

**ALED 485-551: Directed Studies-Costa Rica**  
 Spring 2022 (travel portion is **January 2-15, 2022**)  
 (San Isidro de Peñas Blancas, Costa Rica)

**Instructor:**

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**Class Structure:**

This course is taught at the TAMU Soltis Center for Research and Education in San Isidro de Peñas Blancas, Costa Rica. It is a two-week intersession format from January 2-15, 2022, from 8:00 a.m. – noon; however, mandatory attendance in pre- and post-travel student meetings is required. Some full-day cultural immersion field trips are also required. Assignments will be completed prior to and during in-country study hours.

**Description:**

The course includes an action-oriented, participatory examination of various aspects of international agricultural development issues.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Examine international agricultural development issues through independent investigations;
2. Produce high quality visuals and written copy from the independent investigations; and
3. Increase written and oral communication skills.

**Rationale:**

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Strategic Plan outlines a goal to “Provide experiential learning opportunities that foster critical thinking, complex problem solving, strong communication skills, community interaction, and social/global awareness” using strategies that “Expand out of classroom learning experiences (e.g. study abroad, service-learning, community outreach, internships)” and “Foster real-world interdisciplinary problem solving through service learning and community-based projects” (COALS). This course will provide students opportunities to gain first-hand experiences designing personal learning projects and working in another culture. Rural communities near the TAMU Soltis Center offer unique opportunities to compare cultural aspects between Costa Rica and the United States. Students will practice communication skills and broaden their global/intercultural perspectives, which cannot be replicated on the A&M Campus.

Assignments:	Due Dates	Points	Scale
Pre-travel Reflection Surveys	Pre-departure	100	A = 90-100%
Team Facilitated Reflections	Jan. 2-15	100	B = 80-89%
Post-travel Career Competency Surveys	Jan. 31	100	C = 70-79%
Promotion Kit	Pre-spring break, 2022	300	D = 60-69%
	TOTALS	<b>600</b>	F = <59%

**Assignments<sup>1</sup>:**

1. **Pre-travel Surveys** (100 points): Complete an introspective analysis (online surveys) of self-perceived career competencies (communications, teamwork, professionalism, etc.), intercultural knowledge, and diversity values. Respond to the ALEC Preflection Survey before U.S. departure.
2. **Team Facilitated Reflection** (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 electronic media are prohibited during the conduct of this assignment.
3. **Promotion Kit** (300 points; multiple stages): The Texas A&M Study Abroad Programs Office states that the university “is committed to increasing student participation in high impact, international experiences challenging each college to set its own goals for participation.” Furthermore, The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M has stated that its priorities include high impact learning, climate and diversity, international programs, and the interdisciplinary Grand Challenges program. Your assignment is to produce high quality visuals and written copy for specific partners in Costa Rica (e.g. Espiritu Santo Coffee, Nectandra Institute, and Cloud Forest Gardens, etc.), or for an amalgamation of site visits that correspond to an AGLS Grand Challenge (i.e., Protecting our Environment, Enriching our Youth, etc.). Student teams will be assigned to a specific partner or one of the Grand Challenges prior to departure for Costa Rica (see eCampus for more information).
4. **Post-travel Surveys** (100 points): Introspective analysis of career competencies gained from the Costa Rica experience. Respond to ALEC Study Abroad Surveys by **January 31st**.

**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”***

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other. If you have questions about plagiarism,

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<sup>1</sup> \*Assignments are online with due dates/times; late submissions incur a 10% penalty for each day past the deadline, unless waived by course instructors. All assignments must be in Word format and include the student’s LAST NAME as part of the file name. Missing classes or other planned activities during the Costa Rica travel portion because of an unexcused absence (see Student Rules), requires make-up assignments; failure to complete make-up assignments results in one letter grade reduction for the final course grade.

please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, which can be found online at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>. Any suspected instances of scholastic dishonesty will be investigated and resolved according to the procedures outlined in the Aggie Honor System (<http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

**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/>