



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Course Syllabus

SS 3990 – Topics: Costa Rica Cultural Immersion
Summer 2022, Study Away in Costa Rica, Track A

Instructor Information

Instructor: Richelle Winkler, Professor of Sociology and Demography
Office Location: Monteverde Institute, Monteverde, Costa Rica
E-mail: rwinkler@mtu.edu
Office Hours: TR 10:00am–12:00pm or by appointment

Course Details

Course Location: Costa Rica- Monteverde Institute & various in-country settings
Class Times: Varies. See detailed schedule at back. Generally, 9:00-10:00am M-Thu

Course Description/Overview

This is a special topics course focused on experiential learning of Costa Rican language and culture. It is required for Michigan Tech's Faculty-led Study Away program. The class begins online prior to departure for Costa Rica. In country, students will be taught by Professor Winkler as well as Costa Rican guides, translators, and other support people. We'll learn about the country and its culture, including safety and wellbeing. We'll improve Spanish language skills (focusing on Costa Rican dialect) through practice and in a classroom setting, at a level appropriate to their prior knowledge from novice to advanced. Students live with a Costa Rican family for approximately five weeks, participating in and reflecting on cultural life in Costa Rica. We'll also take lessons in Latin dancing and tropical cooking. Course can be taken for 1-3 credits. The work described here assumes 3 credits.

Course Resources

Course Website(s)

- [Canvas](http://www.courses.mtu.edu) [www.courses.mtu.edu]

Required Course Texts

- The Ticos: Culture and Social Change in Costa Rica. Mavis Hiltunen Biesanz. 1999. First Forum Press.
- The Costa Rican Reader. Steven Palmer and Ivan Molina, Eds. 2004. Duke University Press.
- Costa Rican Spanish: Phrasebook and Dictionary. Lonely Planet. Thomas Kohnstamm. 2017.

Course Fees/Supplies

Course fee= \$4,000 includes program fees for the full Costa Rica Study Away. This includes all room and board in country, all program-related travel in country, laundry, guides and translators, entry fees for all program field trips, use of facilities, services and trails at Monteverde Institute. There is no lab fee associated with the other (optional) courses that are a part of the Costa Rica Study Away program. This one fee covers them all.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to...

- *Communicate with native Costa Ricans and navigate daily living in Costa Rica.*
- *Critically reflect on similarities and differences in Costa Rican culture in comparison to their own culture.*
- *Analyze Costa Rican cultural issues, considering social and environmental impacts, on multiple scales and from diverse perspectives.*

This course meets Upper Level HASS requirements for Social and Behavioral Sciences. It covers material related to the [University Learning Goal on Global Literacy](#). Globally literate students analyze issues on multiple scales from diverse perspectives while acknowledging interconnectivity and complexity. In order to achieve this goal, a globally literate student must be aware of the following: 1) the diversity that exists both within and beyond one's socio-cultural groupings, 2) the multiple scales of human impact on the social and natural world, and 3) the ways in which solutions to problems may contribute positively or negatively to the complex global challenges that persist in the world today.

Grading Scheme

Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade points/credit	Rating
A	93% & above	4.00	Excellent
AB	87% – 92%	3.50	Very good
B	82% – 86%	3.00	Good
BC	76% – 81%	2.50	Above average
C	70% – 75%	2.00	Average
CD	65% – 69%	1.50	Below average
D	60% - 64%	1.00	Inferior
F	59% and below	0.00	Failure
I	Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control.		
X	Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up by the close of the next semester or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is included in the grade point average calculation as a (F) grade.		

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on the following:

Participation	40%
Reflection Papers	30%
Homework/Quizzes	10%
Weekly Journals	20%

Late Assignments

Late homework/quizzes will generally not be accepted, except when circumstances cannot be avoided and at the discretion of the instructor. Late reflection papers will be docked a penalty of 10% for each day late.

Course Policies

We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and where both they and their ideas are treated with respect. This extends to our new colleagues, friends, families, guides, instructors, drivers, speakers, and experts who are native Costa Ricans and from around the world. Students who violate this policy will be held accountable, and if repeatedly violated may be removed from the program.

