



DRAFT

Course Overview

Instructor	Dr. Miguel Karian
Meeting Times	This course is composed of three parts: a) Regular weekly class meetings: Tuesday's; 5:30-7:30pm b) Special Sessions: Orientation (arrival/day 1) & final meetings (last few days) c) Field study & service-learning trips (see course schedule)
Office Phone	2447-1084
Office hours	Tuesdays 4:30-5:30pm or by appointment one working day in advance
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Course Description

An interdisciplinary field-based synthesis of sustainability in Central America, with emphasis on personal sustainable living strategies and local community sustainability efforts related to environmental conservation, community development, social equity, sustainable tourism, agriculture & land use, and renewable energies. Includes group discussion, field planning, program synthesis & integration, and field study/volunteer service-learning work in community development, environmental protection, social programs, and/or other areas as appropriate.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Synthesize disparate topics and field study experiences related to sustainability in Central America.
2. Perform an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of sustainability at a particular site in Central America.
3. Safely and efficiently perform associated volunteer service-learning work.
4. Evaluate, synthesize, and integrate lessons learned into personal sustainable living strategies.

Course Materials

Given that this is a field-based course, no regular textbook is required. However, online materials will be provided to give background and site-specific information associated with field sites we will visit, accompanied by other handouts as appropriate. Course materials and links will be posted at: www.earthedintl.org/CourseMats/AppliedSust/AppliedSust.htm

Course Requirements

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1. **Attendance/Participation.** In order to achieve stated course objectives, attendance and active participation in class and associated field study and volunteer service-learning work is essential. Evaluation in this category will thus consist of both your *physical presence* and *active participation* (quantity & quality of verbal interaction or other psychomotor tasks) during discussions, in-class activities, field trips, and volunteer work. Please note that showing up late on multiple occasions is considered equivalent to missing an entire class period. So that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate, once you have spoken, please respect others need to do the same before you do so again. Please feel free to check with the instructor periodically throughout the program regarding your progress in this category. **Value: 100 points (20%). Late Policy: Not applicable (no make-up's for missed classes).**
 2. **Written Assignments.** In order to synthesize students' varied experiences during the program, facilitate the learning and growth processes, and provide participant feedback, students will be required to complete various written assignments associated with their participation in the program. These will include completion of pre- and post-program assessment forms, written in-country orientation sheets, mid-program activities, and re-entry (end of program) assignments. Although specific guidelines will vary somewhat, all assignments will consist of completion of various activity sheets, followed by an in-class discussion (see participation above). **Value: 100 points (20%). Due Dates: See course schedule. Late Policy: 10% deduction per day late.**

3. **Sustainable Living Assignments.** In order to synthesize knowledge acquired during the course, as well as apply that information to the personal level, students will be assigned two distinct sustainable living assignments in-lieu of traditional exams. Although specific guidelines will vary somewhat, both assignments will require synthesizing and integrating personal sustainable living principles with course topics. Assignments will consist of completion of various activity sheets, followed by an in-class dialog (see participation above). **Value: 100 points (20%). Due Dates: See course schedule. Late Policy: 10% deduction per day late.**

4. **Thematic MediaBlog Postings.** Participants will be required to complete two thematic postings on a selected topic of interest to an online blog. Alternatively, with special permission, a post on volunteer work may substitute for this assignment (see instructor for details). The assignment will consist of various steps as follows:

A) **Theme/Topic Selection.** Start by selecting and signing-up (individually or in small groups) for a *theme* of interest. Possible themes include, but are not limited to: Environmental conservation, community development, sustainable tourism, sustainable businesses, agriculture/land use, renewable energies, social equity/uneven development, or environmental perturbations. Once this has been done, select a *specific topic* within that theme, as well as a *field site* we will visit that addresses that topic in some way (see last page: 'Posting themes & tentative field study sites'). Please note that all topics/field sites must be approved by the instructor, and this will be on a first-come, first-served basis. **Due Date: Tuesday, 24 February. Late Policy: 5% reduction in the final assignment grade per day late.**

B) **Background Research.** Once your topic and field site has been approved, proceed with researching appropriate background information, consulting a minimum of five references *prior to visiting the field site*. Doing so will allow you to get the most out of the site visit and guide further data collection on-site. A list of references, *along with at least two associated diagrams or charts* must be emailed to the instructor by the due date. They will be reviewed for quality & appropriateness and returned with feedback. Please note that Wikipedia or similar sites are inappropriate, as are any other secondary sources. **Due Date: 24 hours prior to our scheduled departure from San Ramón for the field site associated with your topic (i.e., the morning prior): See sign-up sheet. Late Policy: 5% reduction in the final assignment grade per day late.**

C) **Field Site Visit.** During the associated field site visit you will have two assignments:

1. **Pictures.** Take at least *four professional pictures* (more highly recommended). *All pictures must be specific to your topic*, and each student must be responsible for *taking their own* (using other people's is not acceptable). NOTE: If you wish to avoid having to resize pictures before posting, please check your camera settings and adjust as necessary to meet the characteristics below.

