



SYLLABUS

Sustainable Development in Latin America

Instructor: Jesse Abrams

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 6

Contact Hours: 55

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities: 180

Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ecuador provides an ideal setting for exploring issues related to sustainable development. This course will examine the tensions, challenges, and possibilities for reconciling development and conservation in the tropical dry forest zone, a critically important and globally imperiled ecosystem. Course activities center around the city of Bahía de Caráquez, which has attempted to rethink its development trajectory after a series of environmental disasters in 1998 and 2016 that exposed the human toll of unsustainable development practices. We will work closely with staff from the NGO Planet Drum Foundation, engaging in service learning through field excursions, discussions with locals, and participation in native forest revegetation projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Goals: The goals of this course are: 1) to stimulate understanding of and engagement with the principles of sustainable development, including bioregional development, and the opportunities and challenges of implementing sustainable development in a developing country context; and 2) to foster a greater understanding of the community of Bahía de Caráquez, the wider bioregion within which it is situated, and the country of Ecuador as a whole through personal experience engaging with the people, landscapes, and projects of this unique place.

Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to: 1) understand the unique features, initiatives, and challenges associated with bioregional development in the Bahía de Caráquez area; 2) articulate the challenges posed to sustainable development by Ecuador's past history and contemporary location within a globalized economy; 3) analyze the roles played by local citizens, plans and policies, regional assets and constraints, national politics and constitutional principles, and transnational NGOs (and other transnational actors) in setting the stage for development in and around Bahía de Caráquez.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will combine multiple instructional methods, emphasizing experiential and service learning and engagement with community projects. Approximately half of course time will be spent “in the field” in and around Bahía de Caráquez, engaging in activities such as visits to protected areas, cultural sites, and sustainable farm operations, immersion in community-led ecotourism initiatives, direct interactions with local residents, and service learning via participation in Planet Drum Foundation’s revegetation program for degraded lands. The other half will consist of a combination of faculty-led group discussions, short lectures, and independent and small-group projects.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Participation (40 points): Student attendance and participation in discussions and activities is essential to individual learning and group processes of the course. Participation will be graded based upon active participation in class discussions and activities revolving around course topics as well as demonstration of respectful engagement with community members and fellow students. Discussions and activities are intertwined with lectures, presentations, and discussion materials as key components of learning. Lectures may take traditional forms followed by large-group discussions, critical conversations with guest lecturers, or within smaller assigned group activities with discussion.

Completion of individual and small group assignments (30 points): Students will take part in brief in-class assignments, either individually or in small groups, centered on exploring, observing, and analyzing features of the Bahía community and bioregion. They will also be expected to keep a journal in which they process and analyze their experiences. Grades for these assignments will reflect evidence of engagement with the assignment and ability to integrate local experiences with concepts from the readings and discussions.

Final paper (30 points): Students will complete a final paper that integrates themes from the readings and discussions with experiences from class. Details of this assignment will be given near the end of the three-week period in Ecuador.

Students will be responsible for completing some course readings prior to arrival in Ecuador; others can be completed during the course. Students are expected to complete all reading and written assignments on time and to actively participate in class discussions with questions, comments, and careful attention to detail and analysis. Written assignments should display high writing quality (including proper grammar, spelling, citations, and references), evidence of sustained engagement with the readings and discussions, and creative integration of theory with class experience.

Additionally, students are expected to behave with maturity and respect when interacting with Ecuadorian citizens, NGO members, community leaders, and others. Because we will be in a country that is foreign to most or all of the students, and because we will be engaging in potentially hazardous activities (e.g. tree planting, hiking in steep terrain, canoeing), it is vitally important that students show good judgment and that they do not compromise their own safety or the safety of others.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week One: Development History and Theory

In week 1 we will get introduced to Bahía de Caráquez and begin our discussion of development (including multiple perspectives on what the term means and how to achieve it), the importance of history, and the unique factors that set the stage for development efforts in coastal Ecuador. Field activities will be complemented by short lectures, group discussions, and small group projects.

