

School of the Environment, University of Toronto

SYLLABUS• ENV397Y0 - SPECIAL TOPICS FIELD COURSE -

COSTA RICA: A LIVING LABORATORY FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE

SUMMER 2023S • SUMMER ABROAD PROGRAM



INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Mark Hathaway

Email: mark.hathaway[at]utoronto.ca

*To speed processing, **please put "ENV397"** somewhere in the subject line.*

OFFICE HOURS

Please make an appointment with the instructor via e-mail or meet with him over lunch or on the bus.

COSTA RICA COURSE ASSISTANTS

Georgina Jiménez:
georginaj[at]gmail.com

Camila Lesizza:
ivannacamila2101[at]gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Since abolishing its army in 1948, Costa Rica has prioritized healthcare, education, conservation, and sustainability. As a result, despite a modest per capita income, it has a high human development index and a relatively low ecological footprint (one quarter of Canada's). By some measures, it may also be the happiest country in the world.

Costa Rica presents many unique opportunities to study sustainability in a relatively small country. It is home of the UN Peace University and the international secretariate of the Earth Charter. It has a biodiverse national park system, numerous examples of sustainable food production, and a unique history which has focused on integral human development and sustainability in a country with a relatively modest national income. It also generates 100% of its electricity via renewables and

has placed a moratorium on hydrocarbon exploration and all new open-pit mines.

At the same time, Costa Rica faces some very real sustainability challenges, including growing economic inequality, industrial agricultural production using high levels of agrotoxins, and urban transportation dependent on fossil fuels.

During this course, students will learn how this came about while exploring concrete sustainability initiatives in areas related to education, environmental ethics, food production, forest conservation, and energy while also examining current challenges related to transportation, democracy, migration, and poverty. In so doing, students will gain insights into how more just, sustainable, and peaceful societies might be created in practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and understand the nature of sustainability, including its relationship to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the framework of the Earth Charter.
2. Understand and analyse the history of Costa Rica (including its unique features in the region) and the key influences, decisions, and policy initiatives that have promoted sustainability within the nation as well as the limitations of these initiatives (including impacts on Indigenous Peoples, women, and peasants).
3. Analyse and explain the limitations of industrial agriculture, drawing on specific examples from Costa Rica; analyse the benefits of sustainable agriculture including organic farming, agroecology, and permaculture.
4. Describe and explain the history of forest conservation in Costa Rica, including the nation's accomplishments in this area as well as some key limitations or shortcomings.
5. Explain some of Costa Rica's key sustainability initiatives related to energy, mining, and climate change as well as some specific challenges related to transportation and tourism.
6. Explain and apply frameworks from environmental ethics with a particular focus on the Earth Charter. Students will also be able to describe the history of the Earth Charter and some key facets of the Earth Charter initiative.
7. Understand some key theories and practices of sustainability education.
8. Reflect and analyse Costa Rica's experiences with sustainability to apply learnings more broadly to the question of how sustainability may be achieved in other contexts.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

In this course, it is assumed that all of us (teachers and students) will learn from each other and that students will engage actively with the course readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments. Students are expected to engage responsibly in field trips and similar learning experiences and to participate actively in class discussions and practices.

While lively discussion and probing questions are always encouraged, it is also assumed that each person will treat others with respect. Students are expected to do all required (core) readings, attend all classes and field trips, engage in appropriate practices and methods for assignments, and think critically. Critical thinking may be demonstrated by:

- articulating a clear understanding of key course concepts;
- applying these concepts appropriately to specific questions and new contexts;
- putting forth logical arguments backed by appropriate course materials (readings and lectures), examples, and evidence;
- making connections between different concepts and perceiving broader patterns; and
- seeking out the concrete implications for values, policies, and actions.

EXPECTATIONS

As your instructor, I expect that you will:

- Take responsibility for your own learning. This includes participating actively in field trips, in-class and online discussions, and Perusall reading discussions as well as seeking out help (via course office hours, use of a writing centre, etc.) when needed.
- Come to every class prepared (having completed the readings) and ready to engage with the material.
- Come to class and field trips with a considerate, respectful, and non-judgmental attitude towards each other and the instructor and help to create a positive space for creative learning and exploration: While critiques of ideas are welcome, treat others with kindness and consideration.

