



**Center For International Programs & Sustainability Studies**  
**Course Name: Environmental Impact and Social Development**  
**Course Code: Env 3005**  
**Total Contact Hours: 60**  
**Pre-Requisites: None**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to the study of major environmental problems and social issues confronting modern society. Students will examine ecosystems, population patterns and dynamics; use and misuse of resources; population and environmental quality; environmental citizenship, economic incentives and Costa Rican initiatives in eco-tourism. Introduce the student to environmental problems and their socio-economic implications in Latin America, using Costa Rica as an example. Study current and actual cases about conservation and management of biodiversity and wildlife. Visit different scenarios where the relationship between environment and society will be studied. As well the course provides an overview of environmental impact assessment to design, evaluate, and replicate sustainable projects and programs.

The course develops the tools to assess natural resources protection, improvements in population health, positive social impacts and poverty reduction, and economic appraisal that includes sustainability measures at least cost. Students practice assessment methods at project and strategic levels. Integrated assessment using all methods focuses on the agriculture, water, energy, and forestry sectors, applying both project and program analysis. At course end, students



apply knowledge and practical methods that inform prudent decisions and support economic growth, social development, awareness and environmental sustainability.

## **CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR REQUIREMENTS**

It is necessary for foreign students to have clothes both for warm climate and for cold (not extreme), as well as closed shoes (hiking shoes and rubber boots if possible) since many field trips are made to highlands, rainy zones, and sometimes to areas with the possible presence of snakes, insects, and other animals. We've never had an accident under those circumstances, but we want our students to be as comfortable and safe as possible. The appropriate clothing and footwear also facilitate the field work of this course.

## **AUDIENCE**

This course is structured for international students attending the Study Abroad Program at an LCI Education university campus. However, courses are not exclusive to foreigners so local degree-seeking students may enroll in this course. Some of the courses are also taught in Spanish as part of our Bachelor's in Sustainability Management or Business Administration programs.

This is a theoretical-practical course and explores/responds to the following inquiry according to the professional/disciplinary profile:

This is a theoretical-practical course and it seeks to clarify the following question:

***How to interpret the ecosystems and human behavior to promote a positive environmental impact and social development within the sustainable practices applied worldwide?***

To answer this question, the following generative topics will be studied:

- Introduction to Costa Rica Natural History
- Development and Environment in Costa Rica
- Environmental Management
- Environmental Legislation

- Ecological Economy
- Environmental Impact Assessments

Thought the course, the following skills will be promoted:

- Ability to analyze the different complex ecosystems in the planet.
- Ability to determine when an Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary by methods of investigation, analysis and diagnosis.
- Ability to discuss the importance of an environmental and social positive impact.
- Ability to identify human activities influence in different ecosystems and environments.

Among the values and attitudes that will be promoted among students are the following:

- Empathy with the environment
- Teamwork and leadership
- Systemic thinking
- Logical and communicative intelligence
- Problem solving
- Learning how to learn

## **COMPETENCIES, CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE**

The competencies for the Veritas University are reflexive and integral actions that respond to the professional profile and to the problems of the context, with suitability and ethical commitment, integrating the know-how, the know-how, and the knowledge to know in a perspective of improvement.

Below are both the disciplinary and general competencies, linked to their criteria and evidence of performance for this course.



Competencies	Key competences	Learning Assessments
<p><b>Discipline</b></p> <p>Integrates the best environmental and social practices to develop positive and sustainable solutions in accordance with ecological principles, taking into account the maxims of sustainability, awareness, environmental impact and social management.</p>	<p>Analyzes complex environmental and social systems/scenarios considering the use and integration of sustainable techniques, research, analysis and interdisciplinary diagnosis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis</li> <li>○ Individual Presentation</li> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>
	<p>Discusses the importance of sustainable environmental impact and social development through the execution of better and sustainable practices in real projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis</li> <li>○ Individual Presentation</li> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>
	<p>Applies environmental impact and social development precedents through a critical revision of local, national, and international practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis</li> <li>○ Individual Presentation</li> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Generic</b></p>		
<p>Integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes to learn continuously and through one's life pursuing an efficient</p>	<p>Learning to learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis</li> <li>○ Individual Presentation</li> </ul>

