

January 7, 2020

**Public Policy 480 – Global Engagement Seminar  
COSTA RICA**

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan  
Winter 2020: Course Information & Syllabus

**Professor Susan M. Collins**

[smcol@umich.edu](mailto:smcol@umich.edu)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

Class Meetings: M/W 11:30am-1:00pm (Weill 1220)

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00pm, Tuesdays 10:30-11:30am & by appointment (Weill 3234)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This advanced seminar challenges public policy majors to consider how policy issues are framed and addressed in a non-US setting. Specifically, students will focus on Costa Rica, studying three contemporary policy challenges in light of the country's political, economic, historical and cultural context. The winter break study tour will provide students an opportunity to deepen their understandings, including through discussion of the policy issues with local stakeholders. Upon return, students will work in groups to complete poster presentations and to produce short, formal policy reports. The policy issues for 2020 all relate to Costa Rica's long-standing commitment to sustainable development. They will focus on Environmental Education, National Parks, and Roads/Infrastructure.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Develop an understanding of how policy issues are framed and addressed in a small, democratic, middle-income country, also enriching understandings of policy issues in the US and other country contexts.
- Learn how to approach a new policy issue. Key steps will include gathering and organizing relevant (quantitative and qualitative) information, formulating questions, and deciding whom to approach for insights and how.
- Enhance oral and written presentation skills – through in-country interviews with stakeholders, and intensive group preparations of an oral policy briefing, a poster presentation and an in-depth written report.

STUDY TOUR BASICS:

- Flight Details (Delta Airlines) Depart Friday, February 28, Return Saturday, March 7.
- We will spend the first night near the airport, 3 nights in Monteverde and 4 nights in San Jose.
- In-country activities and expectations will be discussed in detail, with written information posted in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

Regular class attendance, preparation and participation are essential for this course. The main assignments and grading allocation will be: (See the 'Assignments' & 'Project' documents for details.)

- Submissions for a Reading Journal (20% final grade)
- Group Policy Project - several components incl. poster, presentation & paper (50% final grade)
  - Each group will present a poster at the Gramlich Showcase (3/20) - attend if possible
- Participation (partly based on self-assessment) - in class discussions, on the trip, and in group work (30% final grade)

January 7, 2020

**Attendance and Participation:**

Although I will lecture at times, this will predominately be a discussion-based class. The goal is active participation from **all** class members. Thus, each of you is expected to complete assigned reading material in advance, to attend class, to stay 'on-topic', to consider comments made by others, and to share discussion time. Active engagement in group projects and activities is also expected.

Please contact me (by email) in advance, or as soon as possible, if you have to miss class. A make-up assignment may be required for missed classes, and multiple unexcused absences will harm your grade.

**FORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT**

Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, I will be happy to work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

**Student Mental Health and Well-Being Resources:** The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>

**Academic Integrity:** To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct.

**Please review additional information and policies regarding academic expectations and resources at the Ford School of Public Policy at this link:**

<http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectations>

January 7, 2020

### COURSE READINGS & Associated Reading Journal Entries

Required readings are listed in the READINGS section below. Most readings will be available as files posted to our course Canvas site, on-line (see links in the Syllabus page of Canvas), and/or on reserve in the Ford School Reading Room.

**You will be expected to complete Reading Journal Entries for a number of the readings - denoted (RJ), and in bold - in the first half of the term. These will be due in CANVAS no later than midnight, the night before class.** Those marked (RJx2) are more extensive and worth twice the credit. Because they are preparation for class discussion, RJ assignments will **not** be accepted after the relevant class has started. (See Canvas for details and some examples. We will also discuss RJ entries during the first few classes to ensure that the assignment expectations are clear.)

Discussion questions are provided to structure your reading and help you prepare for each (pre-trip) class. More information about how to prepare for post-trip classes will be provided well in advance.

Readings for the 3 Projects: See 'Projects' page for some initial readings for each policy topic. Project groups will be expected to seek out additional materials as part of their research. I will work with each group to assist them with this and other project related tasks.

