



Vivir Bien: Well-Being and Resilience in Andean and Amazonian Communities

LACB-3005 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Bolivia: Multiculturalism, Globalization, and Social Change

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical 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

This seminar focuses on community well-being and resilience in Bolivia. Students will inquire into how different Bolivian communities are employing a range of resources to find new ways forward in the face of rampant change. In particular, they will explore Western concepts such as resilience, well-being, health, and happiness, in dialogue with the Bolivian concepts of *vivir bien* (living well) and *ayni* (reciprocity), asking how these different ways of viewing the world affect communities' encounters with globalization and Bolivia's contemporary sociopolitical struggles. They will examine how these understandings and interactions play out at both the community and the family levels. Students will ask: How does migration affect families, and how do they cope? How are childhood and adolescence changing in an increasingly globalized context? What is happening to gender roles? How do reaffirmations of cultural tradition, spirituality of different origins, healing, new ways of looking at education, harmony with *Pachamama* (mother earth) and the arts all provide potential routes to resilience? Do NGOs and government agencies play a positive or negative role in improving community lives and striving for *sumak kawsay* (living well)? Through the seminar lectures, experiential activities and direct engagement with a range of local community members in Andean and Amazonian communities, they will begin to construct their own understandings of the complex psychology and socio-politics of community well-being in Bolivia.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Discuss the culturally constructed nature of well-being and happiness with references to Western/US, Andean, and Amazonian concepts as viewed in the seminar.
- Analyze how geographically and culturally diverse communities in Bolivia cope and/or respond creatively to the challenges provoked by globalization.
- Consider why some communities thrive and can be considered "healthy" in these attempts to respond to rapid change, while others may become "depressed" or downtrodden. Simultaneously, they will be able to analyze why some well-intentioned interventions work and others fail.

- Critically analyze the psychology and socio-politics of community resilience in the Bolivian context as a base for future explorations or possible professional work with diverse communities outside of Bolivia.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in Spanish.

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: Andean Communities and the Quest to Live Well

In this module, students delve into the question of how to live well in the face of rampant change. After discussion of western models of happiness and “helping”, students learn about Andean understandings of healing and well-being from an Aymara shaman and priest. Students then move to explore these ideas during a homestay in a traditional Aymara village on the shores of Lake Titicaca, followed by a visit to one of Bolivia’s three new indigenous universities. They then travel La Paz and El Alto (the largest indigenous city in Latin America) where they will examine Andean understandings of well-being in urban feminist, activist, artist, and culinary communities. Throughout the module, students will examine the complex connections between tradition, the contemporary context, and socio-political change.

Session 1: Course Overview. Positioning our Analysis: US Concepts, Bolivian Concepts

Facilitator: Academic Director

Are ideas of “living well” culturally defined? What is community resilience and well-being? Students will explore differences and similarities between Western and indigenous ideas: individual happiness vs. connectedness (family, community, earth/past, present, future). Why is a culturally-informed perspective necessary when doing community work?

Required Readings:

- Watkins, M. and Shulman, H. (2008). Selected sections of Chapters 3, 8 and 9 (pp. 131-132, 152-159, 161, 164-165, 173-175). In *Towards Psychologies of Liberation*. New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Watters, E. (2010). Introduction. In *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (1-9). *To Hell with Good Intentions*. Address to the Conference on United States of America: Free Press.
- Illich, I. (1968). *To Hell with Good Intentions*. Address to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects. Cuernavaca, Mexico
http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm

Session 2: Andean Cosmivision: Living Well in Community and Andean Understandings of Reciprocity and Healing

Lecturer: Calixto Quispe, Aymara shaman and Catholic Deacon.

This class provides an introduction to dealing and living in harmony from an indigenous Andean perspective.

Required Readings

Gudynas, E. (2011). Buen Vivir: Today's Tomorrow. In *Development*, 54(4), (441-447). Society for International Development. www.sidint.net/development.

Choquehuanca, D. (2010, January 31). 25 postulados para entender el Vivir Bien. *La Razon*. La Paz, Bolivia.

Huanacuni, F. (2003, October 10). Cosmovision Andina o Visión Cómica de los Andes. Sariri: Caminante de los Andes Boletín No.0, 5-13.

