

Costa Rican History and Culture

Duration: 6 weeks.

4 two hour sessions per week.

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Course description:

This course will provide students with an introduction to Costa Rican history and culture. The outstanding 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 since Pre-Columbian times 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. Students will have the opportunity to explore 3 main areas: 1) the historical dynamics that have influenced contemporary Costa Rica's cultural profile 2) the global and regional dynamics that have influenced the history and cultural development of Costa Rica, and 3) the characteristics of Costa Rica's present day society and culture.

Course Proposal and Objectives:

1. To emphasize the importance of history in understanding current Latin American cultural phenomena.
2. To discuss the specific aspects of the Costa Rican culture from a historical perspective.
3. To analyze the impact of Costa Rica's history from varying perspectives (economic, social, cultural and environmental).
4. To emphasize the importance of the social, political and environmental influences and contexts for understanding the current Costa Rican cultural situation.

Areas to be covered:

- Pre-Columbian era and indigenous culture.
- Colonial times and cultural change.
- Export, agriculture and culture: Coffee, cattle and bananas.
- The crisis years and the development of social movements: The women's movement, the labor movement and the emergence of communism.
- The cultural characteristics of the oligarch.
- Civil War and the emergence of a new middle/ business class.
- Democracy versus dictatorships.
- The Welfare State and the Golden Years. Solidarity and stability.
- The 1980s economic crisis and its social, cultural and environmental impacts.
- A culture of conservation: Sustainable development and nature tourism.
- Costa Rican contemporary art world and cultural spaces.
- Shaping forces: Machismo and the church.
- Globalization and cultures in crisis: Neoliberal individualism or a Post-modern participatory citizenship.

FIELDTRIPS:

The course includes the opportunity to participate in several possible field trips:

- 1) San Jose City History Tour.
- 2) A cultural exchange opportunity at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MADC)
- 3) A volunteer opportunity with *Proyectos Orientados al Desarrollo Sostenible* (PODS) in the San Miguel village school.
- 4) A visit to the Oscar Arias Peace Foundation. (Site visits depend on availability).

SESSION CONTENT

| <i>Week One</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| Session 1 | Introduction to the course. Case study and class reading assignments defined and assigned. | Students invited to talk about their Latin American and Costa Rican historical and cultural knowledge. | To read, summarize and present the designated article. Find support material and hand in a brief summary. |
| Session 2 | Costa Rica's Historical and Cultural Trends. Brief History and Overview. | <u>Assignment:</u> Write a paragraph about how you view Costa Rica culture. To hand in and discuss next session. | |
| Session 3 | Pre-Columbian era and indigenous culture. <u>Group Work:</u> Discuss assignment. | <u>Reading:</u> Molina and Palmer (2006) Chapter One: Trails of the First Peoples. Ferrero (2001) Costa Rica, Zona Fronteriza. | * * |
| Session 4 | Colonial times and cultural change. <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | <u>Reading:</u> Perez-Brignoli, H. (1989) Chapter 2. The Colonial Past. Molina and Palmer (2006) Chapter 2: Cacicazgos and Senorios (1500-1570) and Chapter 3 Conquest and Resistance. | * * |

| <i>Week Two</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|-------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| Session 5 | Export, agriculture and culture: Coffee, cattle and bananas. | <u>Reading:</u> Molina and Palmer (2006) Coffee, Capitalism and the Liberal State. Molina Jiménez (2005) pages 33-57. La Consolidación del Mundo Cafetalero... | * * |
| Session 6 | The crisis years and the development of social movements: The women's movement, the labor movement and the emergence of communism. | <u>Reading:</u> Molina and Palmer (2006) The Depression, Social Reform and Civil War. Calvo Fajardo (1997) Different Times, Women, Visions. Brenes Marin. M. (1989) The Women's Movement and its History, its Struggles and its Achievements. | * * * |
| Session 7 | The cultural characteristics of the oligarch. Research brainstorming | <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | |
| Session 8 | San Jose City History Tour | <u>Assignment:</u> To complete the city tour questionnaire by next session, hand in and ready to discuss. | |
| Field Trip | Civil War and the emergence of a new middle/ business class. | Prepare for the quiz. | |

| <i>Week Three</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|-----------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| Session 9 | Field trip follow up and Quiz. | <u>Assignment:</u> 10 minute presentation of research project idea. First draft summary to be handed in. | |
| Session 10 | Democracy versus dictatorships. The Welfare State and the Golden Years. Solidarity and stability. | <u>Reading:</u> Clark (2001) Chapter 2. The Legacies of 1948... Molina and Palmer (2006) The Golden Age of the Middle Class. | * |
| Session 11 | The 1980s economic crisis and its social, cultural and environmental impacts | <u>Reading:</u> Hansen-Kuhn (1993) Sapping the Economy: Structural Adjustment Policies in Costa Rica. Molina and Palmer (2006) Crisis, Restructuring and Rolling Back the Social Reform. | * |
| Session 12 | A visit to the Oscar Arias Peace Foundation. | <u>Assignment:</u> Interview a Costa Rican to find out how they perceive themselves and Costa Rican culture. To hand in and discuss in session 13. | * |
| Field Trip | | <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | |

| <i>Week Four</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Session 13 | Field Trip follow up. Cultural understanding after experiencing. | <u>Reading:</u> Arias (1989) Palabras del Presidente de Costa Rica... | * |
| | A culture of conservation: Sustainable development and nature tourism. | <u>Assignment:</u> Students to find articles on Costa Rica's Conservation culture to present in this class. | All students. |
| | <u>Group Work:</u> Interviews discussed. | | |
| Session 14 and 15 | A volunteer opportunity with Proyectos Orientados al Desarrollo Sostenible (PODS) in the San Miguel village school. | | |
| Field Trip | | | |
| Session 16 | Field Trip follow up. Cultural understanding after experiencing. | <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | |

| <i>Week</i> <i>Five</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|----------------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Session 17 | Research and revision (pay back session) | | |
| Session 18 | Costa Rican contemporary art world and cultural impacts | <u>Reading:</u> To be given by guest speaker. | * |
| Session 19 | With guest speaker – Costa Rican contemporary artist, Lucia Madriz. A cultural exchange opportunity at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MADC) | | |
| Session 20 | Field Trip follow up. Cultural understanding after experiencing. <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | <u>Assignment:</u> Interview a Costa Rican about the position of women in Costa Rican society. To be handed in and discussed next session. | |

| <i>Week</i> <i>Six</i> | <i>Session Content</i> | <i>Reading and Assignments</i> | <i>Class Readers</i> |
|---------------------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Session 21 | Shaping forces: Machismo and the church. | <u>Reading:</u> Sharratt (1997) The Suffragist Movement in Costa Rica, 1889-1949. Interviews discussed. | * |
| Session 22 | Globalization and cultures in crisis: Neoliberal individualism or a Post-modern participatory citizenship. | <u>Assignment:</u> Students to find articles on CAFTA and culture to present in this class. <u>Group Work:</u> Article review and Spanish practice. | All students. |
| Session 23 | Conclusions. Exam. | | |
| Session 24 | Research Project Presentations. | | |

ASSIGNMENTS DEFINED

CASE STUDIES

Activity:

- The student chooses a case study area
- Researches and amplifies the information
- Writes up their case study.
- Hands in their Case Study project on the _____
- Presents their case to the rest of the class on the _____

EXAMPLE CASE STUDY TOPICS

- 1) The importance of coffee in the cultural development of Costa Rica.
- 2) The culture of conservation: its roots and development.
- 3) The future: CAFTA and culture, individualism or solidarity.

CLASS READINGS

- Each student will have at least one class reading.
- The student will be given articles/ texts from the reading pack.
- The student reads and prepares the text for synthesis and presentation to the class on the assigned date.
- The student must also bring additional material to discuss in their class reading session (related to the discussion topic of the day).
- A brief summary of the texts must be handed in on the day of the presentation along with a copy of any additional material/texts used.

Students will also undertake 3 research activities which are defined in the course outline.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

| | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| Participation and attitude (one excused absence allowed thereafter 2% deducted for each absence) | = | 10% |
| Class Readings (presentation, summary write up) | = | 15% |
| Case Study research project write up | = | 25% |
| Case Study presentation | = | 15% |
| Research Activity: Questionnaire. (presentation, summary write up) | = | 7.5% |
| Research Activity: Interviews. (presentation, summary write up) | = | 7.5% |
| Research Activity: Collection of articles. (presentation, summary write up) | = | 5% |
| Exam | = | 15% |
| | | |
| Total | = | 100% |

BIBLIOGRAPHY and CLASS READING TEXTS

(In reading order)

Molina and Palmer (2006) Chapter One: Trails of the First Peoples. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Ferrero (2001) Costa Rica, Zona Fronteriza. Entre el Pasado y el Futuro. Editorial Costa Rica, San Jose.

Perez-Brignoli, H. (1989) Chapter 2. The Colonial Past. A Brief History of Central America. University of California press. Oxford, England.

Molina and Palmer (2006) Chapter 2: Cacicazgos and Senorios (1500-1570) and Chapter 3 Conquest and Resistance. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Molina and Palmer (2006) Chapter 6: Coffee, Capitalism and the Liberal State. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Molina Jiménez (2005) pages 33-57. La Consolidación del Mundo Cafetalero... Del Legado Colonial al Modelo Agroexportador. Costa Rica 1821-1914. Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica. San Jose, Costa Rica.

Molina and Palmer (2006) The Depression, Social Reform and Civil War. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Calvo Fajardo (1997) Different Times, Women, Visions: The Deep Roots of Costa Rican Feminism. From, Abshagen Leitinger. The Costa Rican Women's Movement. Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Brenes Marin. M. (1989) The Women's Movement and its History, its Struggles and its Achievements. The Case Study of Costa Rica. Lock Haven Int review. Issue 12. USA.

Clark, M. (2001) Chapter 2. The Legacies of 1948: Democratic Institutions, Social Welfare and Economic Development. In Gradual Economic Reform in Latin America. The Costa Rican Experience. SUNY, New York.

Molina and Palmer (2006) The Golden Age of the Middle Class. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Hansen-Kuhn (1993) Sapping the Economy: Structural Adjustment Policies in Costa Rica. The Ecologist, Vol.32. No.5 Sep/Oct 1993.

Molina and Palmer (2006) Crisis, Restructuring and Rolling Back the Social Reform. From The History of Costa Rica. UCR, San Jose.

Arias (1989) Palabras del Presidente de Costa Rica... In Hedstrom, I. (1989) La Situación Ambiental en Centroamérica y El caribe. DEI, San José.

Sharratt (1997) The Suffragist Movement in Costa Rica, 1889-1949. Centennial of Democracy? From, Abshagen Leitinger. The Costa Rican Women's Movement. Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.