
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications
ALED 422-550: Cultural Pluralism in Agriculture

 Spring 2021 (travel portion is **January 2-15, 2021**)

(San Isidro de Peñas Blancas, Costa Rica)

Instructor: Gary Wingenbach, Professor, wingenbach@tamu.edu, 261 AGLS

Materials: Various online readings, databases, and media

Prerequisite: Junior, senior, graduate student or approval of instructor

Class Meetings and Structure:

This course is a hybrid between on- and off-campus (TAMU Soltis Center for Research and Education in San Isidro de Peñas Blancas, Costa Rica) instruction. The travel portion is from January 2-15, 2021; in-country class meetings may be from 2:00-8:00 p.m.; however, mandatory attendance is required in pre- and post-travel classes/meetings. Some cultural immersion field trips are required in Costa Rica. Assignments are required before, during, and after the program.

Description:

Selected topics on the diversity of human resources in agriculture; emphasis on working in a multicultural society and developing a sensitivity toward different cultures; explores the interrelationships between the contributions of diverse individuals, the state, nation and global success of agriculture.

Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will:

1. Recognize effects of cultural heritage in U.S. and Latin American (Costa Rica) agriculture;
2. Discern contributions of various ethnic groups to the global agricultural industry;
3. Discuss cultural and historical impact on agricultural production, markets, eating habits, etc.

Rationale:

This course focuses on diversity of people and culture as it relates to United States' and international agriculture. Importance is placed on living and working in a global, pluralistic society, and developing communicative approaches for solving technical and social problems. The TAMU Soltis Center for Research and Education affords learners an authentic educational setting for non-U.S. perspectives on the multicultural origins of agriculture, thereby deepening the study abroad experience. This course is intended for those who desire to broaden their knowledge of an international and pluralistic society. Cultural appreciation is the critical analyses of one's own and others' perceptions, beliefs, and value systems that influence our worldviews. Students who experience cultural differences broaden their understanding of other cultures. Costa Rica's abundant variety of plants, animals, foods, agricultural practices, and cultural customs and traditions greatly facilitate the teaching and learning of cultural pluralism in agriculture.

Course Methods:

Students are required to download and read selected materials (see eCampus) to actively participate in class discussions. All participants have the right to express ideas, feelings, and concerns about culture, heritage, diversity, and ethnicity. Students will develop teamwork, problem solving, decision making, and critical thinking skills and are expected to be respectful of others.

Course Schedule (Subject to available resources):

Dates	Tentative Topics	Assignments*	Hrs ¹	Hrs ²
Fall 2020	Pre-travel orientation, networking, etc.	Surveys	2.0	6.0
Dec 2020-1/1/21	Pre-travel research paper, surveys, etc.	Cultural Heritage	8.0	20.0
Jan. 2	<i>Travel to Costa Rica</i>			
Jan. 3	<i>Hike to Rainforest/Waterfall</i> • Cultural Heritage; Agricultural Stats (Texas)	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 4	<i>Local Farms (Chrisley Dairy); Proyecto Asis</i>	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5

Dates	Tentative Topics	Assignments*	Hrs ¹	Hrs ²
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latin American Agriculture (Costa Rica) 			
Jan. 5	<i>Local Farms (Luna Nueva); Nighttime Rainforest Hike</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory Rural Appraisal 	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 6	<i>Local Agribusiness (Espiritu Santo Coffee)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research/Scholarship Challenge 	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 7	<i>Ecotourism (Nectandra Garden)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Globally Important Agricultural Systems 	Team Reflections Photo Narrative #1	2.5	2.5
Jan. 8	<i>Field Trip to Arenal Volcano National Park</i>	Team Reflections	2.5	1.5
Jan. 9	<i>Ecotourism (Ziplines, Hot Springs, River float)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arenal Volcano; Linda Vista Hotel 	Team Reflections		10.0
Jan. 10	<i>Travel to La Fortuna for lunch and shopping</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainforest Chocolate Tour 	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 11	<i>Tilapia Farm Visit</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Pluralism: Nature vs. Humans 	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 12	<i>Don Juan Organic Farm Visit</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Pluralism: Humans vs. Nature 	Team Reflections Photo Narrative #2	2.5	2.5
Jan. 13	<i>Guanacaste (Occidental Tamarindo Hotel)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student team reflection sessions 	Team Reflections	2.5	2.5
Jan. 14	<i>Local Cultural Tours</i>			10.0
Jan. 15	<i>Return Travel to Texas</i>	Post-travel Surveys		
Jan. 18- Feb. 19	Food Chains: The Human Cost in Our Food Supply (5 weekly classes; Friday, 1:00-2:00 p.m.)	Post-travel Essays	5.0	10.0
Feb. 22- Apr. 2	Effect of Nationalism on Refugee Integration in Texas (5 weekly classes; Friday, 1:00-2:00 p.m.)	Post-travel Essays	5.0	10.0
*ALL projects must be in Word format and include the student's LAST NAME as part of the file name. Assignments are detailed in eCampus with due dates/times; late submissions incur a 10% penalty per day past the deadline. Missing class or other planned activities for an unexcused absence (see Student Rules) requires make-up assignments; failure to complete make-up work results in one letter grade reduction for the final course grade.			45.0	90.0
¹ Federal, state, and university rules require a minimum of 45-48 hours of instructional time for each three-credit hour course (see University Rule 11.03.99.M1). ² Online and hybrid courses must meet the same credit hour requirement as face-to-face courses and must account for 45 hours of instructional time for each three-credit hour course. Semester credit hour is defined as not less than: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One hour of formalized instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or At least an equivalent amount of work as required in item (1) of this definition for other academic activities leading to the award of semester credit hours. <p>One hour is defined as a minimum of 50 minutes per week. Formalized instruction includes any combination of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom instruction through lecture, discussion, or instructor-guided activity; Instructor-facilitated online learning. 				
This course has been assigned three credit hours based upon the work represented by verifiable student achievement of institutionally established learning outcomes, direct faculty instruction, and academically engaged time (Federal Rule 75 FR 66832; see https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-29/pdf/2010-26531.pdf).				

