



Center for International Programs and Sustainability Studies

Course name: Costa Rica Colloquium: History and Culture

Course code: HUM 3513

Total contact hours: 48

Pre-requisites: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION

If we do not know where we come from, we cannot know where we are going. This course provides a new way of learning: Looking back, each one in his “back”, which allows to have more perspective on our daily walks in today's world. Sustainability is actually "a legacy for the future." Such true sustainability not only requires being aware of each one's past –our culture and environment, but occupies, now more than ever, an introspective look in time and space. The history of many countries of the Abya Yala (an old name of the American continent) is a vision of the agro-environmental history and culture. The history in Costa Rica is linked to the ways in which its people use their natural gifts. Only by deeply understanding such complex relationships, can we opt for a harmonious future that preserves our well-being –that of people and the planet.

In this course the agro-environmental, socio-economic, and political features that have shaped and defined the history and development path of Costa Rica will be explored. The major social issues that have emerged to the present day will be uncovered to provide the student with an understanding of how Costa Rica's present-day culture has been shaped. A culture that tries to follow a sustainability path; where the simplest way to define sustainability is to see it as the options of having a harmonious future with total well-being.

This class provides an introduction to Costa Rican history and culture. Students will have the opportunity to explore 3 main areas: (i) the historical dynamics that have

influenced contemporary Costa Rica's cultural profile, (ii) the global and regional dynamics that have influenced the history and cultural development of Costa Rica, and (iii) Costa Rican characteristics in its present-day society and culture.

Learning the history of a country serves to delve into our own history and supports the continuous reconstruction and development of our own identity and humanity. This is a theoretical-practical course and explores/responds to the following inquiry according to the professional/disciplinary profile:

How can I use (as a foreign student) the connection with Costa Rica local history and culture to make an introspection towards my own history and culture?

In order to respond this question, we will study the following **generative** topics:

- Costa Rican history, government, and politics.
- Costa Rican economy in comparison with international data.
- Class and community, education, and cultures in the country.
- Environment, health, and social issues in the country.
- Family and leisure; arts and culture.

Along the course, the following **skills** will be fostered:

- Ability to explore the socio-cultural dynamics that affect human interactions.
- Ability to open creativity channels to think in alternative ways.
- Ability to apply frames and models that help the development of communicative competencies improving personal relationships.

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

- Concern for learning to learn.
- Systemic thinking.
- Respect for diverse thinking.
- Listening and communicational intelligence.

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, 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 Competencies	Learning Assessments
<p>Disciplinary</p> <p>Integrates knowledge and practice to develop successful communication processes, focusing on the understanding of the local culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyzes the actors and contexts immerse in specific cultural and historical processes. ○ Analyzes historical topics considering the differences with contemporary ones ○ Discusses the differences between students' own culture and specific issues about the culture of Costa Rica. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussions in class ○ Class Projects ○ Experience sessions within the Costa Rican culture
General Competencies	Performance Criteria	Performance Evidence
<p>Integrate knowledge and attitudes needed for learning in a continuous way through life, considering the development of society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learn to learn ○ Discuss the cultural elements ○ Review personal reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal ○ Class discussions

Develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to learn how to communicate in an oral and written form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate thoughts in oral and written form. ○ Communication intelligence and abilities ○ Promotes introspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal ○ Project /report ○ Presentations
Integrates the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to learn interpersonal communication techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relate with others. ○ Listen deeply. ○ Communicate thoughts in oral and written form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project/report

COURSE CONTENTS

Unit I: A primer in Costa Rican History

- Indigenous times: Cultural and values changes.
- Conquest and Colonial times: Abolition of indigenous slavery, encomienda, and reduction of indigenous people, black's presence and brief history.
- Cocoa, coffee, cattle, and banana: History and cultures.
- Coffee role: The emergence of the 1st Republic.
- Contemporary Costa Rica and its main cultural & historical figures.

Unit II: Costa Rica – The 2nd Republic (No Army Birth)

- Civil War and the emergence of a new middle/business class. Democracy versus dictatorships in the Central American Region.
- What does it mean living without an army? – *How was demilitarization possible?*
- The 1980s economic crisis and generalizations about its social, cultural, and environmental impacts.
- Changes in values along the history– *The land as a main foundation of the Costa Rican development.*
- Costa Rica towards 2050, *are we heading towards the 3rd Republic?*

Unit III: Costa Rica: Culture, politics, and cultural survival tools

- Globalization and cultures in crisis
 - The Costa Rican mainstream culture and common stereotypes
 - Gender and violence in Costa Rica
 - Gender roles in Costa Rica
 - Minorities and promotion of diversity
 - Claim of minorities for their rights
 - Pressure over human and environment rights
- Costa Rican CULTURGRAM.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of presential and/or blended modality sessions tied with collaborative and participative online and presential exercises, together with readings, discussions, lectures, assignments, and online research, will provide a clearer approach for personal and professional development where classes tend to be of an interactive nature, stimulating the collective construction of knowledge. Therefore, 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.

