

SA 201 Introduction to Central-American Culture & Civilization

Office hours: By appointment

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Class webpage:

I. Required materials:

- Handouts and reading materials will be available for participating student on the class webpage.

II. Course Description:

This course is an introduction to general topics related to the cultures, society and history of Costa Rica. Topics we will explore include politics and economy, health, music, migration, and a wide number of elements to help understand the rich and diverse region of Costa Rica. Topics will be explored through short texts, short films, documentaries, discussions, and visits around town. Students will be expected to critically analyze and further research some of these issues. Students will be expected to actively participate in class and are strongly encouraged to participate in activities outside of class.

III. Course Objectives:

This course is intended for participating students to increase their understanding of the origin and meaning of many cultural elements that make up the Latin American identity, specifically Costa Rica. Students will also be able to address relevant topics related to the Study Abroad experience and Costa Rican culture in particular. The course should be focused on Costa Rica with elements relating to all of Latin America (and not the other way around).

IV. Intended Student Learning Outcomes:

- To explore the political and social ends of culture as manifested on different aspects of the study abroad experience.
- To explore the ethno-history and value systems behind Costa Rica and some of the Latin-American cultural beliefs and social behaviors.

V. Assessments of Learning Outcomes:

No late work will be accepted.

Reading reviews (3): Each student must submit 3 reading reviews from the reading list for the class. The length of each reading review will be between 500 and 1000 words. The work will focus on the central themes of the article and include a personal opinion on the subject.

Site visits essays (4): The class will have the opportunity to visit multiple organizations and talk with people that represent some of the social and political elements that make up current Costa Rican society. Each student must submit 4 essays addressing what he or

she has learned from 4 of those visits/lectures. Each essay must be 4 pages long, double space, Times New Roman, 12 Pts. Assessment will include: a) content, b) organization, c) accuracy and relevance of the information.

Topic Presentation (1): Each student must present and explain to the class the research carried out on a specific topic of her/his preference related to Costa Rican culture. Each student can freely select the topic but it must be related to the culture, history or society of Costa Rica.

The presentation will be evaluated by a) knowledge of the researched topic, b) relevance of the information, c) organization and clarity. (Presenting for the class does not mean reading for the class).

Final Exam: Final exam will consist of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions, term identifications, and short and longer essays that address material covered in lectures, section discussions, films and course readings.

Grading System

Attendance and Participation	10%
Reading reviews	15%
Site visit essays	30%
Presentation	30%
Final Exam	15%
TOTAL	100%

Your grade for this course will be based on the following: 100-90 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; below 60 = F

VI. Classroom conduct and Classroom policies.

1. *Cellphones and other electronic devices:* Cellphones are not allowed out of your backpacks unless we are using them for an activity given by the instructor. The use of cellphone during class time will result in the loss of participation points
2. *Attendance:* Daily attendance to class is required, not optional. Students are expected to attend every class session and to make up all missed worked because of legitimate absences. In case of an absence, the student is responsible to seek the information and/or materials from fellow students before seeking it from the instructor. After 1 unexcused or unexplained absence, your final grade will be automatically lowered by 10%, after 2 absences 20%, after 3 absences 30%, and after 4 absences 40%.

3. Instructors are under no obligation to make special arrangements for students who have been absent or who miss assignments, deadlines, and/or examinations.
4. *Tardiness*: There is a 10-minute toleration. Four tardies will count as 1 absence. In the event students are late, enter as quietly as possible and take a sit. You are responsible for any material that you missed.
5. *Academic dishonesty*: Specific actions will be taken against students caught cheating on test or examinations forging and altering forms or documents, and engaging in plagiarism on any written work. Sanctions for students found guilty in matters of academic dishonesty could include receiving an F for the course.

VII: Topics

- Introduction to the course
- What is Latin America & Central America?
- Indigenous peoples of Latin America
- Central America in the 20th Century
- Demographics & Ethnicity in Costa Rica
- Geography and climate areas (natural resources)
- Costa Rican Provinces
- The challenges of the Metropolitan area.
- Immigration
- Drugs & violence in Latin America / Costa Rica
- Democracy, civil rights, dictatorships and social struggle. A country with NO Army.
- Women and gender in Costa Rica
- Religious believes & politics
- The art icons of Latin America.
- Rhythms from Latin America
- Current challenges in Costa Rica
- Conclusion

Academic Integrity: All students must strictly adhere to the Northern Arizona University's Academic Integrity Policy, which identifies and defines violations of cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and denying others access to information or material.

Sanctions for students found guilty in matters of academic dishonesty are listed in the current NAU student handbook online.

Readings: All readings will be available electronically for download through the course webpage site. There is no required text to purchase for the course.