, will not excuse students for missing assignments. Any late submissions due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Helpdesk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request consideration.

For computer, software compatibility, or access problems call the HELP DESK phone number—352-392-HELP = 352- 392-4357 (option 2).

Inclusive Learning Environment
This course embraces the University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads,

The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities for inclusive learning environment, please see the instructor or refer to the Office of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs website: http://multicultural.ufl.edu.

Communication Courtesy, Respect and Professionalism

Just as in any professional environment, meaningful and constructive dialogue is expected in this class and requires a degree of mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing points of view. **Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained in this class at all times.** All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy, decency, and civility in all interactions. Failure to do so will not be tolerated and may result in loss of participation points and/or referral to the Dean of Students' Office. Turn off cell phones and bury them away from temptation, and only use laptops for taking notes and completing class exercises. E-mailing, texting, or surfing websites during class is not permitted and students may lose participation points if distracted by computers during class. Instructors will require all laptops to be closed if students are found misusing laptops during lecture or discussion.

Semester Evaluation Process

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning.

At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Academic Honesty

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."**

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code.

It is assumed all work will be completed independently. There are no group assignments in this course, but there are in-class group activities. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course. *Remember, do not plagiarize!* Academic honesty dictates that we credit information to the original source through citations or quotes. Copying information or key phrases from other documents (whether they are Web sites, newspaper articles, journal articles, lectures, etc.) without documenting the source is plagiarism *and a violation of the Student Honor Code. If documented, it will result in a zero for that assignment and in submission of the evidence to the UF authorities.* Please take special caution when using or summarizing other sources to be sure your words are your own. Consult the UF tutorial if you wish to have a better handle on plagiarism: http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/students.html or ask questions in class.

Services for Students with Disabilities
The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Software Use
All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or

criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact http://www.umatter.ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)
- Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). http://www.police.ufl.edu/

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml.
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling . http://www.career.ufl.edu/
- Library Support, http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Student Complaint Process

The School cares about your experience and we will make every effort to address course concerns. We request that all of our online students complete a course satisfaction survey each semester, which is a time for you to voice your thoughts on how your course is being delivered. If you have a more urgent concern, your first point of contact should be the SFFGS Academic Coordinator or the Graduate/Undergraduate Coordinator for the program offering the course. You may also submit a complaint directly to UF administration:

- Students in online courses: http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process
- Students in face-to-face courses: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/