

Costa Rican Environmental Policy

Course code: POL 3420

Total contact hours: 60 hours

Pre-requisite: None

Course Overview

This course will explore the dynamics of environmental management, environmental histories, policy, politics, and ACTION in the case study of Costa Rica and beyond. It will study environmental history and policy at a regional and national level; it will explore the emergence of Costa Rica's cutting edge environmental politics and governmental commitments (the greening of the public sector and carbon neutrality and others); it will look back at Costa Rica's conservation history and critically review its conservation and sustainable development model; it will present an understanding of the 'state of the nation and region' in regard to environmental indicators (land-use methods and statistics, deforestation and reforestation data, contamination and waste indicators); it will identify the individuals and organizations working on taking authentic action in environmental protection; it will take a close look at how government policy translates into practice by reviewing cases studies of community and grassroots action in forestry, organic farming, recycling, cooperatives, and women's environmental groups; and lastly, it will address some of central issues and challenges facing these activities and the resultant environmental conflicts.

The course will focus on three major research questions (from the abstract to the theoretical, on to the conceptual and concrete action):

- 1) Can Costa Rica claim to be at peace with nature?
- 2) What environmental policy and practice has and is taking place?
- 3) What is the quality of Costa Rica's conservation initiatives, sustainable development proposal, and subsequent environmental protection?

Students will be expected to critically review Costa Rica's environmental action, participation, commitments, and challenges. They will put these in their historical, regional, and international contexts. They will learn how to spot trends, features, successes, and environmental policy and action failures. They will be part of the dynamic exploration and get first-hand research experience visiting local communities, NGOs, government offices, and environmental groups. Students will become confident exploring and identifying environmental, political plays and processes.