Activities may include:

- A brief city tour of Bahía de Caráquez
- A visit to the cultural history museum in Bahía
- Orientation to Planet Drum Foundation's revegetation projects
- Experiential learning via participation in greenhouse activities with Planet Drum Foundation
- Visits to local historical and natural sites

Readings for week 1:

- Galeano
- Fatheuer
- Domínguez

Week Two: Bioregionalism and Community Action

In week 2 we will begin to explore the wider bioregion in which Bahía de Caráquez is situated and experience examples of community-based conservation initiatives. We will discuss the principles and challenges to community-based conservation and ecotourism. Field activities will be complemented by short lectures, group discussions, and small group projects.

Activities may include:

- Visit to Isla Corazón, site of a mangrove restoration project
- Visit to Agua Blanca, site of a community-based ecotourism project
- Additional engagement in service learning projects with Planet Drum Foundation

Readings for week 2:

- Gudynas
- Berg
- Sale
- Thayer
- Murphree
- Ruiz-Ballesteros
- Veuthey and Gerber

Week Three: Bioregional Development in a Globalized World

In week 3 we will complement our earlier experiences and discussions by considering the challenges of bioregional development given the pressures and limitations imposed by national and global forces. Field activities will be complemented by short lectures, group discussions, and small group projects.

Activities may include:

- Visit to Río Muchacho organic / permaculture farm
- Discussions with local artisanal fishers
- Visit to Chirije archaeological site
- Continued engagement in service learning projects with Planet Drum Foundation

Readings for week 3:

- Carr
- Lipschutz
- Fitz-Henry
- Campbell and Vainio-Matilla
- Matarrita-Cascante et al.

COURSE READINGS

Required text (you will need to purchase this on your own):

Galeano, E. (1974). *Open veins of Latin America*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.

Other required readings (these will be provided in pdf format):

Excerpts from Berg, P. (2009). *Envisioning sustainability*. Breinigsville, PA: Subculture Books.

“Devolving beyond global monoculture.” (129-137)

“The bioregional approach for making sustainable cities.” (189-198)

Campbell, L. M. & Vainio-Mattila, A. (2003). Participatory development and community-based conservation: Opportunities missed for lessons learned? *Human Ecology*, 31(3), 417-437.

Excerpts from Carr, M. (2004). *Bioregionalism and civil society: Democratic challenges to corporate globalism*. Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

“Ecocentric social capital: The ecology of kinship.” (51-69)

Domínguez, J. I. (2008). Explaining Latin America's lagging development in the second half of the twentieth century: Growth strategies, inequality, and economic crises. In F. Fukuyama (ed.), *Falling behind: Explaining the development gap between Latin America and the United States* (72-96). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Fatheuer, T. (2011). *Buen vivir: A brief introduction to Latin America's new concepts for the good life and the rights of nature*. Berlin, Germany: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Publication Series on Ecology, Volume 17.

Fitz-Henry, E. 2015. Greening the petrochemical state: Between energy sovereignty and Sumak Kawsay in coastal Ecuador. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 20(2), 264-284.

Gudynas, E. (2011). *Buen vivir: Today's tomorrow*. *Development*, 54(4), 441-447.

Lipschutz, R. D. (1999). Bioregionalism, civil society and global environmental governance. In M. V. McGinnis (ed.), *Bioregionalism* (101-120). New York, NY: Routledge.

Matarrita-Cascante, D., Sene-Harper, A. & Stocks, G. (2015). International amenity migration: Examining environmental behaviors and influences of amenity migrants and local residents in a rural community. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 38, 1-11.

Murphree, M. (2000). Community-based conservation: The new myth? Keynote address at conference *Community-based conservation: Old ways, new myths and enduring challenges*. Mweka, Tanzania, December 13-15, 2000.

Ruiz-Ballesteros, E. (2011). Social-ecological resilience and community-based tourism: An approach from Agua Blanca, Ecuador. *Tourism Management*, 32, 655-666.

Excerpts from Sale, K. (2000). *Dwellers in the land: The bioregional vision*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

“Dwellers in the land.” (41-51)

Excerpts from Thayer, R. L. Jr. (2003). *LifePlace: Bioregional thought and practice*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

“Planning: Designing a life place.” (144-181)

Veuthey, S. & Gerber, J. F. (2012). Accumulation by dispossession in coastal Ecuador: Shrimp farming, local resistance and the gender structure of mobilizations. *Global Environmental Change*, 22, 611-622.