Paradigms of Development and Political Discourse in Ecuador
LACB 3005 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Ecuador: Development, Politics, and Languages

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description
In this broadly defined interdisciplinary seminar, students examine the core political and development themes of the program and inquire specifically into the complex relationships between development, power, and politics in Ecuador. After a review of Ecuadorian history and socio-political movements and development paradigms, students consider the concept of political discourse as an object of study. Through lectures, course readings, site visits, and excursions, students examine several prominent discourses related to development and politics in Ecuador. They also examine counter-discourses and examine how people are voicing alternative ways of knowing and developing. Who speaks about development, for whom, and to whom, will all be considered. While learning primarily about politics and development in Ecuador, students will construct a nuanced understanding of how discourse has been used to instill, reinforce, subvert, and reinvent power relationships over time in Ecuador.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the seminar, students will be able to:
1. Critically appraise the successes and failures of different paradigms of development in Ecuador with reference to the larger Latin American context.
2. Define and explain the notion of political discourse and discuss how power and ideology are communicated and reproduced in Ecuador using examples from the historical and contemporary moments.
3. Analyze the effects of dominant political discourses around development on different Ecuadorian populations and evaluate the impact and potential of counter-discourses, including alternatives to development.
4. With reference to the case of the Galápagos, critically analyze how political, economic and scientific/sustainability discourses come together in the invention of this iconic
Ecuadorian site. Analyze the tourist industry at this National Park: management, interpretation, carrying capacity, environmental and social impacts.

**Language of Instruction**
This course is taught primarily in Spanish although some readings are in English.

**Readings**
Please note that not all readings will be referred to directly in class. The readings are meant to provide background and/or supplemental and contextual support for the main lines of discussion in the seminar.

**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: The Context of Power and Politics in Ecuador**
1. **Brief overview of Ecuadorian history.** The module begins with an overview of Ecuador’s history up from the Conquest/Colonial period until the 20th Century. Students will learn about the historical roots of social classification, interethnic relations, and regionalism.
2. **Ecuadorian political system: recent history (20-21 centuries) and the key players.** This session continues from the last, emphasizing politics and the State. Students will follow military dictatorships, the return to democracy, and more recent political instability as it relates to the petroleum industry and foreign debt.
3. **Economics and social reality.** Students are introduced to the economic situation which underwrites many, if not most, of Ecuador’s political challenges. The talk will cover the extractive industries, export policies and import substitution, neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism, as well as such themes as the foreign debt moratorium, the banking crisis, and the interplay between the national and the global.
4. **US policy in Ecuador.** In this session, students examine the role of the US in shaping the current situation. Themes include bilateral relations, the Andean Initiative (Plan Colombia), sovereignty, trade, and migration.

**Readings:**

**Assignment:**
Power Relations and History Paper: Inquire about a relevant historical event in Ecuador, identify the key figures or actors involved, and analyze the power relations associated to it.
Module 2: The notion of political discourse and official/State discourses of development in Ecuador

In this module, students are introduced to political discourse. They study some of Ecuador’s most dominant discourses as understood and imposed from above.

1. **What do we mean by discourse?** Thinking about politics in textual terms. How are ideology and power reproduced in language? How are some options foreclosed? Discourse as a tool of oppression and resistance. Globalization and neo-colonial concerns.

2. **The discourse of development.** The official national/international discourse of development. Ideology and development.

3. **The discourse of extractivism and the change of the productive matrix** in Ecuador. The point of view of those in favor.

4. **The discourse of Sumak Kawsay.** Roots, intentions, contested interpretations and applications.

Readings:

Assignment:

Development Paradigms Journal: Present selected notes taken from lectures and readings, and include your critical standpoint regarding hegemonic and counter-hegemonic development discourses.

Model 3: Counter-discourses and social movements: indigenous/intercultural

1. **Indigenous counter-discourses**—beyond or before sumac kawsay. Indigenous modes of understanding politics, the environment, “good governance”, participating or not. Traditional cosmovisions meet the changing contemporary context.