Recommended Readings

Medina, J. (2008). La Buena Vida Occidental y La Vida Dulce Amerindia. Suma Qamaña: La comprensión indígena de la vida buena. La Paz: Comunicación PADEP/GTZ

Medina, J. (2011). Suma Qamaña, Vivir Bien y la Vita Beata. 20 January. Retrieved from <http://lareciprocidad.blogspot.com/2011/01/suma-qamana-vivir-bien-y-de-vita-beata.html>

Quispe, C. (2017). Alasita, una tradición espiritual milenaria andina. Unpublished document. La Paz, Bolivia.

Homestay in the Aymara village of Tocoli. For 3 days, students will live with local families in an Aymara community on the shores of Lake Titicaca. The community of Tocoli has been devastated by out-migration and is trying to revitalize itself through intercultural exchange and the construction of a unique interfaith spiritual center.

Session 3: Efforts to Revitalize a Rural Community in the Face of Urban Migration

Lecturer: Leaders and Community Members of Aymara village of Tocoli

Session 4: Education for Living in Harmony at a Rural Indigenous University

Lecturer: Students and Faculty of the Indigenous University in the Altiplano

Required Reading:

- Required Reading: Farthing, L., & Kohl, B. (2014). Vivir Bien. *Evo's Bolivia: Continuity and Change*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Session 5: Casa de los Nungunos: A Youth Community of Urban Climate Change Activists

Lecturer: Members of the Casa de los Nungunos

Required Reading

Goldbard, A. (2009). Arguments for Cultural Democracy and Community Cultural Development. *GIA Reader*, 20(1).

Session 6: An International Lending Institution's View of "Vivir Bien"

Reading:

Broad, R. and Cavanaugh, J. (2006). The Hijacking of the Development Debate: How Friedman and Sachs Got it Wrong. *World Policy Journal* (Summer).
<http://www.american.edu/sis/faculty/upload/hijacking-of-development-debate.pdf>

Session 7: Bolivian Government Concepts of Vivir Bien and Development

Session 8: Gustu: Revitalizing Andean Foods in the Culinary Arts

Lecturer. Director of Gustu Restaurant and Melting Pot Bolivia Education Project

Reading:

Black, J. (2013). Is Gustu the World's Best New Restaurant? In *Food and Wine* (November).

Friedman-Rudovsky, J. (2012). Quinoa: The Dark Side of an Andean Superfood. *Time Magazine*. April 3, 2012. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2110890,00.html>

Session 9: Social Justice Theater as a Model for Living Well on Bolivia's Streets

Lecturer: Ivan Nogales, Director of Teatro Trono, El Alto

Students will visit an artist community working with street kids through theater, radio program, and decolonizing the body through dance, among other activities. We will pick up our discussion of living well in communities involved in the arts drawing also from the MASIS, the music education program we visited in Sucre.

Required Reading

Dangl, B. (2007). Paradise Now: Street Theater, Hip-hop, and Women Creating. In *The Price of Fire: Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia* (156-178). Oakland: AK Press.

Session 10: Migrant Urban Communities and Economies in El Alto

Lecturer: Felix Muruchi, History Professor, Universidad Pública de El Alto

Reading:

Tassi, N. (2017). "On Our Own Terms": Indigenous Traders in the Global Economy. In *The Native World System: An Ethnography of Bolivian Aymara Traders in the Global Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tassi, N. et al. (2012) "El desborde economico popular en Bolivia: Comerciantes aymaras en el mundo global." In *Nueva Sociedad*, No. 241, Sept-Oct., www.nuso.org.

Session 11: Discussion and Analysis of Module 1

Module 2: Living in Harmony with *Pachamama*: Amazonian Communities and Environmental Health

What alternatives are being proposed inside and outside of Bolivia for healing and living in harmony with nature? A context is provided for understanding the environmental devastation and attempts at healing in Bolivian communities in the Amazon Basin, where rainforests are being destroyed at an even faster rate than in Brazil due to uncontrolled extractivist practices and policies. Without the security of physical place, communities struggle to thrive. Students will visit quick-growing urban Santa Cruz, the indigenous Chiquitano communities of Santa Rita and Concepcion, as well as the ecologically innovative town of Samaipata and the Amboro National Park rainforest to explore efforts at resilience and resistance in this context of ecological devastation. We will introduce concepts of ecopsychology and sustainable development and explore how these ideas might relate to Amazonian cosmivision. We will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of specific tools/policies to successfully blend conservation and development in the Global South.

