

COLA 298

INTERDISCIPLINARY SPECIAL TOPICS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS: SOCIAL SCIENCES

BULLETIN INFORMATION

COLA 298 – Interdisciplinary Special Topics in the Liberal Arts: Social Sciences (3 credit hrs)

Course Description:

Interdisciplinary special topics emphasizing the social sciences. May be repeated as content varies by suffix and title.

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

Topic: Costa Rica: International Inquiry

This course introduces students to the culture of Central America with specific emphasis on political economy and the societal structures that influence land use and governmental policy decisions. Costa Rica is selected as the primary case of interest. The course opens with an overview of the economic, political, and cultural history of Central America. Through lectures, readings, and observations, students will explore the relationship between political power and land ownership and use; the role of the agro-economy, manufacturing, and tourism; the relationship between government and economic sectors; the role of social movements (women, labor) in the development of Costa Rican politics, economy, and culture; and the interrelationships of gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration in contemporary Costa Rican society and its economy.

The course takes place in Heredia, Costa Rica with some class meetings on the University of South Carolina campus before and after travel.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of COLA 298, students will be able to:

1. Examine the relationship between politics and the economy in Central America with an emphasis on Costa Rica
2. Discuss the political, economic, and cultural development of Costa Rica
3. Identify the major sectors of the Costa Rican economy and explain their significance
4. Discuss contemporary Costa Rican society and the relationship among gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration in its economy
5. Analyze problems and issues in the political economy of Costa Rica and communicate these findings.

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. Booth, John A., Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker. *Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change*. 5th Edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 2010.
2. Paige, Jeffery M. *Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS

- 1. Response Papers:** Two response papers are required. Twice during the course, students will prepare a brief (maximum 2 typed pages) response paper in response to specific aspects of the course. The first paper is due the second week of the session and will be in response to the course readings. The second paper will be a response to one of the sectors examined in the study abroad portion of the course.
- 2. Final Exam:** The final exam will be based on course readings and lectures. Exam format is short answer and multiple choice.
- 3. Research Paper and Presentation:** Students are required to prepare a short research paper (3-5 typed pages) and presentation on a topic related to political economy in Costa Rica or Central America, e.g., different economic sectors, public health systems, transportation systems, environmental issues, governmental structures that relate to the economy, social movements and their relationship to political/economic development. The paper should use either the APA (American Psychological Association) or MLA (Modern Language Association) style sheet, and include at least three sources. Web-based sources (provided they are credible) may be used. Students are required to present their research and findings in a brief class presentation toward the end of the course.
- 4. Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend every class session, and participate in site visits and group discussions on the issues, concepts, and cases that are the topics of the daily sessions.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS

Day 1 (scheduled a week in advance of departure): Introduction and Preparation for Study Abroad in Costa Rica (3 hours, on campus.)

Day 2: Arrive in Heredia, Costa Rica (2 hours)

- Orientation
- Survival Spanish Language Training I
- Welcome Dinner

Day 3: History, Politics, and Culture of Central America (5 hours)

- Lecture: Central American History, Politics, and Culture
- Survival Spanish Language Training II
- City Tour

Day 4: Costa Rican History, Social Movements, and the Coffee Sector in Central America (3 hours)

- Lecture: Historical Overview of Costa Rica including social history
- Lecture: Coffee and Power in Central America (comparative analysis)
- Tour of Cafe Brit Coffee

Day 5: Economic Sectors in Central America (2.5 hours)

- Lecture: Economic Sectors in Central America
- Visit to Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce

Day 6: Foreign Direct Investment in Costa Rica and Tech Industry (4 hours)

- Lecture: Foreign Direct Investment

- Visit to Ministry of Finance
- Visit and tour of INTEL or Microsoft, Costa Rica

Day 7: Eco-Tourism in Costa Rica (4 hours)

- Visit to Poas Volcano National Park
- Lecture: Eco-Tourism in Costa Rica
- Exchange with Costa Rican Business Students at Universidad Nacional de Heredia

Day 8: Service Learning Project (8 hours)

- Service Project

Day 9: Public Health in Costa Rica (5 hours)

- Lecture on Public Health and National Health System
- Visit to Ministry of Health
- Tour of Hospital San Vicente de Pa'ul
- Exchange with Costa Rican Public Health students Universidad Nacional de Heredia

Day 10: Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development (6 hours)

- Rain Forest-Eco-Lodge Stay: Hike around facilities.
- Lecture: Sustainability
- First Response paper due
- Group dinner and reflection on experiences

Day 11: Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development (2 hours)

- Rain Forest-Eco-Lodge Stay
- Canopy Tour

Day 12: Return from Rain Forest to Heredia

- Visit to Hot Springs and Group Lunch
- Return to Heredia

Day 13: Agricultural Sector I (4 hours)

- Lecture: Agricultural Sector in Central America
- Visit to Ministry of Agriculture

Day 14: Agricultural Sector II and Visit to Puerto Viejo (4 hours)

- Lecture: Agricultural Sector in Costa Rica, continued
- Visit to Dole Banana Plantation

Day 15: Contemporary Costa Rican Society I: Gender and the Economy (2 hours)

- Lecture: Contemporary Costa Rican Society: Gender and the Economy
- Free Time in Puerto Viejo
- Return to Heredia

Day 16: Contemporary Costa Rican Society II: Race, Ethnicity, Immigration, and the Economy (2 hours)

- Lecture: Contemporary Costa Rican Society: Race, Ethnicity, Immigration, and the Economy
- Second Response Paper due

Day 17: Research Paper and Class Presentation (4 hours)

- Class Presentations
- Research Paper due
- Group Farewell Dinner

Day 18: Return to US

Day 19 (scheduled within a week after return): Final Exam and Summary Reflection (2 hours, on campus)

- Final Exam (1 hour)
- Summary Reflection (1 hour)

The contact hours listed above total 61.5 hours or 3690 minutes of time devoted to instruction and observational learning.