As students, you can expect that I will:

- Establish and maintain a positive space for exploration and learning.
- Come prepared to every class.
- Help you learn and achieve the course objectives.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR CLASS

In order to be able to get the most out of class and participate fully, you will need to read the materials assigned **before each class** on Perusall. The required readings are listed in the syllabus and are available on Perusall for online discussion and Quercus unless otherwise specified.

USE OF PERUSALL FOR ONLINE DISCUSSION OF REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

To encourage critical engagement with course readings, we will be using the Perusall platform to facilitate interactive reading. Be sure to allocate sufficient time out of class each week for this activity.

Go to www.perusall.com, click Login, and then create an account using your University of Toronto email address. Select I am a student and enter the course code **HATHAWAY-RQFM6** upon registration.

You will be asked to enter your student ID – please enter your UTOR ID (normally 8 characters that include part of your last name), not your student number. See “How Perusall Works” posted on Quercus. Also see this set of sample annotations with associated quality scores and an explanation for each score.

You are expected to provide comments or questions on all of the assigned readings. For each reading, typically **you should provide 3 short comments per reading**. Focus on providing comments/questions about the following elements (although you can certainly go beyond this):

1. The key conclusions and arguments of the reading (feel free to skip this if your classmates have already covered this!).
2. The element of the reading that you found most interesting, persuasive, well-argued, or thought-provoking. Please explain *why* you found it interesting.
3. The elements of the reading that you found most problematic, least persuasive, or most in need of further elaboration, and explain why.
4. Connections between the content of the readings and your own experiences, knowledge, or assumptions.
5. Connections between the current reading and past readings in the course or course lectures/discussion. (Do they concur or differ? How so?).

To obtain the highest score possible on Perusall, make sure to read the reading online in Perusall and to **comment on different parts of the text**, spending at least 45 minutes on each reading. (Some longer readings may require 60 minutes and four annotations.) You may also upvote comments from other students and reply to questions they may raise. Late post grades will be reduced by about 14% for each day late (falling to zero after one week).

Note that misuse of Perusall – for example, posting comments as your own that are copied from external web sites or other sources – will be treated as every other type of academic misconduct and will, at a minimum, result in an overall Perusall score of zero for the semester.

PARTICIPATION

Please remember that participation in all classes and field trips is mandatory. Failure to attend a class or field trip without a documented excuse (e.g., official medical note or approval of the On-site Coordinator) will result in a 5% deduction from a student's final grade. A subsequent absence without a documented excuse will result in an additional 10% deduction from a student's final grade. A third absence without a documented excuse will result in immediate dismissal from the program including hotel, if applicable. Personal travel is not a valid excuse for missing class and no special consideration will be given.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

During field trips and class time, you may use your computers only for taking notes. You may use your phone while in transit on buses, but please refrain from using cell phones during class time. During field trips, use your phone sparingly (only to take pictures). Using a cell phone, or other electronic devices, for non-academic purposes will be considered an "absence" from class and will result in an academic penalty as outlined above (i.e. a deduction of 5% from a student's final grade for a first offence and an additional 10% deduction for a subsequent offence).

USE OF QUERCUS (PORTAL/LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

It is your responsibility to check Quercus frequently (daily during the course). You must have a mail.utoronto.ca (or @utoronto.ca) email address indicated on ACORN to properly receive messages from the course instructor through Quercus.

Please note that all written assignments will be submitted through Quercus. It is your responsibility to ensure that your written assignments are uploaded properly. Please make sure the confirmation page appears after submitting your assignments and, if possible, make a copy of the confirmation page ("print" to a pdf document and save).

Note: Assignment due times are on Costa Rica time from July 8-29. The final assignment due date and time are based on Toronto time.

COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Detailed instructions for assignments, including assessment criteria, will be posted on Quercus and discussed in tutorial.