development in the knowledge-based society.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>
Builds the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to learn how to communicate orally and in written form in the different disciplines that make up the curriculum.	Communicate thoughts of the discipline orally, iconically, and in written form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis Individual Presentation</li> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>
Integrates the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learn teamwork and leadership techniques.	Execute teamwork and leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Individual Presentation</li> </ul>
Integrates the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to learn interpersonal communication techniques.	<p>Relate well to others</p> <p>Manage and solve conflicts</p> <p>Negotiate reliably and empathetically</p> <p>Speak responsibly</p> <p>Listen attentively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Video and Documentary Analysis Individual Presentation</li> <li>○ Field Trip Report</li> <li>○ Article Discussion</li> </ul>

## COURSE CONTENT

### Topic 1. Introduction to the Natural History of Costa Rica.

- a) Origin
- b) Geomorphology
- c) Climate

- d) Life zones
- e) Biodiversity

### **Topic 2. Introduction to Environmental Pollution.**

- a) History
- b) Urban Pollution
- c) Forms of Pollution
- d) Sources and Causes
- e) Effects (Human Health and Environment)
- f) Regulations and Monitoring

### **Topic 3. Introduction to Social Development.**

- a) Definitions
- b) Human Development
- c) Process of emergence of new activities in society
- d) Education
- e) Resources
- f) Limits to Development

### **Topic 4. Development and Environment in Costa Rica.**

- a) Urban growth and industrial development
- b) Agriculture and agro-businesses
- c) Ranching, forestry and timber industry
- d) Tourism and coastal & marine development
- e) Climate Change

### **Topic 5. Environmental Management.**

- a) Protected Areas Management
- b) Eco-tourism

- c) Certifications
- d) Clean Production
- e) Pesticide Use in Costa Rica

#### **Topic 6. Environmental legislation.**

- a) National Laws and Policies
- b) International Conservation Policies
- c) National Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation
- d) Threatened, endangered and exotic species regulation

#### **Topic 7. Ecological economy.**

- a) Economic valuation of natural resources
- b) Economics for sustainability
- c) Payment for Environmental Services Programs

#### **Topic 8. Environmental Impact Studies.**

- a) Definition
- b) Components of an EIA

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology is planned as experiential learning using Paulo Freire's educational guidelines, from a constructivist perspective and, the competency-based model.

Classes are of an interactive nature, stimulating the collective construction of knowledge; so, the students can recognize, by their own means, the context in which they are and how they can use it to understand the topics of the course for use in their future careers.

Along the course the expository method is used both by the professor and by students, individually and in groups, always promoting the participation of the students through their direct intervention in discussions, extension of concepts and analysis of the topics exposed. Since research is a pillar of the subject, the subjects to be discussed and exhibited in class and in the

different assignments, are firstly investigated at a bibliographic level by the students, as a prerequisite to present group and individual work products.

The role of the professor is to mediate, facilitate and guide the teaching and learning process, allowing students to build and self-regulate learning, based on their previous and significant knowledge; the student is active, the teaching-learning process is collective and socialized. It also fosters social integration, the development of group work skills, community feeling and respect, without neglecting individualization.

## **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

In order to guarantee good development of the course, therefore, to guarantee learning, the following resources are available: an updated bibliographic database, multimedia equipment that students can use for their individual presentations; whiteboards and other school equipment for weekly sessions, and readings provided by the educator. Most of the lessons will take place in the classroom. During independent work periods, students will be able to attend the institution.

A campus library, study rooms, and computer labs are available for the students' independent work time. Free Wi-Fi connection for students, educators, and staff is provided on campus, which gives students the possibility to work not only in the library or computer labs, but also around campus.

## **LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

In order to make the course or program better competencies-based evaluation compiles and evaluates evidence by taking into account feedback providing pre-established criteria. The course evaluation must be aligned with the competencies and the teaching methodology. There is a rubric for each evaluation resource, and the details will be provided in **CANVAS LMS**. Even



though the rubric grants a grade, it is also a quantitative and qualitative description of the students' performance. The rubrics include the core and discipline key competences.

ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE VALUE
Documentary Analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentary: Sharkwater (Shark finning in Costa Rica)</li> <li>○ Documentary: GMO OMG (Genetic Modified Organisms Industry)</li> <li>○ Documentary: Chasing Coral (Coral Damage)</li> <li>○ Documentary: Before the Flood (Climate Change)</li> </ul> <p>*The titles and topics could vary</p>	<b>40%</b>
Individual Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Free topic (related to Environmental Impact and Social Development)</li> <li>○ Written and oral presentation</li> </ul>	<b>30%</b>
Field trip report (10% each)	<b>20%</b>
Article Discussion	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## LEARNING STRATEGIES

### 1. Video or documentary analysis

Through **video or documentary analysis** each student can generate analysis and conclusions that help him to internalize the subjects of the course. This activity of seeing and listening to the

audiovisuals is shown in a report. Amongst the topics to be analyzed with the support of audiovisual (documentaries) we can find: Shark Finning in Costa Rica, Genetic Modified Organisms Industry, Fracking, Climate Change, Illegal Trade of Species, Illegal Poaching, Deforestation and Endangered Species, Minimalism practices, etc. This assignment is 40% of the total grade (10% each)

Indicator	Excellent 5	Very Good 4	Good 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1
Formal presentation requested (cover with the student's name and audiovisual reference)					
Introduction of at least two paragraphs that captures the main topics of the documentary					
Development of the report, with at least three key aspects of the documentary, explaining them in relationship with the topics discussed in class					
Minimum three conclusions or final considerations					
Presentation of the information with adequate writing and well-written words (spelling)					

Total		
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## 2. Individual Presentation and Report

The assignment consists of research on any topic concerning Environmental Impact and Social Development. Each student must prepare a presentation and a written report along the course, approved by the professor at least one week before presenting, and uploaded to Canvas at least the day before presenting. Presentations will be held last week/weeks of classes, depending on the number of students enrolled. Presenting time plus questions and discussion will be 25 minutes maximum depending on the number of students enrolled. Co- evaluation and self-assessment **could** be applied to this assignment which represents 30% of total grade.

### Topic examples:

- Pollution  
Endangered Species
- Climate Change.
- Case study of your interest.
- A “big” National topic, important at the moment and related to one or more topics discussed in class.
- An interesting article related to one or more topics discussed in class.
- A new technology or knowledge applied to environmental and social practices in a sustainable way.

## 3. Field Trips

This course includes two mandatory Field Trips. Lodging and main meals are covered by the course.

The mandatory field trips in this course **are not excursions**. Only students enrolled in this course may attend. Field work might include volunteer work that might be considered harsh or

strenuous for students who have not done fieldwork before. Students must be on time for all field trip related activities including departure, return and scheduled mealtimes. Some of the national parks and reserves are in faraway areas of the country or places with difficult access so students who get motion sickness from long bus rides might be uncomfortable in these field trips. It is usual to perform volunteering activities to the Sustainability farms the course visits and these farms can be in lowlands or highlands facing hot or cold weather.

Students must carry small notebooks (or phones) to write down anything they see or learn while in the field and what they think about it, especially things related to what has been or will be studied in class. Each person's notes will be unique, not only in that each person notices different things, but also interprets similar things differently. Notes will help students write the field trip report, which is a formal paper that mirrors the field trip experience and learning.

