Study Abroad Ecuador: Service Learning a Focus on Food Security

CSES 3954
First Summer Session May 20- June 4, 2017

Instructors:
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Program details
- PRE-departure orientation. Students will be required to read several scientific papers on cultural aspects of food including a book by M. J. Weismantel, 1989 “Food, gender, and poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes.
- Travel Abroad: May 20-June 5, 2017
- Wrap-up: June 29, 2017

Credits: 3 cr.
There are no formal coursework pre-requisites for this course but students must be in good academic standing. An application form is required through Global Education Office website: www.globaleducation.vt.edu. This course is A-F only; it cannot be taken pass/fail.

Course Description:
The core of this unique two-week experience in Ecuador is to expose students to food security issues across regions within mainland Ecuador and Galapagos Islands. Students will be exposed to issues of food security, and sustainability in communities where high dependency on food import exists (Galapagos Islands). The course will highlight the effect of environment and agricultural practices on ecosystem integrity and services. Several service-learning projects will engaged students with the community. Discussion and reflections throughout the program will focus on key questions around food security and sustainability.

Objectives
This high-impact practice is designed to meet the following learning objectives:
- Learn how Ecuador addresses the challenges of meeting the nutrition, food security, and health needs of its population.
- Examine the effects of climate variability, agricultural practices and tourism on food security.
- Learn to what extent culture describe food and different agricultural practices.
- Connect knowledge acquired in classroom with hands-on experience through the service learning projects.
- Evaluate the common threads connecting food, culture, and global agriculture
- Accomplishment of VT’s motto: Ut prosim, That I May Serve
Course Features
1. At each region (Costal, Andes and Amazon) will: (9 days)
   - Explore the type of crops commonly grown and consumed, the culture of food production and consumption.
   - Visit small holder and large scale farms and examine how:
     - Global factors like urbanization, changing agricultural practices, and climate variability (Global warming) factor into food security challenges and opportunities.
   - Document the cultural practices surrounding food production, preparation, and consumption. Also, document the similarities and differences between the cultures of food in Ecuador vs US.

2. Galapagos Islands (5 Days):
   - Learn about the natural history of the islands – volcanic origins etc.
   - Understand the positive and negative impact of tourism on the livelihood of the local inhabitants.
   - Examine the different natural and managed ecosystems within the islands (the lowland vs the highlands of the islands).
   - Observe signs of damaged ecosystems example invasive species
     - Examine the environmental and economic impact of invasive species
     - Engage in service learning projects in the islands (such as removing invasive species)
   - Learn about the adaptation and use of alternative energy source.

Hands on cultural activates in Gallegos Islands
   - Cacao tour and nature walks to a local waterfall.
   - Sport fishing with the local fishermen
   - Visit lava formations.
   - Visit the famous tortoise breeding
   - Half a day at the beach

Grading
Punctual attendance at all scheduled, program-related activities is required, including group meetings, discussions, visits and other scheduled activities. During the 15-day trip abroad, no student is to leave the group without express consent of an instructor. Students are expected to be respectful and attentive, and will refrain from excessive talking while on tours of farms and ecosystems. Any unexcused absences or continued late arrival to program activities may be grounds for dismissal from the program. Course grades are assigned based on the scale below. Point distributions are considered in determining any curve.

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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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Grades in the course will be assigned based on total points earned from the following sources:

- Pre-departure sessions: 100
- Service learning project: 200
- Journal entry: 200
- Final report (video, ppt …presentation): 200

Total points 700

**University Statements**
If you need accommodations because of a disability; if you have emergency medical information to share with us; or if you need special arrangements during our trip, please get in touch with one of the instructors as soon as possible.

Civil discourse is expected at all times in this class, as embodied in the Principles of Community that are posted in classrooms on campus and that are available on the web (http://www.inclusive.vt.edu/resources/forums/docs/2014-signed-poc.pdf).

*The Virginia Tech Honor Code is the university policy that defines the expected standards of conduct in academic affairs. The VT Honor System is the university student organization charged with disseminating information about the Honor Code to the university community and enforcing the Honor Code. As a student, it is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by the Honor Code. Please visit their website at www.honorsystem.vt.edu for more information. The honor code is in effect for all courses you take. In this class, this applies to all assignments.*

**CSES 3954 Code of Conduct**
Study abroad programs are great opportunities to experience aspects of agriculture and life sciences that cannot be learned from a book, and have a lot of fun in the process. Such programs allow you to develop leadership skills; learn more about your chosen career (or explore possible career paths); meet new people; see new places; and know that you’ve done a good job meeting new challenges. Further, study abroad programs are designed to be outstanding educational experiences which are why these programs have the full support of our departments, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Virginia Tech.

At the same time, it is vital that everyone remember that when we leave Virginia Tech as a group we will be ambassadors for the university, the college, and your departments. The impressions we make on people we meet will be lasting ones. The expectation is that your conduct will be appropriate for any situation: be friendly to the people you meet; be attentive when speakers are presenting information; be responsive when the opportunity to participate presents itself; and be respectful of our hosts, including hotel staff. Virginia Tech has a good reputation, for many reasons; let’s continue to put our best foot forward so we leave everyone with an excellent overall impression of Virginia Tech.

*As always, all Virginia Tech policies are in effect, including zero tolerance for alcohol*
and drug abuse.