Assignments	Due Date	Value
Attendance and Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend all classes and field trips (Note missed class policy above.) Take part in online discussions and bonus participation activities 	Daily during course	20%
Perusall Readings	Check on Perusall	20%
Learning Journals (weekly 400-500 word reflections posted on discussion forums on Quercus): 8% each, 24% total.	1. July 15 @ 11:59 PM 2. July 22 @ 11:59 PM 3. July 31 @ 11:59 PM	8% 8% 8%
Final Assessment: Final Paper	August 11 @ 11:59 PM	36%
TOTAL		100%

LEARNING JOURNAL

Each week, you will post a 400-500 word reflection on your learning in the discussion forum provided on Quercus. You will also be able to read the reflections of your peers after you have posted your own reflections. Please feel free to post 1-3 photos with your reflection.

Key questions to reflect upon include:

1. Which (2-3) learning experiences (field trips, classes) this week have been most important or illuminating for you? Why? (Are there also key concepts you found illuminating?)
2. How do each of these experiences contribute to your understanding of the meaning and practice of sustainability? Are there lessons or learnings from these that could be applied in other contexts?
3. How do these learning experiences highlight challenges related to sustainability in practice?

In each reflection, relate your reflections to 2-3 course readings. In-text citations in APA format (without a bibliography) for course sources are sufficient. (Please include a reference list for any source outside of the course bibliography.)

FINAL ASSESSMENT

The final assessment will be a written paper (2300-2500 words) reflecting on the nature and practice of sustainability based on your learning experiences in Costa Rica as well as course readings. Detailed guidelines will be posted on Quercus.

COURSE TEXTS AND REQUIRED READINGS

All course texts will be available online via Perusall (core readings) or Quercus (recommended and optional readings). In some cases, to access electronic journal articles and some book chapters, you will need to log into the University of Toronto library.

Note: Students are expected **to read all core readings posted on Perusall**. Recommended and optional readings are included for those who wish to explore a theme in more depth and may serve as important resources for your weekly learning journal and final paper.

The list of recommended and optional readings included in the syllabus may be modified somewhat during the course – ***please consult Quercus for an up-to-date list of recommended and optional readings.***

COURSE OUTLINE

Lecture notes for lectures given by the course instructor will generally be available before each class. Guest lecture note availability may be more limited. Please take detailed notes during classes. For field trips, you may wish to jot down some short notes immediately after (or, if possible, during) the trip.

For more details, including readings, please see Quercus (or Perusall for required readings).

CLASS 1: COSTA RICA AND SUSTAINABILITY – AN OVERVIEW (ONLINE VIA ZOOM: TUESDAY, JULY 4 FROM 2-4 PM EDT):

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain some of the unique features of Costa Rica and how its history and geography have affected its quest for sustainability.
- Students will be able to define and understand some key concepts related to sustainability.
- Students will gain an overview of some of the key accomplishments and challenges of Costa Rica in terms of sustainability.

Note: All further classes will take place at the Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development at the UN Peace University. **Our bus will generally depart at 8:15 AM** from our hotel and classes will run from 9 AM to 1 PM followed by lunch at the Peace University from 1-2 PM. The bus will return to the hotel at 2 PM (arriving around 2:30 PM).

Field trip schedules may vary somewhat, but generally we will depart from the hotel somewhere between **7:00 AM and 8:00 AM** for field trips and return sometime in the afternoon (in the case of one-day trips).

[Refer to the course schedule for more precise times.](#)

CLASS 2: COURSE ORIENTATION AND THE HISTORY OF COSTA RICA (MON., JULY 10, 9 AM – 1 PM)

Learning Outcomes

- Students get to know each other, including why they are interested in this course and what they hope to learn.
- Students will become familiar with the campus and history of the Peace University as well as Earth Charter Initiative.
- Students will become more familiar with some of the unique features of Costa Rica's history and how these have affected the quest for social justice, ecological integrity, peace, and democracy (guest lecture).