News articles will also be assigned as required readings, some requiring journal entries. In addition, students will be expected to stay up-to-date with current events in Costa Rica, by reading/skimming one or more of the Costa Rican news sources regularly. Here are three news sites in English:

- [Costa Rica Star](https://news.co.cr) <https://news.co.cr>
- [Tico Times](http://www.ticotimes.net) <http://www.ticotimes.net>
- [American Expatriate Costa Rica](http://usexpatcostarica.com) <http://usexpatcostarica.com>

In addition to articles on economic & political issues, current events and your group project area, you are encouraged to look for articles on topic of special interest to you (Sports? The arts? Etc.)

### Some Background/Reference Materials:

Country Profiles & Data Sources:

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cs.html>
- <https://data.worldbank.org/country/costa-rica>
- <http://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/economic-survey-costa-rica.htm>

A History Timeline:

- *BBC* Costa Rica Timeline: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19414834>

January 7, 2020

READINGS:

NOTES:

- Readings in bold have a required Reading Journal entry. Please see Canvas for details.
- There may be occasional updates to the Readings – which will be posted and announced.
- 

**January 8 (Wed) Introduction, Overview & Expectations** [No Readings for the first class]

**January 13 (Mon) Getting to Know Costa Rica**

**For class discussion:** What ‘national myths’ are identified in the readings, and what is their historical basis? To what extent is Costa Rica ‘exceptional’ in terms of social, economic, political achievements? To what extent do the views presented in the CRR book align with those from other readings?

All Readings Are Required. 3 Reading Journal Entries are DUE Sunday, Jan. 12 (11:59pm):

- (CRR) *The Costa Rica Reader* edited by Steven Palmer & Ivan Molina (Duke University Press, 2004) These short pieces are all in a single pdf:
  - “Introduction,” pp. 1-7
  - “Birth of an Exception?” pp. 9-12
  - “Coffee Nation” p. 55-56
  - **(RJ) “Privatization of the Land and Agrarian Conflict” pp. 57-61**
  - “The Costa Rica Dream,” pp. 183-86
  - “The Crisis: 1980-82,” pp. 212-18
  - “Tropical Surroundings,” pp. pp. 319-21
- Congressional Research Service (CRS), “Costa Rica: An Overview,” (June 13, 2019).
- **(RJ) Miller, Andrew. *Ecotourism Development in Costa Rica*, Lexington Books, 2014. Chapter 2: “Politics, Economics and Exceptionalism in Costa Rica,” (pp. 31-55).**
  - **Skim pages 31-41; Prepare a Reading Journal Entry on pp. 42-51**
- **(RJ) Read through these recent pieces, then select ONE for a Reading Journal Entry:**
  - *The Economist*: “Costa Rica’s election: Unexpected victory of Carlos Alvarado” (Apr 7, 2018)
  - *NYT*: “Tiny Costa Rica has a Green New Deal, Too. It matters for the whole planet.” (March 12, 2019)
  - *The Economist*: “Why Latin American governments spend money badly” (Nov. 15, 2018)

**January 15 (Wed) Sustainable Development & Environmentalism [GUEST: Prof. Susan Waltz]**

**For class discussion:** To what extent does the ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ describe Costa Rica’s experience with de-forestation? What strengths and weaknesses does this frame provide for understanding approaches to sustainable development & stakeholder perspectives in Costa Rica?

All Readings Are Required. Reading Journal Entries for 2 are DUE Tuesday, Jan. 14 (11:59pm):

- Battersby, Steven (2017) “Can Humankind Escape the Tragedy of the Commons?” PNAS, 114 (1), 7-10 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1619877114>.
- Kates W. Robert, Thomas M. Parris & Anthony A. Leiserowitz (2005) “What is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice,” *Environment Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 47:3, 8-21, DOI: [10.1080/00139157.2005.10524444](https://doi.org/10.1080/00139157.2005.10524444)
- **(RJ) Evans, Sterling. *The Green Republic*. (University of Texas Press, 1999) Chapter 2: “The Environmental Problem.”**

January 7, 2020

- (CRR) *The Costa Rica Reader* excerpts: (These are combined in a single pdf document):  
**(RJ) Read through these short selections, then choose ONE, for a Reading Journal Entry:**
  - “Working Paradise,” pp.275-77
  - “A Community Takes Care of Its Environs,” pp. 279-80
  - “Caffeinated Miasmas,” pp. 281-83
  - “Migration and the Costa Rican Environment Since 1900” pp. 284-92
  - “The River of Milk,” pp. 310-13

**(January 20 -- MLK, No Class)**

**January 22 (Wed) Overview of Economic History & Context:**

**For class discussion:** What have been Costa Rica’s main strategies for economic development? What role have external pressures played? What are the successes & challenges? Are these addressed? How?

