

**Instructor:** Nick Babin, Ph.D. ([nbabin@sierranevada.edu](mailto:nbabin@sierranevada.edu)), Phone: 775-831-1314 x7423

**Office Hours:** T, W 2-4:00pm; other times by appointment, PL 205 (Library Mezzanine)

**Class Times:** 8/31/17, 4-6:45pm; 10/26/17, 4-6:45pm; 11/30/17, 4-6:45pm- Patterson 207  
12/28/17-1/13/18 Costa Rica Field Portion (Course CRN 80284)

**Course Description:** This course's goal is to deepen our understanding of the theory and practice of sustainable agricultural development through the intensive, interdisciplinary field study of agroecology in Costa Rica. Students will engage with households and agroecosystems in a variety of projects that serve to give students exposure to some of the most important skills, tools and approaches in agroecological development. This course will also give students the opportunity to gain a more thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by small-scale coffee producers in Costa Rica.

**Course Goals:** Our pre field-course meetings at SNC have the following goals:

- Prepare students for their two-week field study through orientation, team-building and project planning activities.

The field-course portion of the course has the following goals:

- Learn the basic concepts and principles of tropical agroecology in the field
- Identify the major agricultural products and production systems in Costa Rica
- Evaluate various tropical agricultural systems and practices for their sustainability
- Describe how globalization affects agriculture and its impact on the environment and rural society in Costa Rica
- Understand the livelihood strategies, opportunities and struggles of Costa Rican coffee producers
- Work directly with farmers and researchers on community-based projects to confront environmental degradation and social dislocation.
- Experience the culture and communities of rural Costa Rica first-hand including a home-stay experience on a family farm

### Required Text:

All required reading material will be made available on the course Moodle.

### Course Organization, Evaluation Methods and Grading:

There will be a total of 1000 points allocated from the following assignments:

Article report and presentation	200	93 – 100	A	73 – 76	C
Crop report and presentation	100	90 – 92	A-	70 – 72	C-
Service Projects/ Participation	200	87 – 89	B+	67 – 69	D+
Field Assignments	300	83 – 86	B	63 – 66	D
Final Exam	200	80 – 82	B-	60 – 62	D-
<b>TOTAL</b>	1000	77 – 79	C+	59 or ↓	F

## Evaluation Methods Explained

### Article Report and Presentation (200 points):

You will be assigned an article to read and write a 2 ½ -page response as well as prepare a PPT presentation (~5 minutes, 5 slides). Your written response and PPT presentation should consist of three elements:

- (1) Summary (1 page): Identify and summarize the key arguments or main points of the reading. Ask yourself what the author is trying to convince you of and how. Pick out the most important key arguments or main points and explain them.
- (2) Integration (1/2 page): Pick one or two ways in which the authors' arguments relate to field trips, personal experiences, current events or concepts and ideas from other courses, and elaborate on these connections. How, for example, does the reading challenge complement, complicate or in some other way relate to other readings, in-class discussions or extra-class materials? Look for points of similarity or difference, and generate connections, contrasts or comparisons between them.
- (3) Questions/Reactions (1 page): This is a crucial component of the response. Identify at least 5 questions or reactions the readings instigate in you that we can discuss in class. Think of discussion questions that you would like to explore as a group. Also, if you are having difficulties understanding a particular part of the reading, this is the place to put your specific questions about which parts did not make sense. In addition, this is the section in which you can raise objections (to content, style, politics, methods, etc.), agreement, praise, or any other reactions you have to a reading. Feel free to add unconventional insights and controversial opinions as they will help make for a spirited discussion. The following are some example prompts for this section:
  - a. I disagree/agree with the following part of the reading because:
  - b. The author is missing something:
  - c. How would (another reader, someone from discipline x) respond?
  - d. This reading reminds me of (personal experience, current events, history, etc.)
  - e. This reading challenged me to think about the following in a new way
  - f. My emotional reaction to this reading is:

Response due on Moodle by 10/26/17. Five minute presentation (~5 slides) due in class 10/26/17.

1. Gliessman, S. R. (2008). *Agroecological foundations for designing sustainable coffee agroecosystems*. IN *Confronting the coffee crisis: Fair trade, sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems in Mexico and Central America*, 27-42. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
  2. Altieri, M. A. (2004) *Linking ecologists and traditional farmers in the search for sustainable agriculture*. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 2: 35-42.
  3. Downs, M. (2014) *Island Biogeography Theory Misses Mark for Tropical Forest Remnants* <http://blog.nature.org/science/2014/04/16/island-biogeography-theory-forest-remnants/>
- Mendenhall, C. D., Karp, D. S., Meyer, C. F., Hadly, E. A., & Daily, G. C. (2014). *Predicting biodiversity change and averting collapse in agricultural landscapes*. *Nature*, 509(7499), 213.
4. Harvey, C. A. et al. (2008). *Integrating agricultural landscapes with biodiversity conservation in the Mesoamerican hotspot*. *Conservation biology*, 22(1), 8-15.