FIELD TRIP 1: DOWNTOWN SAN JOSÉ (TUE, JULY 11: DEPART FROM HOTEL AT 7:45 AM)

Learning Outcomes

- Students will become aware and understand some of the key issues and challenges affecting urban sustainability in San José.
- Students will continue to learn about the history and culture of Costa Rica via a visit to museums and national theatre.

Note: Students will need to purchase lunch downtown this day. We do the sustainability tour in the morning followed by the theatre visit, then museum visits after lunch.

CLASS 3: SUSTAINABILITY AND AGRICULTURE IN COSTA RICA (WED, JULY 12)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will reflect upon their experiences from the field trip and the insights they gained about the nature and challenges of sustainability in practice.
- Students will gain an overview of some of the key challenges related to sustainability in Costa Rica as they relate to energy, transportation, conservation, social justice, peace, human rights, and democracy (guest lecture).
- Students will gain an introductory understanding of how agricultural practices may either undermine or promote sustainability using concrete examples related to industrial agriculture and permaculture in Costa Rica.

FIELD TRIP 2: RANCO MARGOT, THE ARENAL VOLCANO, AND MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST (THURS, JULY 13 – SUN, JULY 16)

Note: Students will need to vacate their hotel rooms this morning. They may store some luggage at the Hilton Garden Inn. **Students should be ready to depart at 7:30 AM** with sufficient belongings with them until our return on Sunday evening.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand the theory and practice of permaculture (via their experience at Rancho Margot).
- Students will learn about forest ecology and conservation.
- Students will become more familiar with hydroelectric power generation.

MONDAY, JULY 17: OFF/STUDY DAY**CLASS 4: INDUSTRIAL AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION: PART II (TUE., JULY 18)****Learning Outcomes**

- Students will deepen their understanding of industrial and sustainable food production in Costa Rica.

FIELD TRIP 3: IRAZÚ VOLCANO AND PERMACULTURE FARM TOUR (WED, JULY 19) – DEPART@7:30 AM**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will continue to explore themes related to sustainable agriculture, forest conservation, and ecotourism.

CLASS 5: FOREST CONSERVATION, NEO-LIBERAL GREENING, AND POST-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVES (THURS, JULY 20)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will reflect on some of the limitations of capitalist, colonial, and neo-liberal approaches to sustainability.
- Students will learn about the history and practice of forest conservation in Costa Rica, forest ecology, and the challenges and benefits of eco (and non-sustainable) tourism (guest lecture)

FIELD TRIP 4: EL REY WATERFALL AND HUETAR ZAPATÓN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY (FRI, JULY 21)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will learn about the history and culture of the Huetar Indigenous community.

CLASS 6: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, WOLDVIEWS, AND THE EARTH CHARTER (MON, JULY 24)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will be able to describe and apply some key perspectives from environmental ethics including key concepts like anthropocentrism, deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, and integral ecology.
- Students will explore their own sense of connection with the more-than-human world.
- Students will learn about the history and key ideas of the Earth Charter and how it understands integral ecology.

FIELD TRIP 5: CEUNA SCHOOL (TUES, JULY 25)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will begin to explore the practice of sustainability education via a visit to the CEUNA school.

CLASS 7: SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AND THE EARTH CHARTER (WED, JULY 26)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will be able to understand, explain, and apply some key theories and approaches to sustainability education, including how it is related to ecological worldviews and transformative learning.
- Students will be able to describe the relationship between the Earth Charter and sustainability education and how the Earth Charter Initiative promotes and supports education in practice.

FIELD TRIP 6: CARARA NATIONAL PARK AND ORGANIC COFFEE PRODUCTION (THURS, JULY 27)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will learn about the ecology of Carara National Park.
- Students will learn about the practice and challenges of organic coffee production.

CLASS 8: REFLECTING ON SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE (FRI, JULY 28)**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will come to a clearer understanding of sustainability via a collective reflection on their time in Costa Rica: What practices, policies, and worldviews either promote or inhibit authentic sustainability? What might a “regenerative ecological justice” look like in practice? What can we learn from the Costa Rican “living laboratory” and the Earth Charter about genuinely promoting sustainability? How might these learnings be applied in other contexts?

