



KIIS Costa Rica, Summer 2020

SPAN 211: Intermediate Spanish Culture Abroad

Instructor: Dr. Willie Costley

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Taught in Spanish, SPAN 211 is in every way an immersion course in Latin American culture. As we travel throughout several different regions of Costa Rica, students learn about Latin American culture while developing a greater understanding of the political and socioeconomic factors that have shaped it. We consider local responses to globalization and environmentalism as we visit farms, markets, multinational corporations, and family-owned enterprises. We critically analyze sustainability initiatives such as ecotourism and agricultural cooperatives. We learn from local guest speakers about inequality, corruption, and rigid class structures and how creative people work to turn challenges into opportunities. We also consider the rich cultural diversity of Costa Rica. This is a discussion-based, problem-solving, seminar-style class. **Note:** Because this course is conducted in Spanish, you must have taken at least two semesters of 100-level college Spanish language courses or be able to demonstrate equivalent proficiency.

2. OVERALL KIIS PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS creates and offers high-quality education abroad programs for students from diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help transform students into global citizens who have personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizing headlines and outdated cultural clichés to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating in KIIS Study Abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Articulate the relationship between ideas, experiences, and place;
- 2) Develop tools to engage with diverse people in the local cultures; and,
- 3) Explore other peoples' values and clarify their own.

In the equivalent of one, single-spaced typed page, reflect on:

How has this experience made you think – or act – differently about the world around you? Please consider the 3 SLOs discussed. Please don't consider course content in your response; instead, think beyond it, and be as specific as possible.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

The goal of this course is to enable you to speak more fluidly, develop a broader vocabulary, and be able to better comprehend **Spanish conversation**. Additionally, writing assignments will strengthen your written expression in both academic and informal registers. Because learning about culture is an integral part of the course, you will also be able to articulate important social and political issues in Costa Rica and express your opinion about them. More specifically, you will be able to think critically about race and discrimination, political systems, environmental protection, cooperative agriculture, and socioeconomic class structures of Costa Rica.

4. MAJOR TOPICS COVERED IN THE COURSE

Paso 1: Arenal group orientation; historical overview of region; practice map quiz

Paso 2: San Ramón de la Paz

- *Readings/class discussion/presentations*: Political overview of the coffee and sugar industries; graded map quiz
- *Conversation 1*: Interview with your homestay family about the role of sugar production in their family, community, and nation
- *Written assignment 1*: Observing and describing religious practices

Paso 3: La Cusina

- *Readings/class discussion/presentations*: Ecotourism; democracy, current events and broader politics; culture of the sea
- *Conversation 2*: Driving socioeconomic change with conservation
- *Written assignment 2*: Gender diversity and controversy

*MIDTERM

Paso 4: San Marcos de Tarrazú

- *Readings/class discussion/presentations*: Dance and music; the coffee industry
 - The national anthem (memorize and sing)
- *Conversation 3*: Sport, leisure, and nation: Soccer as social event
- *Written assignment 3*: Environmental problems and solutions

*FINAL EXAM

*FINAL PAPER

6. REQUIRED READINGS AND MATERIALS

- a) **A blank composition notebook**. These are inexpensive and readily available at many retailers in the U.S. Purchasing one pre-departure is recommended.
- b) Selected readings from the following. These will be provided to you electronically pre-departure to print or store electronically on a mobile device.
 - Chapman, Peter. *Bananas: How The United Fruit Company Shaped the World*.
 - Koeppl, Dan. *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit That Changed the World*.
 - Palmer, Stephen. *The Costa Rica Reader* (a collection of articles).
 - Perez, Orlando. *Political Culture in Panama: Democracy After Invasion*.
 - Rulfo, Juan. "Es que somos muy pobres."

7. GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Readings, participations, and quizzes	20%
Conversation reflections (reading questions, reflections, and interviews)	20%
In-class presentations	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Final Essay	15%
TOTAL	100%

1. **Readings, participation, and quizzes.** You must keep up with all assigned reading materials. These materials will be provided to you pre-departure and you must have them available to use throughout the trip (including during class time). You will demonstrate your completion of and engagement with these readings through active class participation and performance on written quizzes.
2. **Conversations and reflections.** You will be assigned different topics for each course site that you will talk about with the people you meet in your homestays and the larger communities in which you find yourselves embedded. You will be provided specific questions to ask, but feel free to ask additional or different questions as you develop organic conversations as long as you can relate them to the topics. You will then distill the information you gain from these interactions into written reflections of **2 pages each** that include your personal and academic reaction to this information. Each reflection will be evaluated according to the rubric at the end of this syllabus.
3. **In-class presentations.** You will be assigned a topic that is central or peripheral to the course material and deliver a brief presentation about that material for your classmates. You should talk about the material in your own words, but you should not merely summarize the material. Instead, go beyond summary to make connections to class discussion, previous course material, and broader program experiences. (For example, you might connect the material to the conversations you are having with your homestay family members.) You should also think of ways to engage the class in your presentation, such as by soliciting their opinion through discussion questions. Depending on enrollment, these presentations may be assigned individually or in pairs, and you may deliver one or two during the semester.
4. **Midterm:** Your first partial exam will consist of term/concept identifications, two "short response" essays, and one "synthetic" essay response (relating at least two distinct topics from the course).
5. **Final exam:** Your last exam will be comprehensive but will otherwise follow the same format as the midterm. If time permits, there will be an additional short response (and a longer synthetic essay response may be required).
6. **Final paper:** Your final writing assignment will be an essay of at least **8 pages** synthesizing information from several written reflections/presentations into a coherent narrative. This narrative should not merely reiterate points from previous assignments; it should instead make connections among course topics/sites with a

unifying perspective. This perspective need not be confined to a single lens or optic; it may be interdisciplinary.

8. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program. If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will contact your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter. In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat

each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / andrea.anderson@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/titleixbrochure.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.