5. Jha, S., Bacon, C. M., Philpott, S. M., Ernesto Mendez, V., Läderach, P., & Rice, R. A. (2014). *Shade coffee: update on a disappearing refuge for biodiversity*. *BioScience*, 64(5), 416-428.
6. Babin, N. (In Review). *The Agrarian Question and Coffee in Costa Rica: 1800-1980*. *Journal of Agrarian Change*
7. Edelman, M. (1990). *When they took the "muni": political culture and anti-austerity protest in rural northwestern Costa Rica*. *American Ethnologist*, 17(4), 736-757.
8. Petchers, S., & Harris, S. (2008). *The roots of the coffee crisis*. IN *Confronting the coffee crisis: Fair Trade, Sustainable Livelihoods and Ecosystems in Mexico and Central America*, 43-66. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
9. Pendergrast, M. (2010). Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. *Uncommon grounds: The history of coffee and how it transformed our world*. Basic Books.
10. Babin, N. (2015). *The coffee crisis, fair trade, and agroecological transformation: impacts on land-use change in Costa Rica*. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 39(1), 99-129.

### Crop Report and Presentation (100)

Each student will be assigned a specific tropical crop species that we will see at some point on our trip in Costa Rica. Students are expected to research their topic prior to departure and prepare a 2 page report and five minute presentation. Detailed instructions given at our 10/26 meeting. Report due on Moodle 11/30/17. Five minute presentation given in class 11/30/17.

### Service Projects/ Participation (200 points)

Participation is a key component of this course and you will be asked to engage with each other and with the landscapes we will be studying. Sensitivity and attentiveness toward each group member's experience and the group's progress as a whole will be the responsibility of each group member. Please participate with a helpful and encouraging attitude as a team member in all aspects of the service projects. Evaluations will be based on attitude, frequency, and depth of insight of contributions to service projects and group discussions.

### Field Assignments (300 points):

This course will feature several assignments to be completed in the field. As some of these will be completed in a field journal, please purchase a suitable notebook for this purpose.

### Final Exam (200 points)

Content will come from lectures, field work, class discussions as well as the assigned readings.

**All late assignments will be penalized at 10% per-day.**

**Course Moodle:** The course Moodle will be used to turn in your responses and post announcements, course materials, presentations, assignments, and readings.

**Sanctions for Cheating and/or Plagiarism:**

The Honor Code The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

### **Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code:**

SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1st Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2nd Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3rd Offense: Student is expelled.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Definition of Plagiarism: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a person presents or turns in work that includes someone else's ideas, language, or other (not common-knowledge) material without giving appropriate credit to the source. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in failing this course, and may also result in further consequences.

Academic dishonesty: A student violates academic integrity when he or she claims credit for any work not his or her own (words, ideas, answers, data, program codes, music, etc.) or when a student misrepresents any academic performance. Work deemed a product of academic dishonesty will receive a zero and points equivalent to the value of the assignment will be subtracted from those already earned in the course.

### **Attendance and absences:**

Excused absences are allowed only in cases of SNC athletics, documented illness, approved College events, job or graduate school interviews and serious family emergency. Each unexcused absence in excess of two for the semester will result in a final grade reduction of 5 percentage points.

Because this class meets only once a week and some of the class activities and assignments are especially difficult to makeup, your instructor requests that excused absences be avoided. If you must miss class for an excused reason you will not be penalized for assignments missed, however, you will still be held responsible for completing them and learning the material covered during your absence.

**Athletics Excused Absences:**

The Athletic Director notifies faculty members of student athletes with excused absences for training and competition. This email excuses the student athlete from class attendance, but not from doing the assigned work. It is the student athlete's responsibility to meet with me prior to the excused absence for missed work and/or alternate assignments. If a student athlete fails to meet with me prior to the absence, make-up work is not available.

**ADA Accommodations:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, hconover@sierranevada.edu or go to the OASIS offices on the third floor of Prim Library within the first week of the semester.