All Readings Are Required. Reading Journal Entries are DUE Tuesday, Jan. 21 (11:59pm):

- OECD, “How’s Life in Costa Rica?” November 2017
- **(RJx2) Trejos, Alberto. “Country Role Models for Development Success: The Case of Costa Rica.”** (subsequently published in *Achieving Development Success: Strategies and Lessons from the Developing World*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
- **(RJ) Read these two short articles, and prepare a single (combined) Reading Journal Entry:**
  - “Intel is at home in Costa Rica – for now,” 2009 <https://www.pri.org/stories/2009-02-08/intel-home-costa-rica-now>
  - “Intel Outside,” *The Economist*, 2014.  
<https://www.economist.com/news/americas/21600985-chipmaker-shuts-factory-slicing-away-one-fifth-countrys-exports-intel-outside>
- (CRR), *The Costa Rica Reader*: “Social Development with Limited Resources,” pp. 323-333.

**January 27 (Mon) Overview of Politics, Political Structure:**

**For class discussion:** What are the principal structures of governance, and how do they relate to our central policy questions? NOTE: We will also discuss the following assignments:

- **Project Assign. 1 (Individual) Policy Overview – 500 word max. DUE Feb 4 (8am)**
  - **Includes Self-assessment of Participation -- See Canvas**
- **Questions for Professor Trejos (Individual) – DUE Jan 28 (midnight) See Canvas**

All Readings Are Required. Reading Journal Entries for 2 are DUE Sunday, Jan. 26 (11:59pm):

- **(RJ) *The Ticos: Culture and Social Change in Costa Rica* (1999), pp 65-75:** General overview of government and political structures.
- **(RJx2) Cornick, Jorge and Trejos, Alberto. “[Political and Institutional Obstacles to Reform in Costa Rica](#),”** Chapter 5 in *Growing Pains in Latin America*, edited by Rojas-Suarez, Liliana (CGD, 2009). (See Canvas, or Scroll down to p. 153 to read this on-line)
- (CRR) *The Costa Rica Reader*:
  - “Democratic Enigma,” pp. 139-143.
  - “Corruption,” pp. 336-339[You may also find the following historical pieces interesting – they are NOT required:
  - “The Polarization of Politics: 1932-48,” pp. 164-69]
  - “Democracy on the Brink: the first Figueres Presidency,” pp. 176-82]

January 7, 2020

**WE ARE SHIFTING GEARS TO BEGIN FOCUSING ON THE POLICY PROJECTS AND TRIP PREPARATION.**

- SEE CANVAS RESOURCES FOR INITIAL READING SUGGESTIONS FOR EACH GROUP.
- ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE OUR TRIP:
  - (Individual) Policy Overviews – Due Feb 4 (8am)
  - (Group) Structural Analysis – Due Feb 16 (11:59pm)
  - (Group) Stakeholder Questions – Due Feb 23 (11:59pm)

**January 29 (Wed) An Introduction to our 3 Policy Topics; Prep for Trejos Session**

**For class discussion:** This class will begin with an overview of the 3 policy topics, and some of the general, cross-cutting themes (How do sustainability and development interact? What roles do public, private and civil sectors play?). In the last part of class, we will finalize questions for our (February 3) session with Professor Alberto Trejos.

3 Reading Journal Entries are required for everyone, and are DUE Tuesday, Jan. 28 (11:59pm); Students in each group are required to read all pieces in their project section.

- **National Parks:**
- **Infrastructure/Road to Monteverde:**
- **Environmental Education:**

**February 3 (Mon) Conversation with Professor Alberto Trejos**

**February 5 (Wed) Debrief Trejos Discussion; Tackling policy questions & Initial Trip Prep**

**There are no specific readings for this class.** Each of you will be busy reading in your own policy areas! In addition to class discussions of the 3 projects, and the trip, there will be time for group work.

