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PTRM 391 Sustainable Tourism

A field course dedicated to analyzing adventure and nature-based tourism impacts in
Costa Rica: 3 Credits

Summer 2020

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Credit Issuing Body: University of Montana

Course Overview

This course introduces the concepts and principles of sustainable tourism to assist students in better understanding how to evaluate tourism provider performance, as well as, the environmental, social, and economic implications of adventure and nature-based tourism in often remote coastal areas.

This course introduces concepts and principals associated with sustainable tourism with a specific focus on destination governance as a multi-scalar (local, regional, national, and international) and multi-actor (private sector, state and local government, NGOs, civil society, et.) framework for understanding how behavior can be changed to usher in sustainable outcomes at the destination level. It covers the concepts of sustainable development and include the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism; positive and negative impacts of tourism development; and principles conducive to sustainable tourism planning, community involvement, and development. The course adopts the problem-based, place-based learning format which promotes critical thinking, analytic skills, and problem solving skills along with team work.

Costa Rica serves as a unique 'laboratory for learning'. Costa Rica has modified its national strategy for economic development to include forceful initiatives to increase tourism in rural areas. Tourism in the regions we will visit is increasing rapidly. The goal is for students to understand the nuanced challenges associated with adventure tourism growth and to evaluate different strategies for ushering in more sustainable industry outcomes.

Learning Objectives

The core skills students will learn in this course are field techniques, analytical methods, communication skills and critical thinking, as well as team work and time management. The specific objectives of the course are the following:

1. Understand principles of sustainable development within the context of Costa Rica.
2. Internalize the holistic (the actors and actions involved – and their interdependence) nature of sustainable tourism.
3. Identify challenges, weaknesses and strengths of sustainable tourism within the contexts of adventure and nature-based tourism in Costa Rica.
4. Identify the socio-economic and environmental impacts on tourism at the individual and community level.
5. Explore and understand the major ecosystems hosting tourism in Costa Rica; their status and health.
6. Recognize different types of niche tourism activities (surf tourism, dive tourism, residential tourism, adventure- / eco-tourism, etc.) and the capacity to foster sustainable community development.

Assessments

We expect active participation in all aspects of the course, from the discussion and analysis of the assigned readings to the review of literature, classes and field work. Some of the course experience is a group effort; some represents your individual work. The unique aspect of this field course is it requires you do three major assessments of sustainable adventure tourism: one creative; one practical (assessing a provider based out criteria); and the last more academic.

Assessment Item	Grade Weight	Work hours
I. Creative Group Assignment	30%	20
II. Provider assessment/Sustainability	30%	20
III. Adventure Tourism SWOT analysis	30%	30
V. Participation and reading quizzes	10%	30
TOTAL	100%	100hrs

I. Group interview assignment and creative presentation:

The goal of this assignment is for your group to tell a narrative to a popular audience that synthesizes theoretical themes from class with existing research on your topic (or industry sector), and with stakeholder perspectives. Once your stakeholder data is collected you must organize it around themes and present your main findings **creatively** to the class. Examples of presentation techniques include: a video, a skit, a podcast, a website, a blog, etc., which you will present to the class.

II. Assessing tourism providers in action:

Using the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC, 2016) Industry Criteria for Sustainable tourism providers assess any provider we visit and their performance as an operation based on the categories listed in the GSTC (2016) document. You may use information from websites, interviews with owners, and observations to discuss how each category and sub-category is addressed by the provider (or not). If you were to make one practical suggestion for improving their practices to better conform to the GSTC's criteria, what would it be, why, and what category would it fall under?

III. Tourism SWOT analysis and report (Turned in 2 weeks after program conclusion): This assignment is designed to be a formal assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of a particular adventure tourism industry and location. Students will design a project that assesses these factors related to the sustainability of a sector of the tourism industry in Costa Rica. The goal is to determine which practices and policies are consistent with sustainable practice and which practices are not. Each student will then make recommendations to stakeholders based on current information and findings. This applied

project will help students to develop skills they can use in environmental evaluation in contexts around the world and potentially to influence actors and agencies involved in tourism governance.

V. Participation: It is critical to be engaged both in the classroom and during site visits.

***Cheating:** Don't do it, you will get a zero on the assignment.

Grading Scheme

A	95.00 – 100.00%	B+	86.00 – 89.99%	C+	76.00 – 79.99%	D	60.00 – 69.99%
A-	90.00 – 94.99%	B	83.00 – 85.99%	C	73.00 – 75.99%	F	0.00 – 59.99%
		B-	80.00 – 82.99%	C-	70.00 - 72.99%		