Michigan Tech is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help or to find additional resources, visit the

[Counseling Services website](#) or download the myssp app. I also encourage you to reach out to the services staff at the Monteverde Institute.

Academic Integrity Rules

Students may discuss homework assignments, but are expected to individually work/write all submitted work. All authorized resources used, including but not limited to internet sites should be appropriately cited. Please restrict all use of cell phones and/or other electronic devices during class to course-related activities. The focus of class time should be interaction between students, and with the instructor. Any other unauthorized activities are likely to be distracting to other students and the instructor.

For more details on academic integrity, please review the [Academic Integrity Policy of Michigan Tech](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/usenate/policies/p109-1.htm) [http://www.admin.mtu.edu/usenate/policies/p109-1.htm].

University Policies

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodations or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office at 906-487-2212. More information is also available from the [Syllabi Policies webpage](http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructionalresources/syllabus/syllabus_policies.html) [http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructionalresources/syllabus/syllabus_policies.html].

COVID-19

All students are expected to comply with University and Monteverde Institute protocols in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. All students are required to be vaccinated and will be asked to show proof (vaccination card). Other standard vaccinations are required by the Costa Rican government for foreigners entering the country. Students will also be expected to adhere to any Costa Rican government standards related to Covid-19.

Course Schedule (45 contact hours)

Week 1: Meet daily via Zoom, 10:00-11:00am (5 hours total)

- M 5/9* Introductions and Logistics: Meet via Zoom 10:00-11:00am
T 5/10 Costa Rica: The Land, the People, and History
Chapter 1 & 2 – Los Ticos
Selections from The Costa Rica Reader
- W 5/11* Economy, Government & Politics
Los Ticos- Chapt 3 & 4
Selections from The Costa Rica Reader
- R 5/12* Class, Ethnicity & Community
Los Ticos- Chapt 5 & 6
Selections from The Costa Rica Reader
- F 5/13* Reflection Paper 1 due

Week 2: meet in person in Costa Rica (13.5 hrs total)

- M 5/16* Travel prep/travel day
W 5/18 Arrive in San Jose International Airport
Program and country orientation, 2:00-4:00pm
Health and Safety briefing, 4:30-5:30
- F 5/20* Journal check
S 5/21 Survival Spanish 12:00-1:30pm
Homestay Orientation 2:00-4:30pm
Los Ticos- Chapt 6 & 7 Community, Housing, Health and Everyday Living
- S 5/22* Quaker Meeting and History of Quaker Settlement, 9:00-12:00
Walking tour Santa Elena/Cerro Plano/Monteverde, 1:00-4:00

Week 3: meet in person in Costa Rica (8 hrs total)

- M 5/23* Walking tour of Santa Elena/Cerro Plano/Monteverde, 9:00-10:00
Orientation to the Monteverde Institute, 10:00-12:00
Spanish class, 1:00-2:00
Los Ticos- Chapt 8 The Family
- T 5/24* Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
W 5/25 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
Latin dance class, 5:30-6:30pm
- R 5/26* Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
F 5/27 Los Ticos- Chapt 9 Education
Journal check

Week 4: meet in person in Costa Rica (6.5 hrs total)

- M 5/30* Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
T 5/31 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)

W 6/1 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
Tropical cooking class, 5:00-7:30pm
R 6/2 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
F 6/3 Journal check

Week 5: meet in person in Costa Rica (3 hrs total)

M 6/6 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
T 6/7 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
W 6/8 Los Ticos: Chapt 12 Continuity and Change a la Tica
F 6/10 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
Journal check

Week 6: meet in person in Costa Rica (4 hrs total)

M 6/13 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
T 6/14 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
W 6/15 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
R 6/16 Spanish class, 10:00-11:00 (exact time dependent on level- one hour)
F 6/3 Journal check

Week 7: meet in person in Costa Rica (5 hrs total)

M 6/20 Farewell dinner with Homestay families & reflection, 5:00-7:00pm
F 6/24 Walking tour San Jose, 9:00-12:00
Reflection Paper 2 due (Final Paper)