**South America:**
**Nature, Society and Sustainability**
Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program in Cuenca, Ecuador

GRG 323K / LAS 330 Topic 3
Unique Numbers 37320 and 40480

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Teaching Assistant: TBA
Syllabus tentative and subject to change

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
This course examines issues of cultural landscapes, human-environment relations, and sustainable development in South America, taking full advantage of its location in Ecuador. Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse nations in the world, with rain forests, high mountains, and coastal mangrove estuaries. It is also ethnically diverse, with over 40 indigenous nations, a large Afro-Ecuadorian population, and mestizos, as well as European, Middle Eastern, and Asian immigrants. The country’s three largest cities (Guayaquil, Quito, and Cuenca) display a range of issues involving housing, employment, water and food provision, poverty and gentrification, and preservation of historical districts. The nation is rich in agricultural and aquacultural products, including flowers, bananas, shrimp, and cacao, as well as more traditional subsistence crops such as manioc, potatoes, quinoa, and corn. There is a large system of national parks and preserves spanning landscapes from high grasslands (páramos) to tropical forests; the interaction between the goals of conservation, indigenous territoriality, and the (growing) mineral and hydrocarbon extractive industries spurs ongoing debate.

The 2008 Ecuadorian constitution enshrined the protection of mother earth (pacha mama) and cultural diversity while pursuing the culturally appropriate good life (buen vivir, sumaq kawsay). This course will examine ongoing issues in sustainable development in these local contexts, which provide an excellent sample of similar issues in the rest of Latin America.

From 2007 until 2017, Ecuador has been governed by Rafael Correa, a “21st Century Socialist” who has promoted modernization, nationalism, social justice, and the fight against poverty; controversially, he has sometimes combatted environmentalists and indigenous movements who went against his programs. On February 19, 2017, elections will take place and the new president will take office on May 24, 2017, a week prior to our program’s start. Correa’s former vice president, Lenin Moreno, who uses a wheelchair and is a champion of people with disabilities, is his preferred successor and the most likely person to win the election according to polls.
Field trips and site visits will include coastal, highland, and Amazonian destinations illustrative of Ecuador’s natural and cultural diversity. Students will examine selected issues through readings, discussions, site visits and field trips. There will be an extended amount of time in and near Cuenca, Ecuador’s third-largest city (population 730,000 in the larger metropolitan area). Cuenca was a Cañari indigenous settlement before it became first an Inca, and then a Spanish colonial city. Indigenous and colonial monuments explain its listing on the UNESCO world heritage list, while its highland setting (8200 feet above sea level) provides for a diverse hinterland with small farms, national parks, and villages noted for artisanal crafts. It has also become an important destination for ecotourism and residential migration.

This course may be used towards the Geography major (Cultural Track, Sustainability Track) and Latin American Studies major (core requirement and/or concentration), and as part of the Latin American minor in International Relations and Global Studies (IRG). This course may also be used for the environmental track in IRG, and towards the study abroad requirement in IRG. It also meets requirements in the new Sustainability Studies major. The course carries a Global Cultures flag.

Global Cultures Flag
This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

Host Institution
Our course in is hosted by CEDEI (Centers for Interamerican Studies) in Cuenca, which will provide for home stays in Cuenca, lodging and meal arrangements elsewhere, transportation, facilities, and security. CEDEI was founded in 1992 as a nonprofit institution of higher learning. It offers English classes to 600 local Ecuadorian children and adults; a non-traditional trilingual elementary school focused on social and environmental consciousness; and support for a variety of international programs including this University of Texas program. The main facility at Gran Colombia 11-02 and General Torres, in central Cuenca, is the location of our classroom and computer lab during our stay in that city.

Course Format
Most classes will involve site visits (in Cuenca) or longer field trips. Lectures by the course instructor will be combined with group discussions (including peer group discussions) of questions related to the readings and site visits. Where appropriate, students will meet with entrepreneurs, farmers, and community leaders in local settings to discuss their needs and concerns. Many activities will also involve trained local guides. Students are expected to attend
all course activities, read all materials, submit all assignments on time, and be prepared to participate. Students will consult their email and the Canvas website frequently for course updates, including updates in the schedule.

**Canvas Website**
The Canvas website will contain all course readings and other materials and assignments. It is also where students will submit required assignments, including the field notebook at the end of the course.