COURSE POLICIES**REFERENCING STYLE: APA**

All references in written work must be fully cited using the APA format. The following website is a useful style guide.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Note: On course assignments, *please include page or lecture slide numbers in inline citations even when these are not direct quotes*. This helps the instructor when marking your essays. You may also simply lecture citations as described in your course assignment instructions.

OURIGINAL

Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to Ouriginal for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Ouriginal reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Ouriginal service are described on the Ouriginal web site.

If a student does not wish to participate in Ouriginal, the student **MUST** advise the instructor at least three weeks before the assignment due

date as alternate arrangements for screening the assignment must be arranged. (Normally, this will entail the submission of rough notes and drafts along with their final assignment.)

LATE AND LENGTH PENALTIES

Please follow the length guidelines for each assignment carefully. A 2% penalty for up to the first 100 words over the maximum length will be deducted from the assignment (i.e. from 1 to 100 words over the limit) and 5% for each additional 100 words (101 to 200 over, etc.). (

Late papers will be assessed a **3% reduction of the value of the assignment per day late**, unless previously negotiated with the course instructor or with the submission of an ACORN absence self-declaration form. (Please inform the Instructor if you have submitted a declaration of absence form.) Note that late penalties for Perusall readings are different, as noted previously.

Unless previously negotiated, **late papers will only be accepted for one week after the due date.**

Papers later than this will not be assessed. **Please do not leave potential issues to the last minute to discuss with the course instructor.**

If assignments are submitted late because of medical reasons, you must submit an online absence declaration on ACORN. (The declaration is available on ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu.). **After submitting the verification of illness form, let the course instructor know how long you anticipate you will not be able to engage in schoolwork due to illness.**

ASSIGNMENT EXTENSIONS

If you need to submit an assignment a few days late because of conflicting deadlines, extenuating circumstances, etc., you may request (**48 hours before the assignment is due**) a “life happens” extension without further explanation by **writing to the Course Instructor** via e-mail. Each student is entitled to a total of four days of “life happens” extensions that may be used separately (single days) or in blocks of 2-4 days. Please be careful to use these wisely. (It is probably best to only use 1-2 of these days at a time.) **Make sure to follow the extension request procedure outlined on Quercus.**

You may also, of course, request an extension (**48 hours before the assignment is due**) due to illness (with an ACORN absence declaration) or accessibility-related reason.

Generally speaking, extensions will only be granted for Perusall readings due to an illness or accessibility-related issue – “life happens” extensions will not apply. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that you keep up to date on your assigned Perusall readings.

REMARKING POLICY

If a student believes that their assignment has not been fairly assessed, they should first read all the comments (both in the text and terminal comments) and consult the assignment rubric. If, after reviewing these, the student would like to request a reassessment, they should write the course instructor – **within three days of receiving their assignment grade** – with a written justification explaining why the assignment should be reassessed. The instructor will then consider the request and remark if they believe this is justified.

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS AND SERVICES

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. The office of Accessibility Services at U of T provides a range of services to students with disabilities to help them meet their educational objectives. In conjunction with Accessibility Services, the course instructor and teaching assistant would like to ensure the inclusion and full participation of everyone in the course. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>. As well, if there are things that we can do to facilitate your learning, or that we need to know as members of the teaching team, please contact the instructor during the first few weeks of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic

achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarise yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at UT, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts. Using an AI tool to write your assignment.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorised assistance on any assignment including
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorised aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

You can get further guidance on academic integrity at: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will post an **Academic Integrity Checklist** with each assignment on Quercus. ***By submitting your assignment, you confirm that you have read the checklist and affirm that its statements are true.***

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website. If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WRITING CENTRES

Students having difficulty with writing skills, or those who would simply like to improve their ability, are encouraged to consult the writing centre affiliated with their college at U of T. The writing centres offer free individual tutoring, group workshops, and other resources. For more information, see

<https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Students may book up to 2 sessions/week.