Global Awareness – Costa Rica

Prof. Gisela Norat
Office: Buttrick 357

Required books:


Course objectives:

- Through a variety of readings, films and class speakers expose students to a range of historical and current issues that shape Costa Rican society.
- Give students the opportunity to develop their discussion and critical thinking skills through individual written reflections and small group work.
- Encourage research and oral presentation skills on a topic of individual interest to be shared in a class.

Course requirements:

- **One reflection piece per class session (60%).** Students will be evaluated, principally, on their engagement with the assigned texts and daily class preparation, which will serve as material for construction of their e-portfolio in the Global Awareness Experience (GA 201) part of the course.

For each of the readings assigned from *The Costa Rican Reader (CRR)* students are required to summarize the three most important points that the writer makes. These should be prepared in bullet form and consist of a sentence or two paraphrasing each of the three key elements. After summarizing the main points of each reading, students should reflect on all the readings (including fiction) as a whole and write a brief paragraph (3-4 sentences) on what they have learned about Costa Rican society. To demonstrate critical thinking, in a second brief paragraph reflect on a subject of past or present concern on a local, national or world level and explain how it can be connected with the Costa Rican issue. Craft each reflection piece thoughtfully as you will also use these for your e-portfolio project in GA201.

**Type, sign and pledge** all written work to be handed in. It is your responsibility to complete all work for every class session. **Work will only be accepted** during class and **late submissions will incur a penalty of three points per day (including weekends and holidays) for every session**
outstanding past the original due date. Make sure you familiarize yourself with the Spanish Dept.’s policies as noted on the attached Course Information sheet.

- **Final presentation on a current issue (20%). Duration 15 minutes.** Students will present on a specific topic of interest, based on research of current news events reported over the past year in the Costa Rican English newspaper, *The Tico Times*, and other media sources. Choose your topic carefully since you will use the research material for your e-portfolio project in GA201. The topic should be one that truly interests you.

Your topic proposal must be submitted in writing for my approval by **Feb. 25, 2008**. Detailed guidelines on presentation, content and evaluation criteria will be posted on Blackboard.

Preparation for this requirement entails reading past and current issues of *The Tico Times*. Students are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the electronic version by going to: [http://www.ticotimes.net/](http://www.ticotimes.net/)

I receive the paper version of *The Tico Times* and have placed back issues on reserve at the library. As I finish reading issues, I will add them to the course reserve stockpile. Since the hardcopy newspaper subscription is for sharing, please do not remove issues from the library or tear out pages.

- **Participation (20 %)** is essential. Active participation means answering questions about the readings and sharing the reflection pieces that you prepare for class sessions. Students will be asked to lead the discussion on a short story. Preparation entails reading ahead of time and submitting 4-5 discussion questions (at least one class prior to the scheduled discussion) to the instructor for group distribution. The participation grade will take into account preparation on leading a discussion and thoroughness in completing assigned readings as scheduled on this syllabus. Please note that typically I do not call on individuals. Participation is left up to you on a volunteer basis.

A sheet detailing the criteria for the participation grade will be posted on Blackboard under course documents. By midterm student will see a participation grade posted on their Blackboard grade book. Toward the end of the term another grade will reflect your participation for the second half of the semester. Your final participation grade will be the average of the two grades.

**January:**

**Weds. 1/16**  Introduction / The Ticos

**Mon. 1/21**  No class – Martin Luther King Day

**Minority populations**

**Weds. 1/23**  Indigenous groups  
*CRR*: 229 “Other Cultures”; 234 “Dispossessed”; 264 “Taking Care of Sibö’s Gifts”
Mon. 1/28  *When New Flowers Bloomed:* 25 “Garabito”; 31 “Indian Mummy”  
*CRR:* 16 “Hunting Indians”; 22 “The Trial of Pablo Presbere”;

Weds. 1/30  Costa Ricans of Black ancestry  
*Stories of Quince Duncan:* 213 “The Legend of Joe Gordon”;

February:

Mon. 2/4  *Stories of Quince Duncan:* 89 “Two Roads”; 93 “When I Lay My Burden Down”; 109 “A Letter”

Weds. 2/6  *CRR:* 237 “West Indian Limón”; 243 “Our Blood is Blackening”; 245 “Every Day Racism”

*Economics*

Mon. 2/11  The banana industry:  *CRR:* 128 “Banana Strike”; 132 & 133 “Notice to West Indian Farmers”

“Estefania” by Carmen Lyra (in *When New Flowers Bloomed*)

Weds. 2/13  The coffee industry:  *CRR:* 55 “Coffee Nation”; 57 “Privatization of the Land and Agrarian Conflict”

in class film: *Birdsong*

Mon. 2/18  Speaker – economist, Dr. Stefan Krause – Emory University

Weds. 2/20  Community and Immigration  
*CRR:* 249 “The Devil and don Choco”; 257 “Passing Nicas in Costa Rica”; 349 “Building Our Home; “Chumico Tree” by Rima de Vallbona (posted on Blackboard).

*Family & Gender Issues*

Mon. 2/25  Macho culture: in class film: *A Man When He is a Man*  
*CRR:* 198 “A Costa Rican Godfather”; 350 “Men in Crisis?”  
Final presentation topic due today

Weds. 2/27  Short stories by Rima de Vallbona: “Penelope’s Silver Wedding Anniversary” (in *Short Stories by Latin American Women: The Magic and the Real* – on reserve);  
“Parable of the Impossible Eden” (posted on Blackboard).

“Ramona, Woman of the Ember” by Carmen Lyra (in *When New Flowers Bloomed*)

“Little Boy Blue” by Quince Duncan

March

Mon. 3/3 – Fri. 3/7  Spring break

Mon. 3/10  “Alcestis” and “Eva” by Emilia Macaya (in *When New Flowers Bloomed*)
**CRR:** 102 “Women of the Barrio”

**Weds. 3/12** – *CRR:* 155 “Democrats and Feminists”; 160 “Women’s Vote”
Speaker - TBA

**Ecology**

**Mon. 3/17** – *CRR:* 275 “Working Paradise”; 285 “Migration and the CR Environment”; 310 “The River of Milk”; in class film *Rain Forest*

**Weds. 3/19** – *La Loca de Gandoca* (novel) by Anacristina Rossi

**Mon. 3/24**  *La Loca de Gandoca*
*CRR:* 293 “From Rain Forest to Banana Plantation”; 298 “Pesticides and Parakeets in the Banana Industry”

**Weds. 3/26** Speaker - Coffee farm owner & Decatur proprietor – Byron Holcomb

**Politics**

**Mon. 3/31**  “And We Sold the Rain” by Carmen Naranjo (in *Contemporary Fiction from Central America – on reserve*); *CRR:* 135 “A Governor and a Man”; 139 “Democratic Enigma” Speaking Center – mock oral presentation

**April**

**Weds. 4/2**  *CRR:* 163 “The Polarization of Politics 1932-1948”; “Of Their Obscure Family” by Yolanda Oreamuno (in *When New Flowers Bloomed*) “The Good Guys” by Rima de Vallbona (in *When New Flowers Bloomed*)

**Mon. 4/7**  *CRR:* 170 “Memories of Girlhood in ’48”; 175 “Democracy on the Brink”; 183 “The Costa Rican Dream”

**Weds. 4/9** — film *Caribe*

**Mon. 4/14** Final presentations

**Weds. 4/16** Final presentations

**Mon. 4/21** Final presentations

**Weds. 4/23** SpARC

**Mon. 4/28** Final presentations