- **Project Assignment 2 (Group) Structural Analysis – DUE February 16 Sunday (11:59pm)**
- **(RJ) Select one of the additional readings you completed for your Policy Overview**

**February 10 (Mon) Eco-Tourism; Writing a CRS-Style Policy Report;**

No Reading Journal Entries

**For class discussion:** In the first half of the class will focus on complexities and experiences related to Eco-tourism (See the piece by Honey). The remainder will focus on writing a CRS-style policy report. Review the assigned materials and compare them for style and content. *What are the **weaknesses** of the “Eco-Tourism” article? **Compare its structure and type of content to the three CRS reports.** Scan these to reflect on the **kind** of information they contain. They are **NOT** about Costa Rica. In many ways CRS reports set the bar for a high-quality policy brief (and may help you see what you should be aiming for as a policy professional). What insights can be gained from the way these reports are structured, and the way the content is presented? Again -- We will **NOT** be discussing the content – just the structure. If you learn some things about US policy & context, consider it a dividend!*

- **(RJx2) “Honey, Martha. *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* Island Press, 2008. Chapter 5: “Costa Rica: On the Beaten Path.”) See Canvas**
- **“Eco-Tourism in Costa Rica.” (Article to be Critiqued, after reviewing CRS report)**
- CRS reports to skim:
  - CRS, “Rural Highways,” (July 5, 2018)
  - CRS, “National Park System,” (April 25, 2013)
  - CRS, “National Environmental Education Act of 1990: Overview, Implementation and Issues for Congress,” (August 24, 2007)

January 7, 2020

**February 12 (Wed)** Required Trip Orientation [Note that the date for this may change]  
Orientation Readings will be added.

- Project Assignment 3 (Group) Stakeholder Questions – DUE February 23 (11:59pm)
- Second Self-Assessment of Participation -- DUE February 24 (11:59pm) See Canvas

**February 17 (Mon)** Monteverde!

After an initial discussion of Monteverde's history and context, much of the class will be working sessions with each group related to their Structural Analyses.

Readings:

- (RJ) Vivanco, Luis A. Green Encounters: Shaping and Contesting Environmentalism in Rural Costa Rica. (Berghan Books, 2006) (pp. 54 – 59); pp. 60-63 and 162-180
- Tourism information on Monteverde <http://www.monteverdeinfo.com>

**February 19 (Wed)** Group Projects – Outline and discussion of key issues for each group

**February 24 (Mon)** Trip Prep; Questions for stake-holders: What are your gaps? How to 'interview'

**February 26 (Wed)** Trip Prep; Revised Project Outlines; Finalize Stakeholder Questions

**STUDY TOUR: February 28 - MARCH 7** (Details To Be Posted in Trip Section of Canvas)

AFTER WE RETURN FROM THE TRIP, THE COURSE WILL FOCUS ON COMPLETING THE GROUP PROJECT THROUGH A SERIES OF STRUCTURED ASSIGNMENTS. SEE PROJECTS PAGE IN CANVAS FOR DETAILS. The class will continue to meet through April 15. However, class time will be used in a variety of ways, including full class sessions, group meetings with me, group oral presentations, and independent group work. I will be available to meet with groups during 'Group Working Session' times, as well as during office hours and by appointment.

Below is a preliminary Outline of Class Sessions for March-April. Details will be provided after we return; a few readings may be added (in addition to project readings by each group).

March 9 (Mon) -- Trip Debrief (Affirmations & Contradictions); Poster Session Planning

March 11 (Wed) – Policy Projects – Next Steps; Poster Preparation & group work

March 16 (Mon) – Group Working Sessions

March 18 (Wed) – **Poster Drafts (Due March 17)**; Oral Poster Presentations & Feedback Session

March 20 (FRIDAY) -- GRAMLICH SHOWCASE

March 23 (Mon) – Group Meetings with me

March 25 (Wed) – Group Working Sessions

March 30 (Mon) – (**Report Drafts Due Mar 29**); Group Working Sessions to prep for Oral Presentations

April 1 (Wed) -- **Oral Presentations (25 minutes for each group)**

April 6 (Mon) – Group Meetings with me

April 8 (Wed) – Class Presentations & Feedback

April 13 (Mon) – Group Working Sessions

April 15 (Wed) – **Final Reports (Due April 14, 11:59pm);**

**Final Reflections & Self-Assessment of Participation (Due April 16, 11:59pm)**

Final Course Debrief & Discussion of 'Framing Questions'

April 20 – No class