**The SNC Email System:**

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year. Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

**The Mission Statement:**

Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

**The Core Themes:**

Liberal Arts      Professional Preparedness      Entrepreneurial Thinking      Sustainability

**Itinerary:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Thurs 28-Dec</b>	Arrivals	<b>6pm</b> – All flights arrive by this time <b>8pm</b> – Welcome dinner at Hotel Aeropuerto in Alajuela
<b>Fri 29-Dec</b>	Travel to Agua Buena	<b>7am</b> – Drive to Agua Buena Stops along the way in Páramo ecosystem and Boruca Indigenous Reserve in Curre <b>1pm</b> lunch at Flor de Sabana <b>6pm</b> - Arrival at Finca Jimenez (FJ)
<b>30-Dec</b>	Tropical Ecology	<b>9-12-</b> Tour of Botanical Garden and Las Cruces Reserve <b>12-1 pm</b> – lunch at Las Cruces/ pack lunch <b>1-5pm</b> - Ecological investigations Evening with families
<b>Sun 31-Dec</b>	Tropical Ecology/ Reforestation	<b>8am-12:30pm</b> - Reforestation and Primary Forest Visit to Loma Linda, Cañas Gordas, Panama visit <b>1-2pm</b> -lunch at homestay <b>3-5pm</b> - Reforestation project/ plant trees <b>7-9pm</b> Dance Lesson
<b>Mon 1-Jan</b>	Agroecology and Sustainable Development	<b>9-10 am-</b> Coffee, Agroecology and Sustainable Development (FJ) <b>10:30 am-12:30 pm</b> - Coffee Agroecology Tour and talk (FJ) <b>1:00-2:00 pm</b> – Lunch at Jimenez house <b>2- 5pm</b> -Agroecology Practicum at Finca Jimenez Evening with families
<b>Tues 2-Jan</b>	Agroecology and Sustainable Development	<b>8-10am</b> – Coffee Crisis/ Fair Trade Concepts and Research (FJ) <b>10-11am</b> - Walking Tour of the Town <b>11:30-12:30</b> – Lunch with families <b>1- 4pm</b> - Tour of CoopePueblos Coffee Mill - History of Coffee Production and Cooperativismo in AB with Walter Mendez
<b>Weds 3-Jan</b>	Agroecology and Sustainable Development Projects - Understand the livelihood strategies, opportunities and struggles of smallholder Costa Rican farmers.	<b>8-9am</b> - Tree/Crop Biodiversity Research (FJ) <b>9-11:30am-</b> Finca Jimenez Homegarden Inventory <b>12- 4:00pm</b> - Finca Mendez Homegarden Inventory Observe Sun Coffee at Finca Sanchez (Pack Lunch)
<b>Thurs 4-Jan</b>	Agroecology and Sustainable Development Projects	<b>9am-12pm</b> -On-farm Project at Finca Mendoza <b>12-1pm</b> Lunch with families <b>1:30 -5:00pm</b> - Agroecology Practicum at Finca Municipal
<b>Fri 5-Jan</b>	Agua Buena Wrap-up Day	<b>9-12pm</b> Ranchos Amigos Waterfall Hike <b>12-2pm</b> - Lunch with familes <b>2:30-5pm</b> - Agua Buena Wrap Up (FJ) <b>6-9pm</b> Potluck at FJ with Homestays
<b>Sat 6-Jan</b>	Beach	<b>8am</b> – Meet at FJ- Drive to Dominical (breakfast and packed lunches from homestay) <b>1pm on</b> – Dominical beach day- swim, surf, suntan, zip-line-waterfall-sleep Stay at Tortilla Flats In Dominical
<b>Sun 7-Jan</b>	Tropical Ecology/Manuel Antonio National Park	<b>8am</b> - Drive to Manuel Antonio (students responsible for all meals all day) <b>10am-1pm</b> arrive at MA- Tour of National Park <b>1-4pm</b> free time (buy souvenirs, swim, be a tourist) Stay in Manuel Antonio

<b>Mon 8-Jan</b>	Beach/ Travel to La Selva	<b>8am-12pm</b> - Surf/ hike in Manuel Antonio <b>12pm</b> - Depart for La Selva <b>5pm</b> - Arrive La Selva/ Tour
<b>Tues 9-Jan</b>	Tropical Ecology/ La Selva	Ecological investigations
<b>Weds 10-Jan</b>	Tropical Ecology/ La Selva	Ecological investigations
<b>Thurs 11-Jan</b>	Tropical Ecology/ La Selva	Ecological investigations
<b>Fri 12-Jan</b>	Travel to San Jose/ Alajuela	<b>10am</b> Leave for Hotel Aeropuerto in Alajuela National Museum/ Central Market
<b>Sat 13-Jan</b>	Departures	Leave for San Jose Airport (students responsible for all meals all day)