ECUADORIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION: 
GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND POPULATION 
SYLLABUS

Lewis & Clark College
Overseas Program in Cuenca, Ecuador

Instructor: Andrea Augusta Neira

Number of Sessions: 25
Language of Instruction: English

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the cultural diversity and complexity of Ecuador, always considering it within the Latin American context. We will analyze regional differences (Costa-Sierra-Oriente) from an anthropological perspective and discuss, from a historical approach, how social institutions and cultural practices and traditions have been shaped, and how they have dealt with continuity and change. Some case studies and specific historical events of Ecuador and other Latin American countries will be used to explore relevant topics related to ethnicity, social stratification, national identities, rural/urban relationships, cosmology and religious institutions and practices, human mobility, and gender. Following a roughly chronological approach, beginning with the encounter of the European and Native worlds, and continuing through the contemporary era, we intend to analyze the legacy of colonialism, the formation of the nation-state, the emergence of social movements, artistic expressions, post-colonial nationalism, the impact of migration and urbanization, and the effects of neo-liberal policies and globalization. The topics are explored through different teaching methods such as traditional lectures, discussions, debates, simulations, readings, films, and music.

Along the course every student will be asked to engage in an independent research project under the supervision of the teacher. Such a project must begin with a brief written proposal and it is expected an article, discussion paper, essay or presentation as a final output.

Themes that we will focus on include concepts of race, ethnicity and gender as they appear in Latin America; political and economic processes; urbanization and migration; religious and ritual festivities; and indigenous social movements.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After completing this course, students will:

1. To introduce students to the study and comprehension of Ecuadorian contemporary issues in order to encourage critical thinking, informed discussion, and motivation for further study.
2. To recognize the geography of Latin America, and have a general knowledge of its history and contemporary reality.
3. To acquaint students with existing social and political conflicts, and to understand present day Latin American beliefs and cultural practices.
4. To discuss and analyze essential traits, elements, and themes common to many Ecuadorian and Latin American cultural issues.
5. To understand Ecuador as part of an integrated part of the world, not just a separate piece.
6. To broaden the cultural experience of students and actively engage on the local context and people.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY:

This course will consist of lectures, group discussions, use of media and technology, excursions within the city, and in-class quizzes.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:

1. Attendance and participation. All students are expected to contribute to class discussions, and to complete all assigned readings before class. The nature of the class is highly interactive, and students will be graded on active participation. (20%)
2. Students will be expected to write three small blog articles on different topics to be posted on the internet. The articles will be judged by narration, research, originality, photography, etc. Participation and comments in one another's articles will be taken into account. Publication dates will be announced throughout the course (30%)
3. Mini-projects and homework. All assignments are due before class begins. (20%)
4. A final project will be given to assess overall knowledge of course content though the students' work in the course. (30%)
Specific instructions will be provided in class for each assignment.

COURSE OUTLINE

Sessions 1 to 5:
Introduction to the course
Geographic aspects of Ecuador and Latin America
Understanding Ecuador’s and Latin America’s History
  • Pre Hispanic civilizations

Session 6 to 10:
Understanding Ecuador’s and Latin America’s History
  • The Clash of Civilizations
  • The Colonial Period
  • Independence process

Session 11 to 15:
Ecuador and Latin America during the:
  • 19th century
  • 20th century

Session 16 to 20:
Contemporary Ecuador and Latin America
  • Population
  • Cities and development
  • Religion and Religious festivities
  • Food

Sessions 21 to 25:
Contemporary Ecuador and Latin America:
- Medical practices
- Education
- Arts
- Literature
- Human Mobility

COURSE READINGS

Selected readings from the texts listed below.


GRADING EQUIVALENCES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94:</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-90:</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-88:</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-85:</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-80:</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-76:</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-72:</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-68:</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-66:</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65- And less</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>