



KIIS COSTA RICA, Summer 2015

BIOL 475/GEOG 455 Global Environmental Change

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Syllabus subject to change

Home page: <https://sites.google.com/site/kiiscostaricaenvsci/>

Readings and news articles are available from this home page. You are encouraged to preview these before departure. Hardcopies of this content will be provided to you upon arrival in Costa Rica.

Course Description: In this cross-listed course, we investigate the local context of three global environmental issues. For each, we take advantage of our travel to infer how these issues play out within the unique histories and cultures of Costa Rica. We focus on three topics: 1) human-animal interactions and the illegal and legal trade in wildlife; 2) coffee cultivation and tensions surrounding fair trade and eco-certification; and 3) transformations of food and diet in Costa Rica due to globalization

Purpose: To develop an understanding of how local contingencies and contexts in Costa Rica shape the forces of globalization impacting people and the environment

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how global environmental issues unfold in the local context of Costa Rica
2. Characterize the cultural views and practices relating to human-animal encounters, wildlife and their possession, trade, or exhibition in Costa Rica
3. Give examples of how food production and consumption Costa Rica have responded to globalization

Instructional Activities: Group discussions of readings and field experiences; instructor lectures (infrequently, when mandated by the topic); guest lectures (when available and appropriate); field excursions.

Field Experiences: Organized and independent visits to a variety of farms and agricultural businesses

Course materials:

Readings and news articles will be made available upon arrival. No laptop is required. A bound blank journal book is a preferred means of collating and keeping track of your course content.

Grading: Student performance in the course will be evaluated as follows:

Graded Work		Grading Scale	
Human-animal encounters	10 points	90-100%	A
Coffee dialogue	10 points	80-89	B
Food diary	10 points	70-79	C
Participation	10 points	60-69	D
Oral exam and journal submission	30 points	≤59	F
Final written exam	30 points		
TOTAL	100 points		

Participation: Participation will be assessed regularly through qualitative observations made by the instructor and informed by your peers. There will also be announced quizzes that will be based on the class activities and discussions.

Human-animal encounters: Each student will maintain a list of animals encountered over the duration of the trip. For each, the context of the encounter needs to be described. What is the status of the animal? Is this a shared perspective or is it specific to a particular cultural or social group? How is the meaning of the animal constructed? Animals that are not encountered directly on our trip, but are the focus of any conservation or policy issue where we are travelling should also be placed on this list. Information from these encounters will be derived from news articles, readings, class trips, chance events, and in-class discussions.

Coffee dialogue: Each student will compose a dialogue or make position statements defining two people with views on coffee that while not necessarily directly opposite, are not in agreement with each other. These dialogues are to be derived from our readings, news articles, class trips, and discussions with people in Costa Rica involved in the coffee trade. Relate how the global demand for coffee shapes local practices in Costa Rica.

Food diary: Make a food diary for each day of the trip. Add to it any foods you see others selling or consuming. Use our readings, news articles, class discussions and trips to add more descriptive detail to your food diary. Try not to focus on explaining what you like and don't like. Inquire about the origins of the food, its preparation, and what issues surround its availability. Keep in mind the overarching question of how food and diet are changing in Costa Rica in light of its destination for global tourism.

Final oral exam: A 15 minute individual oral exam will be held with each student prior to the written exam. Questions for our conversation will be based on content originating from our readings, news articles, journal entries for our wildlife, coffee, and food activities, as well as class discussions and trips. Each will be ranked from 1-10 based on how well they incorporate local observations with the content from the course and independent research

Final written exam: A set of reflective essay questions will be assigned based on the activities described above.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend every class and to participate in out of class activities as directed by the instructor. KIS requires that any unexcused absence result in grade reduction, and multiple unexcused absences may result in expulsion from the program.

Academic Honesty Policy: Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own), and doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are not permitted. Your signature on each assignment and exam represents a pledge that you have adhered to this policy.

Course Outline: (The sequence of topics will be adjusted in order to capitalize on opportunities offered by the travel itinerary and in coordination with activities of other courses.)

Pretrip: View these films. Both are either available online through major rental outlets (iTunes, Amazon, Netflix).

A Small Section of the World
Parrot Confidential

Week 1: Cultural dimensions of wildlife

Curriculum: Readings and news articles

Drews, C. 2001. Wild animals and other pets kept in Costa Rican households: incidence, species and numbers. *Society & Animals* 9 (2):107-126.

Journal activity: Deconstructing human-animal encounters

Week 2: Coffee cultivation and fair trade

Curriculum: Readings and news articles

Sick, D. 2008. Coffee, farming families, and fair trade in Costa Rica: New markets, same old problems? *Latin American Research Review* 43 (3):193-208.

Activity: Coffee dialogue or position statements organized around the tensions and conflicts surrounding coffee cultivation. Relate how the global demand for coffee shapes local practices in Costa Rica.

Week 3: Global-local tensions in food and diet

Curriculum: Readings and news articles

Cantor, A., J. Peña, and D. Himmelgreen. 2013. "We never ate like that, not fast food, or junk foods": Accounts of changing maternal diet in a tourist community in rural Costa Rica. *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 52 (6):479-496.

Food diary: Document and deconstruct the food you and others eat during the duration of the trip. How has globalization and tourism altered the diet of local residents of Costa Rica?

Week 4: Wrap up, submission of journal, final oral and written exam