The field trips are intended to allow students to apply and analyze the concepts learned in class, as well as having a direct experience with the ecological interactions present in the country and learn from them actively. The field trips promote the assimilation, reflection and internalization of knowledge in students; sensitize them through observation and interaction. This process makes it possible to take responsibility for the facts, develop a critical attitude and put into practice the ability to make decisions during the process of learning to learn. Value 20% it is evaluated through the delivery of a report, using as instrument the following rubric:

#### 4. Article Topic Analysis

The exhibition of article topics is a space dedicated to promoting techniques of oral expression and research on current events in the field of ecology in the country or the region. In addition, it is a space to promote the discussion and expression of diverse points of view, analysis, criticism and possible applications for the management of sustainability. The idea is for each student to investigate a current event in the field of ecology that is ideally occurring in Costa Rica, or failing in Latin America, to orally present the event, its point of view and a generating question of the discussion and the analysis. The

subject must be chosen by each student and sent to the teacher for approval one week prior to the exhibition, including the sources consulted. The value is 10% and is evaluated by the following rubric:

## ATTENDANCE

### Regarding classes:

1. Students are only allowed a two (2) **non-consecutive (back-to-back) class absences**. A student shall fail the course if more than two absences are registered by the professor. Administration does not control attendance.
2. Three **late arrivals** to class (arrival after the first 15 minutes) are treated as one absence. Attending class 30 minutes late without an official justification will also count as an absence.
3. In the case of an **absence from any assignment evaluated in class** (presentations, evaluations, field trips, etc.) a student will be given a grade of zero unless an official document is presented within **one week** of the absence.
4. If a student presents an official document to excuse the absence, the missed assignment is to be presented on that same day.

### Regarding field trips:

5. An unjustified **absence on a field trip** will immediately result in the loss of all points assigned to that specific trip. However, if an official document justifying the absence is presented, 50% of the assignment points may be obtained upon presentation of a complementary research assignment, to be agreed upon with the professor, within one week of the field trip.
6. An absence on a field trip may be justified should two course field trips coincide. In such a case, and to avoid losing points, students shall be able to opt for carrying out a research assignment.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Professors have the right to expel a student from the classroom should he / she/ they:

1. Be disruptive in the classroom.
2. Behave in a disrespectful way.
3. Be under the influence of alcohol.
4. Be under the influence of any illegal drug.
5. Shows hygiene or odor problems that may disturb other students.



## ELECTRONIC DEVICES



The use of cell phones, smartphones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive and is therefore prohibited during class. **Please turn all devices OFF and put them away** when class begins. Devices may be used only when the professor assigns a specific activity and allows the use of devices for internet search or recording. Those who fail to comply with the rule must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Using devices while the professor or other peers are lecturing, or presenting is perceived as a lack of interest and disrespectful.

## STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM POLICIES

The student must comply with the provisions of the Study Abroad Program Policies available on the Canvas/Omnivox platform.

## CHRONOGRAM

Week	Key competence	Content	Learning strategies
1	Analyses the key concepts and components of natural history for Costa Rica.	<b>Topic 1.</b> Introduction to the natural history of Costa Rica 	Course introduction and presentation of key concepts to understand the natural history of Costa Rica. The student will understand definitions, history, relevance.  Professor's exposition.
2	Discusses and analyses the social development concepts using Costa Rica as an example	<b>Topic 2.</b> Introduction to Social Development	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Article Discussion
3	Discusses and analyses the environmental	<b>Topic 3.</b> Introduction to Environmental Pollution 	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Film Analysis
4			

	pollution concepts using Costa Rica as an example		Article Discussion
5	Discusses the status of the different industries in Costa Rica and its environmental and social effects	<b>Topic 4.</b> Development and environment in Costa Rica 	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Film Analysis Article Discussion
6			
7			
8	Discusses the different organizations, certifications and strategies for environmental management in Costa Rica	<b>Topic 5.</b> Environmental management 	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Film Analysis Article Discussion
9	Discusses the different organizations, certifications and strategies for environmental legislation in Costa Rica	<b>Topic 6.</b> Environmental legislation	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Film Analysis Field Trip Article Discussion
10	Discusses the different organizations, certifications and	<b>Topic 7.</b> Ecological economy	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Article Discussion



	strategies for ecological economy in Costa Rica		
11	Analyzes complex Environmental Impact Scenarios considering the use and integration of alternative techniques and methods, research, analysis and interdisciplinary diagnosis.	<b>Topic 8.</b> Environmental Impact Studies	Professor's exposition. Brainstorming activity. Article Discussion
12	Individual Presentations	<b>Individual Presentations</b>	Individual Presentations