2. **Data Collection.** Gather as much additional information (beyond what is available online) as possible related to your selected theme while you are on-site. This may consist of collecting brochures or other written materials, taking notes during presentations, and interviewing or informally talking to those involved. A field notebook is highly recommended for this purpose.

D) **Preparation of Photos.** Once the field site visit is complete, select the *four best pictures* and prepare them for online posting. They will inevitably need to be modified using a photo editing program so that the **file size does not exceed 100KB per picture**. This can be done in a number of ways, including reducing the quality and dimensions (recommended no more than 400 pixels wide (or tall if an upright picture). All pictures must also be of professional quality. Inappropriate or offensive pictures will receive no credit and will be deleted. For detailed guidelines on preparing to post, see: <http://earthedintl.blogspot.com/p/posting-information.html>. **NOTE: Posted pictures that do not meet the above file size criteria will result in an automatic 5% reduction in the final assignment grade.**

E) **Written Descriptions.** During, or soon after completion of, the field site visit, write one description to accompany each of the four pictures, as well as one for each of the two diagrams or charts (six descriptions total). In other words, using the researched information *and* data collected on-site, write a concise, thorough description to accompany each visual. Each description should be between 200 and 400 words in length, provide in-depth information relating to that particular image, and provide substantially different information than any of the others (i.e., avoid repetition). All descriptions should be prepared in advance of posting so that they may be uploaded together with the pictures/diagrams. **NOTE: If descriptions are written using MS Word, the document MUST first be re-saved as a text file (.txt) which removes advanced formatting. If you try to paste text directly from Word without doing this, it will CAUSE ERRORS. NOTE: Postings that clearly have formatting issues as described here will result in an automatic 5% reduction in the final assignment grade.**

F) **MediaBlog Postings.** Once all six visuals and descriptions are ready, you will need to login to the blog to upload them. Go to <http://earthedintl.blogspot.com/p/home.html> and login using the username/password 'EEIblog/participant'. Click on 'new post' and create an appropriate title. Create the post, and add the visuals, *selecting 'large' for the size* (and whatever location you would like it placed at: left/right). Then, in the section to the right, assign the appropriate *labels* (using any there that are appropriate only), and select the *location* on the map. Please be advised that getting the layout exactly the way you want may be difficult, so it could take a few times posting and then editing again to achieve a professional-looking post (see previous examples for acceptable format). Once you are satisfied with the text layout, add 'AUTHOR: Your Name' at the bottom (aligned to the right). **Note that all postings must be completed by MIDNIGHT (11:59pm) on the due date (see sign-up sheet). VALUE: 100 points (20%) each, 200 points (40%) total. LATE POLICY: 10% deduction per day late.**

Student Evaluation

The final letter grade for the course will be based on a maximum possible of 500 points according to the following standard grading scale:

95-100% = 475-500 pts. = 4.0 (A)	73-76% = 365-384 pts. = 2.0 (C)
90-94% = 450-474 pts. = 3.7 (A-)	70-72% = 350-364 pts. = 1.7 (C-)
87-89% = 435-449 pts. = 3.3 (B+)	67-69% = 335-349 pts. = 1.3 (D+)
83-86% = 415-434 pts. = 3.0 (B)	63-66% = 315-334 pts. = 1.0 (D)
80-82% = 400-414 pts. = 2.7 (B-)	60-62% = 300-314 pts. = 0.7 (D-)
77-79% = 385-399 pts. = 2.3 (C+)	0-59% = <300 pts. = 0.0 (F)

Course Policies

Field Study Format. This course is designed to offer the student unique learning by doing opportunities through hands-on experiences. The course format will thus include significant field study as well as volunteer work at various sites. However, please remember that this is an academic experience equivalent to classroom time: Always adhere to all course and program policies, work safely in all activities, and have an emergency plan in mind at all times.

