

KIIS COSTA RICA Program, Summer 2023



SPAN 345 Exploring Costa Rica's Uniqueness (3 cr.)

Instructor: Prof. Elena Picech

Email: epicechreisinger@murraystate.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

In this course, students will become acquainted with the Costa Rican cultural landscape, its people and its geopolitics. Selected readings about Costa Rica and the surrounding Central American and Caribbean region, in conjunctions with excursions to a number of specific cultural sites, will provide the backbone for class discussions.

All class lectures, discussions, assignments, and exams will be in Spanish.

Prerequisites: Two years of college Spanish, SPA 202 or equivalent, or consent of faculty

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- increase understanding of the Central American region and in particular of Costa Rica

- become acquainted with three or more Costa Rican celebrities and their work (artists, scientists, etc.)
- familiarize themselves Costa Rican social, economic and political developments
- engage in active Spanish conversations with classmates, guests, and traveling companions
- initiate and maintain a Spanish conversation with native Spanish speakers
- record, reflect, report about their daily experiences
- conduct interviews with local people
- sharpen their written skills through analytical writing assignments and presentations in Spanish

4. Major Topics covered in the Course

Students will explore the artistic expression, history, politics, and economic and social developments within the natural background in which Costa Rica is inserted.

In conjunction with assigned readings and in class activities, the Costa Rican landscape, culture, sites, anecdotes and people will offer students a unique opportunity to fully immerse themselves in a vivid learning experience. Moreover, students will expand their knowledge of the Spanish language and refine their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

5. Required Materials, Readings and Preparedness (BEFORE departure)

Acquire the necessary materials

- a) KIIS Costa Rica Course Pack** (available for purchase during Orientation day)
- b) A spiral notebook**
- c) A couple of pens of different colors, pencils and eraser**
- d) Small diary or notepad** for journaling and taking notes while out and about

Complete the prep activities

- **Research the assigned topic** (Topics TBC by faculty during orientation or before via email)
- **Browse the news** to become informed about Costa Rica's current events
- **Review** vocabulary pertaining history, geography, the news

Note

- Students will need to have English-Spanish Dictionary OR access to www.wordreference.com / www.Spanishdict.com / www.rae.es
- Students may be required to pay the cost of certain cultural events and museums (a tentative cost will be provided during orientation)

6. Graded Assignments:

- 5% Before departure (written research assignment to be turn in upon departure)
- 5% *Bienvenida* (individual introductions and mini presentations)
- 20% Participation, Preparation and Oral engagement in class and when out and about
- 30% Daily Graded Written and Oral Assignments and Quizzes
- 20% Individual and Group Presentations
- 20% Final Cumulative Exam

There will be no make-up opportunities and late assignments will not be accepted.

Quizzes will be given at the instructor's discretion over key points (they may or may not be announced)

The following grading scale will be used in this course:
A: 90 – 100; B: 89 – 80 ;C: 79 – 70; D: 69 – 60; F: Below 60

Students are expected to abide by the university's guidelines regarding academic integrity. "Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal".

7. 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.

8. 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 Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, 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 Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, 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 notify 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.

9. 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 Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@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/eeo/titleixbrochure2020.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.