**Prerequisites:** Upper Division standing; this requirement may be waived for study abroad students. The course is open to students in all majors, but students must be admitted to the corresponding Ecuador study abroad program. Although the course will be taught in English, students should have had some background in, and/or willingness to learn, Spanish. In particular, during your home stay in Cuenca, you should strive to learn to speak Spanish in front of your family.

**Summary of Grading:**
Grading will be based on 3 written assignments (15%), a cumulative class logbook (50%), and class participation (35%).

The Class Logbook is the record of the class, consisting of responses to questions pertaining to your lecture notes, field trips, and your readings. The logbook must be kept up to date. You will normally maintain the logbook as a file on Canvas. Students' written assignments and logbook entries may be used in classroom discussions, including peer groups proctored by students. They will be graded on the basis of overall quality, originality, creativity, and evidence of independent personal investigation. Points will be lost on the basis of factual errors, and failure to complete assignments on time.

Grading will be on the plus minus system, as follows. Scores and totals will not be rounded up or down.

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Course Readings

Student handouts: after your arrival in Ecuador, you will receive emergency contact information, program calendars, information on health and safety, information on host families, maps and other information on Cuenca, and basic historical and geographical information on Ecuador.

Recommended but not required, map:

Ecuador and Galapagos Islands (National Geographic Adventure Map, 2011). Available on Amazon and other sites.

The following four are textbooks for our course, and will be placed online on Canvas; read for background as desired. Other readings will be placed on Canvas as required for essays or as background for site visits.


In addition, other required and background readings will be provided on Canvas.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

PROGRAM CALENDAR AND ITINERARY -SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

Reading Assignments will be provided on Canvas as the course proceeds

Week One
May 31 Arrival in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and orientation 1.
June 1 Guayaquil City Field Trip; orientations 2 and 3. Lecture 1. Begin entries in logbook; welcome dinner.
June 2 Lecture 2. Orientations 4 and 5. Manglares Churute community-led mangrove swamp site visit. Guayaquil-Cuenca bus trip; meet host families for home stays.
June 3 Free day with families. Log Book Draft 1 due.

Week Two
June 4 Gualaceo and Chordeleg Field Trip; Indigenous communities, markets and food. Essay 1 Due.
June 5 Lecture 3; Cuenca City Field Trip (urban overview). Cooking classes begin.
June 6 Catedral Antigua site visit.
June 7 Pumapungo Archaeological Museum, ruins, and gardens site visit
June 8 Lecture 4.
June 9 Dance classes. Logbook Draft 2 due.
June 10 Free day with families

Week Three
June 11 Field trip. Ingapirca Inca site; Iglesia de la Virgen de Rocio and Cañar Market.
June 12 San Joaquin Valley field trip (organic farms). Essay 2 Due. Lecture 5 (Dr. Stuart White on Paramo ecology).
June 13 Lectures 6 and 7 (including guest lecture on current politics of sustainability in Ecuador)
June 14 ETAPA Water Treatment Plant site visit. Lecture 8 (Traditional Medicine)
June 15 Homero Ortega hat factory site visit. Lectures 9 (Llactalab Mapping Projects) and 10. Logbook Draft 3 due.
June 16 Cajas National Park field trip, Andean and Paramo ecology, water supply issues. Optional extra cost overnight camping trip.
June 17 Free day. Essay 3 due.

Week Four
June 18 Father’s Day with your homestay families.
June 19 Lecture 11.
June 20. Free day. Final dinner with families
June 21 Cuenca-Patate bus trip (Hacienda Leito); Tungurahua Volcano Observatory with Lecture 12, Patricia Mothes.
June 22 Patate - Cotacocha Lodge, field activities.
June 23 Cotacocha Lodge. Amazon conservation and community development issues.
June 24 Cotacacha– Quito bus via Papallacta
Week Five
June 25 Quito urban field trip, cultural and historical preservation issues, Guayasamin museum. Log book check.
June 26 Quito – Vicundo, organic agriculture and agricultural community home stay with activities.
June 27 Vicundo activities; flower plantation visit, night in Otavalo.
June 28 Lecture 13. Otavalo, Peguche, community development and irrigation issues, farewell dinner.
June 29 Log Books Due. Otavalo-Quito via Quitsato equatorial community tourism site.
June 30 Airport transfers, Quito – US