Field Study & Service-Learning Items. Please remember that various field study items are required for safety reasons. Although specific items will vary from site to site, the following general items are required for ALL overnight trips: a) A good *flashlight* with extra batteries; b) Basic *medical supplies* (anti-diarrhea and upset stomach medication, antiseptic, Band-Aids, antibacterial ointment, sting/itch reliever, motion sickness medication if applicable); c) *Enclosed shoes*; d) *Travel bag(s)/backpack*; e) *Water bottle* (at least 1 liter size); f) *Rain gear*; g) Required *personal medications*; h) Any type of *hat* (sun protection); i) *Sunscreen* and sunburn medication; j) *Notebook* for journal keeping; k) Portable Spanish-English *dictionary* or guidebook (not necessary for advanced Spanish speakers). For more details on service-learning/field study guidelines, see <http://www.earthedintl.org/Policies.htm#Academic>.

Attendance. With the exception of illness, participants are expected to attend all program functions, activities, field trips, service-learning activities, guest presentations, etc. There are a variety of reasons for this including receiving academic credit for associated activities, facilitating program dynamics, assisting with personal adjustment issues, and contributing your effort toward group assignments. Students will be held responsible for knowing the class schedule and making alternative arrangements ahead of time for any missed assignments. For further detail regarding participation, see 'course requirements' above.

Absences. In accordance with general program policies, course absences will subject grades to being lowered. Unexcused absences from *class meetings* will subject the final course grade to a reduction of 1% (for 1 days missed), 2% (for 2 days missed), and 5% per day thereafter (for three or more days). Also note that excessive tardiness to class may be counted as missed class. Missed *field study/volunteer work days* will result in a 5% reduction in the final grade (1 day missed), and a 10% reduction per day thereafter (this is also considered class time). This means that if you are late and miss a departure for a field trip, you not only miss the trip, but also the equivalent amount of class time. For SPECIAL circumstances (beyond your control) where you are unable to attend, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DIRECTLY CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR PRIOR TO CLASS TIME, regardless of the reason for the absence. Otherwise, all policies previously outlined will be in force and there will be NO make-ups.

Appropriate Behavior. The following guidelines for appropriate behavior will apply to this course, and the program:

- Cell phones** may NOT be used during scheduled class time, whether we are in a formal classroom or in the field.
- Laptops, tablets, or similar devices** are to be used ONLY for taking notes, not for connecting to the internet for any other purpose. If this policy is disrespected, WiFi service at the university may be discontinued for all.
- Email** is the official means of communication throughout the program. As such, all students will be responsible for checking email at least once daily. Thus, please be sure we have the best email address for you during your time in Costa Rica, as not receiving/reviewing emails is no excuse for not knowing appropriate information. Accordingly, all communications with professors related to academics shall be via email (or phone, if during regular working hours). Texting is not an appropriate means for questions about course assignments.
- Homework questions** that are within 24 hours prior to the due date are subject to a non-response. Though students often choose to complete assignments the night before it is due, questions that may arise at that point do not constitute an urgent situation for the professor. In particular, texting or calling at the last minute--particularly outside of working hours--is not appropriate, nor a substitute for advanced planning.
- All other policies** identified on the program web site, and presented at the beginning of the program, also apply to this course: <http://www.earthedintl.org/Policies.htm>.

Course Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Orientation
- B. Course introduction

II. Applied Sustainability Field Study

- A. Field planning, safety & debriefing
- B. Field study & service-learning field excursions
 - 1. La Fortuna
 - 2. Alberto Brenes Reserve
 - 3. Alajuela
 - 4. San Ramón
 - 5. Nicaragua*
 - 6. Palmares*

III. Program Logistics

- A. Personal field study planning & monitoring
- B. Socio-personal & cultural considerations
- C. Exploration & analysis
- D. Synthesis & integration
- E. Re-entry training