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. Activities are planned at a basic and intermediate level, and they promote teamwork exercises in class, studies analysis, argumentative essays, and research projects.

The methodology of theoretical and some practical exercises (close or around campus), together with readings, discussions, assignments, and visits will provide a clearer approach for personal and professional development. Teacher's role is mainly to mediate, facilitate and guide the teaching and learning process, allowing students to build and self-regulate their own learning, based on their previous knowledge. The student is active; the teaching-learning process is collective and socialized, as it fosters social integration and enhances learning and respect.

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. Finally, the course wills intent to integrate an open opportunity to expand more awareness into the connection with the local history and culture as a mean to apply introspection towards his/her own culture, contributing to the further below showed learning strategies.

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 (both online and physically) for weekly sessions.
- Readings provided by the educator or found by students in their own independent research guided by professor.

All of these complement the suggested projects and provide the students with higher possibilities of knowledge own ship.

Occasionally some lessons may be complemented by city fieldtrips (if possible), which account as a practical class. For 60 hours classes, fieldtrip costs are included. For 48 hours classes, usually one close-by city location is chosen; whenever necessary students will need to bring money for paying public transportation means, and entrance-fees if those are needed (some places can be visited for free). The Costa Rica Colloquium course is a 48 hours-class.

During independent work periods students will be able to attend the institution (physically if needed, online always). Students have access to the institution's library during opening hours, also they can access the online library and, besides, when needed

they can access study areas or computer labs and any other convenient area on the university's campus for individual study. Likewise, the university provides free Wi-Fi access to all students, professors, and staff throughout the campus. The Wi-Fi connection gives students the possibility to work not only in the library or computer labs, but also around campus.

The university also places the CANVAS Learning Management System at the disposition of students and staff ensuring pedagogical flexibility making it easier to integrate new technologies into the courses and always ensure seamless and effective communications between the student and professor through an app center. The professor will make available to students, through the CANVAS platform, the presentations, videos, readings, and other material used during class. TEAMS platform is also at the disposition of students and staff ensuring pedagogical flexibility making it easier to integrate new technologies into the courses and always ensure seamless and effective communications between the student and professor through an app center, and other ICT and multimedia tools.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Evaluation by competencies is the process by which evidence is collected and an opinion is given, having in consideration the pre-established criteria. There are rubrics that give a quantitative and qualitative description of the student development. In order to make the course or program better competencies-based evaluation compiles and evaluates evidence by considering 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. 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.

LEARNING EVALUATION ITEMS	PERCENTAGE VALUE
<p><i>Sharing information 40 (individual presentations – just pptx but well founded in bibliography):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Historical figures presentation ○ Cultural figures presentation 	<p>20%</p> <p>20%</p>
<p><i>Class project (30) (may be in small groups of 2-3 people):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paper – An argumentative essay (doc) ○ Project Oral Presentation (ppt) 	<p>20%</p> <p>10%</p>
<p><i>Personal experiences (30):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal excerpts’ presentation tied with their favorite place/experiences while here ○ Experience’s sessions report 	<p>10%</p> <p>20%</p>
TOTAL	100%

General format for written assignments: Even though a specific rubric is provided for each assignment, there is a general format for all written assignments:

- Header with name, class, and date
- Letter size page
- Arial 11 and double spacing
- Margins 3x3 centimeters
- APA format for bibliography sources

The following items will be considered for all the presentations:

- Preparation and content
- Organization and style
- Student’s critical opinion
- Punctuality
- Fostering classmates’ discussions and/or participation

Whenever required, assignments should be submitted electronically through:

- CANVAS LMS PLATFORM (priority form)
- Whenever necessary, can be send to: Professor’s mail.

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RUBRICS

The following learning strategies will be developed:

1. Sharing-info presentations:

Topics will be distributed among the students for their research and presentations to the class, to generate class interaction, discussions and more well thought of different topics. Along unit 1 a couple of presentations should be done, one about a historical figure, and another one about a cultural figure and features. There is a list of each topic in Canvas, and also, there is a detailed document already uploaded in Canvas, a Presentation's Guideline, which also form part of this syllabus. ***These two semi-formal oral presentations*** will be followed by class discussions, for which the students should be prepared to participate and bring information to it. These presentations shall relate to reliable sources of information: book chapter, journal paper, magazine article. Students choose among a list of selected topics and, also, they decide how to do their presentations, with computer aid, or with a theatre rehearsal, or just using in a very well orderly way the whiteboard, among other mechanisms. Each student will present two topics: (1) A historical figure presentation and (2) A cultural figure-features presentation. Lists of historical and cultural figures are in Canvas.

