Course Description
The Conservation and Sustainability Practices in Ecuador seminar focuses on the analysis of major environmental threats to Ecuador’s ecosystems. The course examines contemporary conservation strategies that have been implemented to protect the natural resource base and their viability. National and local government policies aimed toward sustainable resource use and their effects are studied. Through the multifaceted and interdisciplinary exploration of Ecuadorian conservation and sustainability issues, students build an individual framework that facilitates their conceptualization of contemporary environmental and socioeconomic challenges as they relate to conservation and, as a result, impact local resources and landscapes.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define and discuss with examples the primary environmental issues, threats to conservation, and challenges to sustainability in Ecuador.
- Demonstrate an interdisciplinary understanding of conservation policy and management, human adaptations to the environment, and resource use and management in Ecuador.
- Discuss the individual, social, and institutional factors that affect Ecuadorian conservation efforts and resource management.
- Propose and debate alternatives for conservation, based on the analysis of current resource management strategies and policies.
- Assess the linkages between global and local conservation issues, problems, and solutions.

Language of Instruction
The academic content of this course is taught predominantly in Spanish. All orientation and logistical issues are provided in English.
Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.*

Module 1: Environmental Conservation in Ecuador and Threats to Cloud Forest Conservation
This module provides an overview of the most pressing threats to conservation and sustainability in Ecuador and in the Cloud Forest specifically, including deforestation for agriculture and pastureland, logging, and mining.

Session 1: Eco-Anthropology of Ecuador: Humans and nature in Ecuador, a historical and contemporary analysis. This session includes complementary readings of Ecuador’s Constitution regarding nature and global sustainability issues.

Required Readings:

Session 2: Deforestation in Ecuador and Carbon Sequestration: Analysis of one of the most important ecological threats in Ecuador and potential solutions.

Required Readings:

Session 3: The Yunguilla Community Project: Organic farming, food production, forestry, ecotourism, land and work distribution within the community (provided in several sub-sessions during the Yunguilla excursion).

Session 4: Participatory Activities in the Yunguilla Community: Organic farming, forestry, and food production.

Session 5: Cloud Forest Ecological Threats: Deforestation for pastureland, logging, and mining (provided in several sub-sessions during the Maquipucuna cloud forest excursion).

Session 6: Organic Farming: Day-visit to an organic farm; principles of organic farming and challenges in Ecuador.
Module 2: Páramo Conservation and Sustainability Issues
This module analyzes the management, conservation, and sustainability problems that the Ecuadorian Páramo currently faces, with particular emphasis on the Páramo area of the Antisana Volcano Ecological Reserve.

Session 1: Introduction to Páramo Conservation and Sustainability: Human use, ecological services, and threats to Ecuadorian Páramos.

Required Readings:

Session 2: Antisana Volcano Páramo & Ecological Reserve: Challenges to conservation and sustainability, land tenure, and reserve management (provided in several sub-sessions during the Páramo excursion).

Session 3: Government vs. Private Conservation in Antisana: Analysis of current management issues and conservation policies (provided in several sub-sessions during the Páramo excursion).

Session 4: Andean Condor Conservation Program: Current activities and practices in the Antisana Ecological Reserve (provided in several sub-sessions during the Páramo excursion).

Module 3: Galápagos Conservation and Sustainability Issues
The Galápagos Conservation and Sustainability Issues module analyzes the major management problems that the Galápagos National Park and Marine Reserve currently faces, such as invasive species, excessive tourism, over-fishing, and other issues.

Session 1: Introduction to Galápagos Conservation and Sustainability

Required Readings:

Session 2: Galápagos National Park and Marine Reserve Management: Resource management strategies and field observations, discussions, and activities (provided in several sub-sessions during the excursion).

Session 3: Impact of Introduced Species and their Eradication Programs: Lecture and field practice.
Session 4: Over-tourism in Galápagos: social and environmental consequences. Lecture and field observations, discussions, and activities (provided in several sub-sessions during the excursion).

Session 5: Over-fishing in Galápagos: Social and environmental issues. Lecture and fieldwork.

Module 4: Amazon Rainforest Conservation & Sustainability Issues
This module provides an introduction to the complexities of the environmental conservation of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Topics include social and environmental impacts from major threats, such as the petroleum industry and large-scale agriculture (including African oil palm).

Session 1: Introduction to Ecuadorean Amazon Conservation and Sustainability Issues: Human use and ecological services of the Amazon Rainforest. The Yasuní ITT Initiative.

Required Readings:

Session 2: The Petroleum Industry in Ecuadorean Amazon: Environmental and social Impacts.


Session 4: Ethnic Groups in Ecuadorean Amazon: Current social problems (provided in several sub-sessions during excursion).


Session 6: Visit to Petroleum Fields in Ecuadorean Amazon: Legal, environmental, and social issues.

Session 7: Deforestation in Ecuadorean Amazon: Logging and African oil palm plantations (provided in several sub-sessions during the Amazon Excursion)

During this module, students conduct Amazon Section of Conservation/Sustainability Field Report

Session 9: Student Presentations of Conservation/Sustainability Article Analysis

Session 10: Final Exam

Evaluation and Grading Criteria
Assignments:
• Readings Readings will be distributed to students during orientation week. Readings are organized by ecological systems: Ecuador General; Galápagos/Coast; Cloud Forest/
Páramo; and Amazon. The readings are intended to complement and expand upon the information covered by lecturers, offering different points of view as well as more in-depth discussion of the topics. There are separate reading packets available on flash and hardcopy. Readings should be properly cited in all assignments.

- **Conservation/Sustainability Article Analysis Oral Report** This assignment consists of a critical analysis of a current scientific article in the fields of conservation and/or sustainability. Students should provide their personal arguments during a short oral presentations of 5 minutes. Students choose one of the following required articles for the analysis:

- **Conservation/Sustainability Research Project** This is a group project to be developed until the last week before ISP. This assignment simulates a real life research experience with field studies, a science paper, and an oral presentation. Groups and topics are selected during Orientation Week. The written work (about 10 pages single space) follows a professional scientific format which includes the following sections: introduction, methodology, materials, analysis, discussion, suggestions, and a bibliography. The project also includes data tables, graphs, pictures, or other related support. The oral presentation is usually presented with a PowerPoint.

- **Final Exam** The final examination contains questions from all lectures and field activities, in addition to selected required articles indicated by the AD.

- **Participation** Participation is assessed based upon:
  - Preparation, attendance, and attitude in all lectures, discussions, activities, and excursions.
  - Active contribution to periodic group meetings.
  - Completion of written assignments.
  - Completion of assigned readings.
  - Culturally respectful behavior, flexibility, punctuality and enthusiasm.
Assessment:
Conservation/Sustainability Article Analysis Oral Report 25%
Conservation/Sustainability Research Project 40% (10% oral; 30% written)
Final Exam 30%
Participation 5%

Grading Scale:
94-100% A Excellent
90-93% A-
87-89% B+
84-86% B Above Average
80-83% B-
77-79% C+
74-76% C Average
70-73% C-
67-69% D+
64-66% D Below Average
Below 64 F Fail

Expectations and Policies
• Readings Students are responsible for all readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear during program activities. The readings aim to help students place the classes in their context, to engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions, and to deepen student knowledge of particular topics.
• Assignments Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation, and presentation of evidence.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Class Meetings:
Experimento de Convivencia Internacional
Calle Hernando de la Cruz N31-37 y Mariana de Jesús
Tel. 222-95-96
SIT Office: First Floor; AD: Dr. Xavier Silva

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.

Please Note: Course contents, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any change of class topics or lecturers may be necessary, student will be promptly notified.