IV. Summary & Conclusions

Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENTS/DUE DATES
--	TBA	- Pre-program assessment	Pre-Assessment due (prior to arrival)
1	Sun, 15 Feb*	- Arrival & San Ramón tour	
	Mon, 16 Feb* (Session I: 8:30-11:45am)	- <u>Orientation</u> - Introductions, logistics & policies - <u>Orientation</u> - Spanish placement & USJ enrollment	
	Mon, 16 Feb* (Session II: 2-5pm)	- Course introduction & thematic posting assignment - <u>Presentation</u> - 'Costa Rica: What to Know' - <u>Assign</u> - Written assignments #1	Complete written assignments #1
	Tue, 17 Feb	- <u>Discussion #1</u> - <i>Socio-personal explorations</i> - Field study planning	Written assign #1 due: 5:30pm
	Fri, 20 Feb	- <u>Field Trip: Alajuela (SPAN)</u>	
2	Tue, 24 Feb	- Field study debrief/planning - <u>Assign</u> - Sustainable living A - <u>MediaBlog Posting Session</u>	Complete sustainable living assign A *All thematic posting topics due**
	Fri-Sat 27-28 Feb	- <u>Field Excursion: Biological Reserve (SUST)</u>	BG research due (Alajuela/Reserve): 24 hrs. prior to departure
3	Tue, 3 March	- Field study debrief/planning - <u>Sustainable Living A Dialog</u> - <u>Assign</u> - Written assignments #2	Sust living assign A due: 5:30pm Alajuela/Reserve postings due: mn Complete written assignments #2
	Fri 6 March	- <u>Field Trip: San Ramón Coffee Farm (CULTURE)</u>	BG research due (San Ramón): 24 hrs. prior to departure
4	Tue, 10 March	- Field study debrief/planning - <u>Discussion #2</u> - <i>Mid-program check-in</i>	Written assign #2 due: 5:30pm San Ramón postings due: mn
	Fri, 13 March	- <i>Designated long weekend (no class)</i>	
5	Tue, 17 March	- Field study debrief/planning - <u>Nicaragua</u> - <i>Final preparations</i>	
	Wed-Sat 18-21 Mar	- <u>Field Excursion: Nicaragua (AS)</u>	BG research due (Nicaragua): 24 hrs. prior to departure
6	Tue, 24 Mar	- Field study debrief/planning - <u>Assign</u> - Sustainable living B - <u>TBA</u>	Complete sustainable living assign B Nicaragua postings due: mn
	Fri-Sat 27-28 March	- <u>Field Excursion: La Fortuna (SUST)</u>	BG research due (La Fortuna): 24 hrs. prior to departure
7	Tue, 31 Mar	- Field study debrief - <u>Sustainable Living B Dialog</u>	Sust living assign B due: 5:30pm La Fortuna postings due: mn
	Thurs-Sun 2-5 April	- <i>Semana Santa (no class)</i>	
8	Tue, 7 April	- Field study planning - <u>Assign</u> - Written assignments #3 - <u>TBA</u>	Complete written assignments #3
	Sat 11 April	- <u>Field Trip: Palmares (AS)</u>	BG research due (Palmares): 24 hrs. prior to departure
9	Mon 13 April* (Session I: 8:30-11:45am)	- Program evaluation & assessment	
	Tue 14 April	- Field study debrief - <u>Discussion #3</u> - <i>Re-entry</i>	Written assign #3 due: 5:30pm Palmares postings due: mn
	Wed 15 April* (Session I: 8:30-11:45am)	- Summary & conclusions (final program meeting)	

Posting Themes & Tentative Field Study Sites

LOCATION & DESTINATION	POSTING THEMES							
	Environmental Conservation	Community Development	Sustainable Tourism	Sustainable Businesses	Agriculture/Land Use	Renewable Energies	Social Equity/Uneven Develop	Environmental Perturbations
Alajuela - Commerce & history (Spanish field trip)			X?	X?			X	X
Fortuna - Peñas Blancas Hydro Plant		X				X		X
Fortuna - Hanging Bridges Reserve: Environmental conservation & ecotourism	X		X	X				
Fortuna - La Catarata Ecolodge		X	X	X		X		
Fortuna - GEMA: Medicinal plants, products & farm #####		X	X	X	X		X?	X?
Alberto Brenes - Biological field station/reserve (& micro hydro)	X		X	X		X		X?
Alberto Brenes - Research & education projects #####		X	X	X				
San Ramón - Coffee farm & processing plant (Culture field trip)	X?			X?	X			
San Ramón - Farmers market (Spanish field trip)		X		X	X			
Nica - Amayo Wind Farm				X	X	X		
Nica - Eco-Hotel Mariposa: Sustainable tourism & business, community development #####		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Nica - La Concepción: Eco-Built Study Centre		X	X	X		X	X	
Nica - La Concepción: Local School #####		X					X	
Nica - Jubilee House: Intentional community & Center for Development in C.A.		X		X?			X	
Nica - Nueva Vida: Women's fair trade cooperative	X?	X		X			X	
Nica -Managua: Uneven development/poverty							X	X
Nica - La Granadilla: Rural community tourism & agriculture		X	X	X?	X		X	
Palmares - Community conservation & biological corridor ##### *special arrangement/time constraints*	X	X		X?	X			

CHART KEY
X = Site theme positively applicable
X? = Site theme negatively applicable or questionable
Possible service-learning sites