



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Course name: Costa Rican Tradition: Peace and Democracy

Course Code: POL 3100 –

Total contact hours: 48 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A general survey of the complex social and political heritage of Costa Rican society, examined through a comprehensive and multidisciplinary view focusing on the historical development and present day dynamics of economy, society, polity, natural resources and culture. Special attention will be given to present day issues of peace, democracy, environment, economic and political trends, population, and the emergence of old and new paradigms and ideological movements. Emphasis will be placed upon different topics during the course, according to student's interests and current events emerging in Costa Rican society.

OBJECTIVES

- Establish a framework for the analysis of Costa Rican culture and traditions, which may allow for comparisons with that of other societies.
- Emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary approaches to the understanding of the culture of present day societies, with emphasis on Costa Rica
- Discuss present day issues being faced by Costa Rican society, obtaining a framework for understanding the identity and values of Costa Rican citizens.
- Define and discuss the heritage and social evolution of Costa Rica, through a comprehensive and multidisciplinary overview.

CONTENTS

The following topics will be critically analyzed in terms of their contribution to the molding of Costa Rican society and its identity and values, and to the understanding of the countries attitude towards peace and democracy:

- I. Concepts of peace and democracy
 - International and national approaches to peace and democracy
 - The role of culture and values in society
 - The development of societal cultures and values
- II. The development of Democracy in Costa Rica
 - Timelines and events
 - Critical events of 1948
- III. Evolution of peace and democracy on modern day Costa Rica

- History
- Culture & values
- Population
- Economics
- Social and political organization
- Present day issues and trends

IV. Peace and democracy in the Latin American region: A comparative view

METHODOLOGY

This is expected to be a very active class, conducted in the manner of a seminar, which will provide in depth discussion of important aspects of Costa Rican culture and way of being. Students are expected to participate extensively, drawing from class lectures, readings and their on-going experiences in Costa Rica, either in discussions and at times presenting their findings on specific issues that have been assigned. Participants will be asked to present at least three papers in written form, and orally to the class and leading discussions, on topics of interest, using mostly internet sources. It is expected that there will be some half day field trips around the city of San Jose, to view first hand illustrations of topics discussed in class. This will be arranged as the term progresses.

EVALUATION

Class projects (3)	60% (20% each)
Final exam	30%
Mid-term quiz	10%

Audience

This course is structured for International Students attending the Study Abroad program at Universidad Veritas. However, courses are not exclusive to foreigners so a few native student could enroll in this course.

Attendance

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Students are only allowed a total of 2 nonconsecutive (back to back) absences. The student will fail the course if he/she has more than **two absences**. Students will have a 0 on any assignment evaluated in class (presentations, evaluations, field trips, etc.) if he/she is absent unless the student presents an official document no later than one week after the absence. If the student presents an authoritative report to excuse the absence, he/she must submit the missed assignment on that same day. An unjustified absence to a field trip will immediately mean losing all of the points assigned to the field trip. If an official document is presented for the field trip absence students will have to present a research assignment to obtain 50% of the points. The only exception to this rule is when two-course field sessions collide in programming. Students can then

opt for doing a research assignment not to lose any points on the field trip they don't attend but it must be coordinated ahead of time with the professors. Three late arrivals to class (within the first 15 minutes) are treated as one absence. If you come to class 30 minutes late without an official justification document, it will also count as an absence.

Electronic devices:

The use of cell phones, smart phones, 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.

Behavior

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

- 1) be disruptive in the classroom
- 2) be under the influence of alcohol or even smell like alcohol
- 3) Behave in a disrespectful way.

If you tend to be late for class, you will lose 25% of your total grade

READINGS

Ivan Molina and Stephen Palmer. History of Costa Rica, 2nd edition. San Jose: University of Costa Rica Press. 2009.

Larry Samovar, Richard Porter & Edwin McDaniel. Communication Between Cultures, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. Thomson: Wadsworth. 2007.

Myron Lustig. The Deep Structure of Culture. New York: Longman. 1999.

Leonard Bird, Costa Rica: The Unarmed Democracy. London: Sheppard Press.