Major Cultural Traditions:
History, Culture, and Politics in Ecuador
Honors 105
Bellingham/Ecuador
Summer 2020
Western Washington University

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Texts and materials:
Required:
*Huasipungo*, Jorge Icaza
*The Queen of Water*, Laura Resau and María Virginia Farinango

Optional:
*The Ecuador Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffler, eds.
*Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, John Charles Chasteen

Other materials will be available on Canvas

Description: This course is a 4-credit, faculty-led international learning experience that explores the history, languages, and cultures of Ecuador through experiential learning. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, and throughout the course we will explore history, politics, literature, and culture in an attempt to understand how Ecuador fits into the broader history of Latin America, as well as the factors that make it unique in the region.

Students will participate in classroom and applied learning opportunities that include pre-program orientation, group instruction, reading, writing, and critical reflection assignments, learning from and with indigenous knowledge sources, and active engagement with their peers, the faculty directors, and local guides.
Students are expected to be active participants in their own learning and dedicated contributors to our learning community. Faculty and staff from WWU and our partners in Ecuador will serve as mentors for students, though in the end the investment that each student makes in the experience will determine its value in terms of academic and personal development.

Prior to travel, students will participate in orientation, team-building activities, preparatory study on ethical global learning, and team teaching sessions on various aspects of Ecuador’s history and culture. While in Ecuador, students will engage in on-site discussions, writing, and reflective practice.

One of the primary goals of this program is to provide a hands-on opportunity for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values to collaborate effectively in a global society.

**Course objectives:**

- To explore the history, politics, cultures, languages, and social issues of Ecuador and neighboring countries in Latin America;
- To develop a broader understanding of global citizenship and the ethics of international travel and education;
- To reflect on how language, culture, history, and politics shape us as individuals and as societies.

**Course components and grade breakdown:**

International Education Fieldwork: 70%

*Professionalism, Engagement, and Contribution (50%)*

*Critical Reflection and Contribution to Collaborative Learning (written and oral) (20%)*

Other Assignments: 30%

*Teaching and Learning about Ecuador (15%)*

*Final Reflection Activity (15%)*

*International Education Fieldwork (70%)*

1. *Professionalism, Engagement, and Contribution (50%)*

Before we depart, we as a group will collaboratively discuss group norms and expectations as well as WWU rules for international travel programs. We will use this discussion to design a rubric for our collective expectations.
It is incumbent upon us as visitors in another culture to be aware that everything we say and do reflects upon us, our group, our university, and our country. Therefore, respectable and safe behavior is expected at all times; disrespectful or unsafe behavior could mean a failing grade and/or an early trip home.

More details available under the Assignments tab in Canvas.

2. Critical Reflection and Contribution to Collaborative Learning (written and oral) (20%)

Students will have multiple opportunities to practice critical reflection throughout the program. Sometimes this reflection will take place in seminar discussions, but at other times, it may happen at dinner or on the bus or walking down a city street. We ask that students remain open to the learning experiences around them. Students will also write daily short critical reflection papers.

The point of these activities is to deepen individual reflection in support of the group learning experience. These reflections will be due as assigned, with no make-ups.

Other assignments (30%)

1. Teaching and Learning about Ecuador (15%)

During the on-campus portion of our course, students will work in teams to research some aspect of Ecuador’s history and culture and share that information with the group. Each team will design a 30-minute lesson; we encourage you to include hands-on or interactive activities.

More details available under the Assignments tab in Canvas. Each team should plan to meet with me prior to presenting.

2. Final Reflection Activity (15%)

This experience will change you.

Your perspective on yourself, on Ecuador and Latin America, on the US, and on the various communities of which you are a part will be different as a result of this experience.

Our challenge to you is to think deeply about what you will do with this changed perspective.

Your final reflection activity will provide an opportunity to wrestle with the learning you’ve done during the program and think about what to do with this knowledge once you return home.

More details available under the Assignments tab in Canvas.