Assignments:

- Pre-travel Surveys** (100 points)
Complete an introspective analyses of self-perceived career competencies, intercultural knowledge, learning styles, and diversity values. Respond to the Preflection Surveys before U.S. departure.
- My Cultural Heritage Report** (100 Points): Investigate your family's cultural heritage through online ancestry programs or family interviews. Prepare a short report (~1000 words) describing:
 - Origin (family surname, ethnicity, and historical homeland);
 - Identity (language, religion, SES, residence, education, careers, and unique factors);

- c. U.S. Transition (how/when family came to the U.S.; years and travels to current residence);
- d. Significant Norms (favorite foods, traditions, values, holidays, etc.); and,
- e. Cultural Heritage Unknowns (explain the top three aspects you did not know about your family).

See eCampus for assignment rubric and past examples.

3. **Photo Narratives** (100 Points): (**Note: products from this assignment may be used for research.**)

While studying abroad, there are daily opportunities to interact with host country nationals. These interactions may stimulate your curiosity about culture. Before you attempt to understand another culture, examine your own by telling a short story (through photo and text) about yourself.

Photo Narrative #1 Instructions: (50 points)

To facilitate telling your cultural heritage story, you need a cellphone camera (make and model are irrelevant), and note taking tools. Two weeks before your study abroad travel, acquire a series of digital photos that are most representative of your cultural heritage. Think about images that illustrate your culture or heritage, such as foods, home, clothes, places, traditions, etc. **NO selfies or photos with your face in them are allowed** (it defeats the double-blind review process). **YOU must own each photo submitted** (i.e., no online photos or Photoshop images allowed).

While collecting photos, make notes for each photo, focusing on these Photo Collection Questions:

- Where was the photo acquired?
- What drew your attention to the subject of the photo?
- What aspect of culture or heritage does the photo represent to you?
- What were your emotions and/or thoughts when you took the photo?
- How will this photo help you tell your cultural heritage story with/without text?

PN #1: During the first week of study abroad:

1. Pick three photos that show one theme in your heritage; reduce photo sizes to ~500KB/photo.
2. Paste these digital photos into an email to wingenbach@tamu.edu.
3. Write a narrative (~200 words) to describe your Cultural Heritage theme, represented by the photos, in the email message.
4. Participate in double-blind reviews (i.e., each student analyzes a peer's photo set and writes a new narrative describing how the peer's photos best represent the peer's culture/heritage).
5. After the peer review, reflect on the similarities/differences between narratives.

Photo Narrative #2 Instructions: (50 points)

During the first week of the study abroad, collect a series of digital photos that are most representative of the host country's cultural heritage. Think about images that illustrate the host country's foods, homes, clothes, places, signs, etc. Use the same questions from PN #1 to collect photos and notes for your set.

PN #2: During the study abroad:

1. Choose three photos for one theme of the host country's culture; reduce sizes to ~500KB/photo.
2. Follow steps 2-5 from PN #1.
3. Share reflections from the Photo Narrative process as they relate to intercultural learning and/or expression of cultural heritage in domestic and foreign settings.

4. **Team Facilitated Reflections** (100 points)

Active class and study abroad participation is essential to enhance your career competencies; to demonstrate active course participation (pre-departure, in-country, and post-return) student teams lead "Facilitated Reflection Sessions," focusing group discourse on learning objectives in this study abroad program. Additional information, discussion topics, and a rubric are posted in eCampus. **Note:** Cell phones and other media are prohibited during this assignment.

5. **Post-travel Essays** (50 points)

Complete two essays for post-travel discussions of cultural pluralism in agriculture topics; see eCampus for additional details.

6. **Post-travel Surveys** (50 points)

Complete post-experience surveys by **April 15th**.

Grading Scale
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D = 60-69%
F = <59%

Faculty Senate Statement on Plagiarism and Aggie Code of Honor: Scholastic misconduct is defined broadly as “any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work.” Plagiarism is one of the worst academic offenses, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student.

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do”

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Attendance Policy: “The University views class attendance as the responsibility of an individual student. Attendance is essential to complete the course successfully. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located on-line at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>.”

Copyright Policy: All handouts and supplements used in this course are copyrighted. This includes all materials generated for this class, including the syllabus, exams, review sheets, and lecture outlines. Materials may be downloaded or photocopied for personal use, and may not be given or sold to other individuals.

Syllabus Revision Policy: Revision to this syllabus will be made at the instructors’ discretion. Changes in dates and topics will be announced in class and may not be communicated in writing.

Resources:

- Article: [Race and the Food System: An Introduction](#)
- Article: [Accenting the “culture” in Agriculture](#)
- Article: [Overview on Diversity Awareness](#)
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- Human Development Index: <http://chartsbin.com/view/5352>
- UN Data: <http://data.un.org/>
- USDA Foreign Agricultural Service: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>