



VOICES OF THE ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Term: Fall 2019
Dates: August 26 to December 03
Hours: Tuesdays 04:55 pm – 06:10 pm
Location: [Grainger Hall](#), GH-1111
Language: **Spanish**
Grading: Satisfactory/Non-Satisfactory

Instructor: MSc. [Edgar Virguez Rodriguez](#)
Email: edgar.virguez@duke.edu
Program: [PhD Environment Candidate](#), Nicholas School of the Environment
Office: [Grainger Hall](#), GH-3120
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00pm-02:00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Can paramos enhance the water distribution system in Colombia while helping local community markets? Is it possible that ecotourism and biodiversity conservation improve the life of Galapagos Islands inhabitants? Do local tribes in the Amazon Jungle contribute to the preservation of endemic species? Are the environmental challenges that people face in Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) countries comparable to other environmental problems across the globe?

If you want to answer these questions, while enhancing your Spanish communication skills, this course is designed for you. By studying different environmental challenges that LAC countries have faced by means of case studies, presentations from guest lecturers and the interactions with children from [Fundacion Ayuda por Colombia](#), we will learn about the amazing opportunities we have to contribute to LAC sustainable development.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- 1) Identify major environmental challenges that are relevant for LAC countries.
- 2) Recognize a culturally-specific understanding of the effect of environmental problems into local population.
- 3) Create a simplified explanation of a major environmental challenge in Spanish.

Remember to honor the Duke Community Standard throughout all the course.



INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Rather than working with a traditional textbook, we will work from a multi-modal platform (Sakai) designed to include a variety of perspectives from Spanish-speaking communities. For each class you will complete a series of online materials in preparation for our discussion. A file describing the previous lectures, videos, vocabulary, proposed questions, and research, will be uploaded to the course site.

Generally, the first part of the class will be used to improve the knowledge of environmental terms in Spanish by reviewing technical vocabulary and answering discussion questions about the material you previously reviewed. The second part will be devoted to a lecture that summarizes the relevant information for each of the study cases or presentations.

EVALUATION, ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The course will address all modes of communication mandated by the National 21st Century Skills Map in language acquisition:

- 1- negotiating meaning through oral conversations (interpersonal mode),
- 2- reading and listening to texts (interpretative mode), and
- 3- developing projects with a larger audience (presentational mode).

As one of the main objectives of the course is to develop your communication skills in Spanish, active participation in all classes is highly encouraged. In order to have an efficient participation, previous revision of the course material available at Sakai is necessary.

The course is graded using a satisfactory/non-satisfactory scale. Attendance is mandatory, but **two** unexcused absences are permitted. More than two unexcused absences may result in course credit loss. If you miss a class, you will be asked to upload a 20-minute video in which you analyze the weekly course materials and present additional content.

Over the course of the semester, you will complete **two** assessments. The first one will be a study case presentation in which you will develop an individual research on a specific study case and lead the class discussion about the topic. The second one will be a course project in which you will work with members of the [Fundacion Ayuda por Colombia](#) to create a short audiovisual (5 minutes) to answer one the questions that children from the foundation formulates.



DUKE COMMUNITY STANDARD

All activities of Duke Students, including those in this course, are governed by the [Duke Community Standard](#), which states:

“Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and nonacademic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity. To uphold the Duke Community Standard:

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.”

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in the class are encouraged to contact the Student Disabilities Access Office as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

REFERENCES

1. Fundación Ayuda por Colombia. <http://www.ayudaporcolombia.org>. Retrieved on August 16, 2019.
2. Duke Community Standard. <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/about-us/duke-community-standard>. Retrieved on August 16, 2019.
3. Student Disabilities Access Office. <http://access.duke.edu/students/>. Retrieved on August 16, 2019.



SCHEDULE

Each of the course sections will present a main topic and a specific study case as follows:

| Class # | Date | Topic | Study Case |
|----------------|-------------|---|---|
| 1 | 8/27/2019 | Course description and introduction | - |
| 2 | 9/3/2019 | Unique ecosystems and impacts on local economies | Protection of Colombian Paramos |
| 3 | 9/10/2019 | Biodiversity and conservation efforts | Latin America as a biodiversity hotspot |
| 4 | 9/17/2019 | Environmental ethics and cultural anthropology | Strategic investment for Paraguay's sustainable development |
| 5 | 9/24/2019 | Using biodiversity to boost tourism | Galapagos Island as a world recognize tourist spot |
| 6 | 10/1/2019 | Effect of environmental problems over local workers | Asbestos in automotive friction products |
| - | 10/8/2019 | Fall Break (<i>no class</i>) | - |
| 7 | 10/15/2019 | Effect of natural disasters on local communities | Puerto Rico energy grid reconstruction |
| 8 | 10/22/2019 | Course project distribution | - |
| 9 | 10/29/2019 | Energy demand growth in emerging economies | Estimating energy demand in a Latin American cities |
| 10 | 11/5/2019 | Diversifying the energy matrix | Costa Rica implementation of renewable resources |
| 11 | 11/12/2019 | Community based environmental management | Collective Local Payments for ecosystem services in Mexico |
| 12 | 11/19/2019 | Conservation of the Amazonian Jungle | Amazon Jungle: political fires? |
| 13 | 11/26/2019 | Challenges for sustainable value chains | Connecting fishermen with restaurants |
| 14 | 12/3/2019 | Project presentations | Fundación Ayuda por Colombia |

The course content will be continuously updated on Sakai's website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor via email, expecting a response in less than 24 hours.

Remember to honor the Duke Community Standard throughout all the course.