2. **Discourse of interculturalism.**

3. **Other social movements** challenging the way key issues are understood and framed: (a) the feminist movement/women’s movement in Ecuador, (b) LGBTIQ activism, and (c) the exercise of citizenship, human rights activism. The Ecuadorian Constitution as a new framework for the socialization of rights.

Readings:
Assignment:
Social Movements Paper: Discuss the current weakening and/or co-optation of social movements in Ecuador.

Model 4: Counter-discourses and social movements, continued: Sustainability or Restoration?
Perhaps nowhere more than in the Galápagos we can see how a place is constructed through dramatically varying discourses. In this module, students will travel to the Galápagos to consider how politics, tourism economics and sustainability desires combine and clash.

Readings:
- https//:www.turismo.gob.ec

Assignments
1. (Discussion) How was this area constructed historically? How do conservationists discuss the Galápagos? What varieties of tourist discourses re-cast the Galápagos in still other manners? How can we make sense of what we see against these competing narratives?

(Group projects) What the existing tendencies, themes, and tropes in tourist literature about Ecuador in general and the Galápagos in particular? What is the tourist expecting to find? What experiences, people, natural life are highlighted, and which elements are notably left out? With this in mind, design a better newspaper article or tourist brochure that promotes a different way to understand the Galápagos. The group will discuss all submissions and vote on the best portrayal.

Module 5: Final debates and discussion …
After having examined the political and economic contexts around development and having studied official and alternative discourses, students will take time in this final module to participate in round-table discussions and presentations on the following questions:
- How does language shape how we understand politics, development, and sustainability in Ecuador? What is the relationship between discourse and social structures?
- Who is development for in Ecuador? Can it be redefined to include more people and more possibilities? How are the terms currently manipulated, made positive or negative?
How have different marginalized groups been able to counter-propose? What is your assessment of what may happen next? What sort of room exists in which to work?

Final Exam: Short answer questions and short essay on discourse and power in Ecuador.

Readings:

Excursions to both rural and urban areas throughout Ecuador link classroom learning to interactions with institutional, community, and individual experiences of development paradigms, discourse practices, and politics. Key excursions and visits include:

- **In Quito:** FAS (*Fundación Ambiente y Sociedad*), SENPLADES (Secretaría de Planificación del Estado), Coordinadora Política de Mujeres Ecuatorianas, CDES (Comisión de Desarrollo Económico y Social), MIES (Ministerio de Inclusión Social y Económica).
- **Intag Cloud Forest Reserve:** This reserve is located in the buffer zone of the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve, one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. Students experience directly this extraordinary feature. They also learn about the local community-based organization and the efforts to protect the forest where important water sheds originate. Key concepts like sustainability, restoration, quality of life, appropriate resource management, political mobilization, and environmental education are discussed thoroughly.
- **En route to Galapagos, Guayaquil:** In the port city of Guayaquil, activities include visits to the *Museo Antropológico y de Arte Contemporáneo*, *Parque Histórico de Guayaquil*, and *Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural*, in addition to sessions and discussions on cultural identity and difference, local urban imaginaries, development, export economy, and regionalism.
- **Galapagos.** After a day visit to Guayaquil, the group flies to San Cristóbal Island in the Galapagos. Main visits include the Charles Darwin Research Station, National Park headquarters, tourism agencies, the USFQ campus, civil society organizations, artisan collectives, and natural history sites.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**
Students are expected to take an active role in discussions and be responsible for readings.

**Assessment:**

- Power Relations and History Paper 15%
- Development Paradigms Journal 15%
- Social Movements Paper 15%
- Galapagos Discussion & Group Project 20%
- Final Exam 25%
- Participation in discussions and group activities 10%
Grading Scale

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

Expectations and Policies

- **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.

- **Excursions:** The objective of the educational excursions is to learn from experience. Many of the visits will be to underprivileged areas, challenging students to understand how historical oppression and public policies affect the lives of peoples today.

- **Readings:** Students are responsible for all of the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear in class. The readings will help place the classes in context, engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen student knowledge of particular issues discussed in class.

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

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.