



**Michigan  
Technological  
University**

## Course Syllabus

SS 4390 – Seminar in Sustainability  
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](mailto: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. Field Trip Based.

### Course Description/Overview

Costa Rica is a world leader in sustainability efforts from reforestation, conservation, and protected lands to sustainable agriculture, ecotourism, and climate change mitigation and renewable energy adoption. This course is a study away course based in Costa Rica, focusing on sustainability in Costa Rica. Students learn general aspects of sustainability and apply that to the Costa Rican case, evaluating challenges and opportunities and identifying positive and negative externalities associated with various kinds of sustainability efforts.

### Course Resources

#### Course Website(s)

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

#### Required Course Texts

- Readings posted on Canvas
- The Green Republic: A Conservation History of Costa Rica, by Sterling Evans. 1999. University of Texas Press.

#### Course Fees/Supplies

A program lab fee of \$4,000 is associated with participation in this Costa Rica Study Away program. It should be paid through registration in SS 3990 (required), rather than directly through this course.

## Course Learning Objectives

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

- Explain what Costa Rica is doing to promote various dimensions of sustainability and how this compares to other places in the world.
- Identify challenges and opportunities as well as positive and negative externalities associated with various kinds of sustainability efforts in Costa Rica.
- Evaluate sustainability efforts considering social, economic, 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

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade points/credit</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>A</b>	93% & above	4.00	Excellent
<b>AB</b>	87% – 92%	3.50	Very good
<b>B</b>	82% – 86%	3.00	Good
<b>BC</b>	76% – 81%	2.50	Above average
<b>C</b>	70% – 75%	2.00	Average
<b>CD</b>	65% – 69%	1.50	Below average
<b>D</b>	60% - 64%	1.00	Inferior
<b>F</b>	59% and below	0.00	Failure
<b>I</b>	Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control.		
<b>X</b>	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%
Field Trip Journal	20%
Sustainability Project	40%

## **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, unless it is explicitly determined to be a team project. 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 (79 contact hours, 25 hrs out of class work time expected)**

### **Week 1: Prepare for Travel to Costa Rica (1.25 contact hour; ~ 8 hours prep out of class)**

*M-W 5/9-11* No meetings. Read *The Green Republic: A Conservation History of Costa Rica*  
*R 5/12* Meet via Zoom 11:30-12:45  
Course Logistics and discussion of the book

### **Week 2: meet in person in Costa Rica (12.5 hrs total)**

*R 5/19* Penas Blancas hydro plant tour, 10:00-12:00  
Biodynamic farm tour, 3:00-5:00  
*F 5/20* Arenal Volcano National Park tour, 8:00am-12:00  
Wind turbine viewing/discussion, 3:00-4:00pm  
*S 5/21* Hike in Santa Elena Reserve with high school ecotourism students, 8:00-11:30am

### **Week 3: meet in person in Costa Rica (10 hrs total)**

*T 5/24* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*W 5/25* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*R 5/26* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*F 5/27* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*S 5/28* Sustainable agriculture field trip, 9:00am-3:00pm

### **Week 4: meet in person in Costa Rica (16.5 hrs total)**

*M 5/30* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*T 5/31* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*W 6/1* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*R 6/2* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*F 6/3* Reforestation Activity in Bellbird Biological Corridor, 8:00-11:30am  
*S 6/4* Sustainable fisheries field trip, 8:00am-5:00pm

### **Week 5: meet in person in Costa Rica (18 hrs total)**

*M 6/6* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*T 6/7* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*W 6/8* Community Ecotourism field trip, 1:00-5:00pm  
*R 6/9* Community Ecotourism field trip, 9:00am-2:00pm  
*S 6/11* Adopt a Stream field work, 8:00-12:00  
Sustainable Coffee/Banana Tour, 2:00-5:00pm

### **Week 6: meet in person in Costa Rica (14.5 hrs total)**

*W 6/15* Children's Eternal Rainforest presentation, 2:00-4:00pm  
*R 6/16* Class, 3:30-4:30 Monteverde Institute  
*F 6/17* Natural history hike to San Gerardo field station, 8:30am-12:00

Presentation and Discussion on Amphibian Decline and Partial Recovery,  
3:30-5:00pm

History of the field station and night hike, 6:00pm-9:30pm

*S 6/18*

Rainforest sit, 8:30am-10:30am

**Week 7: meet in person in Costa Rica (6 hrs total)**

*T 6/23*

Manuel Antonio National Park tour, 8:30-11:30am

*S 6/25*

Rutas Naturbanas urban water tour, 9:00-12:00

Final journal due