Competences to be achieved along Unit 1:

- Student analyzes the actors and contexts immerse in specific cultural and historical processes.
- Student analyzes historical topics considering the differences with contemporary ones.

2. Class project presentation:

Along Unit 2 the student will develop a documentary research project, which is an academic product of this class. The class project will be selected among a provided list where the student chooses a topic for the reflection on the concepts presented and discussed in class to go in depth in a specific topic of interest. There is a class session

devoted to share this information by means of a **formal oral presentation** (a PPT, video or very well written Blog is required).

3. Class project paper:

Also, along unit 2 a paper about the selected class project topic will be written. The **essay or document paper** is 7 pages (maximum). The list of commonly chosen projects include: (1) Living without/with an army, (2) living surrounded or close to nature vs. far from nature (parks, pets, etc.), (3) the challenge of speaking in Spanish, (4) safety issues in urban/countryside areas, (5) gender issues (women, LGTBQ, indigenous groups), (6) getting in touch with my own history, starting from learning the history of a foreign culture, (7) Costa Rica: The Pura Vida lifestyle, (8) immigration issues in Costa Rica. More detailed information about class presentations is included in Canvas.

Competences to be achieved along Unit 2:

- Student discusses the differences between students' own culture and specific issues about the culture of Costa Rica.
- Student integrates knowledge and practice to develop successful communication processes, focusing on the understanding of the local culture.

4. Personal experiences –A learning journal presentation:

Along Unit 3 a **learning journal** is developed by each student as a document that contains her/his experiences in the country and /or by means of this class. It is as a type of personal journal to be done during the length of the class, along the whole term, and shall include 10 entries. It is an instrument for the reflection of learned concepts and experiences of each student. It should show challenges and reactions to class activities and to the Costa Rican cultural journey, and their learnings on favorite places (visited in presence or even online) or situations (PPT is recommended for the personal journals).

5. Personal experiences –*Filling in a participation report:*

In this same unit (unit 3), at least, two outdoor activities or Costa Rica learned experiences' sessions will be included for students to reflect on their learnings about the Costa Rican culture. These are supported by an observation guide, where cross-cultures will be assessed by means of a Participation Report, where students will ***fill in a template/questionnaire*** and include pictures of selected sites. Along this unit students will briefly share their personal experiences information by means of participation in class (especially in CULTURGRAM sessions).

Competences to be achieved along Unit 3:

- Student analyzes himself or herself as an actor immersed in a specific cultural and historical context, perceiving deeply the differences between his/her own culture and the culture of Costa Rica, and understanding better the Tico-local culture.

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 platform.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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CHRONOGRAM

General schedule both for regular terms (12 weeks, w) and intensive summer-terms (5 weeks, with four sessions per week) of the Colloquium course.			
Unit I: « A primer in Costa Rica history»			
12 W. term	Summer (20 S.)	Contents	Evidence of learning per unit
Week 1	Sess. 1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Course introduction ○ Indigenous Period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Share-info presentations</i> ○ <i>Thematic discussions</i> ○ <i>Participative lectures</i>
Week 2	Sess. 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indigenous Period ○ Costa Rica: XVI and XVII centuries 	
Week 3	Sess. 5, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costa Rica: XVIII & XIX centuries ○ Emergence of the 1st Republic 	
Week 4	S. 6/7	Module I.4 – Learning activities	Specific dates
Unit II: «The Second Republic (No Army Birth) »			
Week 5	Sess. 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No Army Birth ○ Costa Rica in the world's scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Class project paper</i> ○ <i>Class project presentation</i> ○ <i>Participative lectures</i>
Week 6	Sess. 9, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The XX century ○ Towards the 3rd Republic 	
Week 7	Sess. 11, 12,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes in values along the history: Part 1 & Part 2 	
Week 8	S. 13/14	Module II.4 – Learning activities	Specific dates
Unit III: «Costa Rica: Culture, politics and cultural survival tools»			
Week 9	Sessions 15, 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Globalization and cultures in crisis: Part 1 and Part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Class and thematic discussions</i> ○ <i>Journal Presentation</i>
Week 10	Sessions 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Globalization and cultures in crisis: Part 3 ○ Culturgram No. 1 	

Week 11	Sessions 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Culturgram No. 2 ○ Culturgram No. 3 	○ <i>Sharing cultural experiences</i>
Week 12	Session 19 or 20	Module III.4: Learning activities	Specific dates

Please note that this chronogram is tentative and subject to change.