Date	Course Topic	Teaching Contact hours	Learning activity hours	Required Readings
Day 1 Liberia	Lecture 1: Course introduction – Expectations and Excitement!	1		Review Syllabus
	Lecture 2: Costa Rica Historical Context: Understanding foreign influence and dependency	2		(Longley, 1994)
	Lecture 3: Introduction to Costa Rica and Ecological History and Importance	2	2	
Day 2 Nosara	Lecture 4: History of Tourism	1		Mowforth & Munt, 1999
	Lecture 5: Sustainable Tourism: Theoretical underpinnings and mandate as a tool for achieving sustainable development goals	1		Mowforth & Munt, 1999
Day 3 Nosara	Lecture 6: Surf tourism Phase 1: Surfer's as goofball neo-colonists (Beach visit for surf lesson and observation of resource use)	1	2	Barilotti, 2001
	Lecture 7: Tourism area life cycle and common-pool resources.	1		Krause, 2011
	Lecture 8: Surf Tourism and sustainability	2	1	Ponting, 2009
Day 4 Nosara	Lecture 9: Tourism Destination Governance	1		Laws, 2011
	Lecture 10: Voluntary Private Sector Sustainability Initiatives (Tour of Harmony Hotel)	1	2	Blanco, 2011
	Lecture 11: Global Sustainable Tourism Council Industry Criteria: (Student complete assessment of Harmony Hotel)	1	2	GSCT, 2017
	Lecture 12: Greenwashing and Challenges with Certifications	1		Geerts, 2014
Day 5 Nosara	Lecture 13: Surf Tourism as a drive for new and unique employment opportunities (Guest panel with local tourism employees)	2	2	Buckley & Ollenburg, 2012
	Lecture 14: Romancing the wild: the call to adventure tourism	1	2	Fletcher, 2014
	Lecture 15: coastal tourism to remote areas, property values, and associated issues	1		
Day 6 Nosara	Lecture 16: Resorts, eco resorts, and locally owned hostels (which is more sustainable?) (visit to Barigiones Reforestation project)	1	2	Bernard, 2003
	Lecture 17: Natural resources and adventure tourism (Zip-line experience and forest canopy tour)	1	2	
Day 7 Avellanas	Transfer to Avellanas Lecture 18: mangrove ecosystems and tourism infrastructure	2		Fletcher, 2014
	Guided Beach walk and Mangrove tour		3	
Day 8 Avellanas	Lecture 19: Remote coastal communities, development, and surf visitation	1	1	(Mach & Ponting)
Day 9	Lecture 20: Surf Slums	1	2	(Tantamjarik, 2004)

Avellanas	Visit to Tamarindo and talk with surf industry professionals	2	2	
	Discussion: Tamarindo Debrief	2	2	
Day 10 Playa Grande	Lecture 25: Turtles, Tourism and protected area management in Playa Grande (Visit to Las Baulas National Marine Park)	2	2	(Salazar, 2014)
Day 11 Playa Grande	Lecture 25: Surf tourism and environmentalism (Playa Grande Case Study and Visit to Bahia Pirates)	2	2	Surfer Magazine
	Lecture 26: NGOs and Nature Based Tourism	2	2	West & Carrier, 2004
Day 12 Playa Grande	Lecture 27: Assessing tourism sustainability at the Destination Level	2	1	Laws, 2011
	Lecture 28: Course Wrap up and assignment Review	2		
Day 13	Transfer to Liberia and fly back to USA			
Total		39	34	

Workload Summary	Hours
Faculty led lecture hours	44
Faculty or expert led activity hours	35
Outside workload (readings and assignments)	100
Total hours	179

Class Readings

- Blanco, E. (2011). A social-ecological approach to voluntary environmental initiatives: the case of nature-based tourism. *Policy Sciences*, 44(1), 35-52.
- Buckley, R., & Ollenburg, C. (2012). Tacit knowledge transfer: Cross-cultural adventure. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 419-422.
- Fletcher, R. (2014). *Romancing the Wild: Cultural Dimensions of Ecotourism (New Ecologies for the Twenty-First Century)*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Geerts, W. (2014). Environmental certification schemes: Hotel managers' views and perceptions, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 39, 87-96.
- GSTC. (2016). *GSTC Industry Criteria*. GSTC. Retrieved from http://www.gstcouncil.org/images/Integrity_Program/Criteria/GSTC-Industry_Criteria_only_v3_21Dec-2016_Final.pdf
- Honey, M. (1999). *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development : Who Owns Paradise?* Washington, D.C: Island Press.
- Laws, E., Agrusa, J., Scott, N., & Richens, H. (2011). *Tourist Destination Governance: practice, theory and issues*. Wallingford, UK: CAB International.

- Longley, K. (1994). Resistance and accommodation: The United States and the nationalism of Jose Figueres 1953-1957. *Diplomatic History*, 1-29.
- Mach, L., & Ponting, J. (n.d.). Governmentality and surf tourism destination governance. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (2003). *Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalisation and New Tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge.
- Ostrom, E. (2009). A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems. *Science*, 325, 419-422.
- Ponting, J., & O'Brien, D. (2013). Liberalizing Nirvana: An analysis of the consequences of common pool resource deregulation for the sustainability of Fiji's surf tourism industry. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
- Salazar, E. R. (2014, 2 12). *The Central American Dome Hope Spot - the forgotten sea*. Retrieved from Missionblue.org: <https://mission-blue.org/2014/02/the-central-american-dome-hope-spot-the-forgotten-sea/>
- Tantamjarik, A. (2004). *Sustainability Issues Facing The Costa Rica Surf Tourism Industry*. MA Thesis.
- West, P., & Carrier, J. (2004). Ecotourism and Authenticity: Getting away from it all? *Current Anthropology*, 45(4).