Key Thematic Module Questions:

- What is sustainable development? (four paradigms of “development” and their influence)
- What are the strengths and weaknesses specific tools/policies to successfully blend conservation and development in the Global South?
- How are the communities of Concepcion, Samaipata, and Los Alisios (small Amboro buffer zone fern forest community) practicing aspects of Vivir Bien?
- What is the influence of quick-growing, globalizing Santa Cruz on: 1. Bolivia’s national vision of Vivir Bien? 2. the above small communities’ visions?

Required (Predeparture) Reading

Powers, W. (2006). *Whispering in the giant’s ear: A frontline chronicle from Bolivia’s war on globalization*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Session 1: Introduction to Eco-psychology

Students will discuss readings introducing the field of eco-psychology, which views the environmental crisis as a psychological crisis where humans of western civilization have separated their identities from the rest of the natural world, seeing the planet as material resources for human consumption.

Required Reading

Golden, C. (Retrieved June 19, 2017). *What is Ecopsychology?* Retrieved from <http://soulcraft.co/essays/ecopsychology.html>

Documentary Films: Bolivian Baroque

Students will discuss the film *Bolivian Baroque*.

Session 2: Current Environmental and Cultural Issues in Bolivia’s Lowlands

Lecturer: Sonia Virginia Matijasevic Mostajo, M.S, Director of Bolivia’s Protected Areas

Required Reading:

Fabricant, N. & Gustafson, B. (2016). Revolutionary Extraction? NACLA Report on the Americas, 43:3, 271-279. Retrieved from: <https://nacla.org/blog/2017/02/20/growing-resistance-megadams-bolivia>

Hindery, Derrick. (2013). Political Ecology, Pipelines, and the Conduits of Resistance. In *From Enron to Evo: Pipeline Politics, Global Environmentalism, and Indigenous Rights in Bolivia*. University of Arizona Press.

Achtenberg, E. (2017). The Growing Resistance to Megadams in Bolivia. NACLA Report on the Americas. <https://nacla.org/blog/2017/02/20/growing-resistance-megadams-bolivia>

Tabuchi, H., Rigby, C. & White, J. (2017, February 24). Amazon Deforestation, Once Tamed, Comes Roaring Back. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/24/business/energy-environment/deforestation-brazil-bolivia-south-america.html?_r=0

Healy, K. (2001). Sections from Challenges to the Western Modernization Model. In *Llamas, Weavings and Organic Chocolate: Multicultural Grassroots Development in the Andes and Amazon of Bolivia* (74-82). Indiana: University of Notre Dame.

Recommended Reading:

Mueller, R. Pacheco, P. & Montero, J.C. (2014). Chapter 6: Conclusions. In *The context of deforestation and forest degradation in Bolivia: Drivers, agents and institutions*. Occasional Paper 108. Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR.

Averbook, C. (2013). Summary of Bolivian Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera's book *Geopolitics of the Amazon*. Unpublished document. Full book in Spanish: http://www.vicepresidencia.gob.bo/IMG/pdf/libro_final.pdf

Cuellar Araujo, A. Contra-revolucion agrarian o soberania alimetaria? Unpublished paper.

Octavio, M., Renne, M. (2013) Dialogo: Desafios del Vivir Bien, para enfrentar los impactos del cambio climático. In *Tinkazos* 34, December Issue. Bolivia.

Session 3: Rural Village Stay Experience: Chiquitano Culture, Daily Life and Community Organizing

Lecturer: Leaders and Community Members of Chiquitano community of Santa Rita

For 2 days, students will live with local families in the indigenous Chiquitano community of Santa Rita, where they will observe and participate in daily community life and gain an understanding of the struggles faced by communities in a region with increasing rates of deforestation and the pressures of urban migration. They will also learn what this community is doing to respond to these challenges and remain resilient.

Session 4: Chiquitano Community Organizing

Lecturer: Don Diego, Cacique (dirigente indígena) de la Organización Indígena Chiquitana

Session 5: Women's Weaving Initiative in Santa Rita

Lecturer: Lupe Antelo

Session 6: Institute for Agriculture and Animal Studies, Government-NGO Project to Prevent Forest Fires in the Amazon

Lecturer: Director and students of INFOCAL Agro-Pecuaria Institute

Session 7: Impact of Corporate Globalization on understanding of "Vivir Bien"

Session 8: Sustainable Non-Timber Forestry Projects in the Chiquitano

Lecturer: Nelson Pacheco Rodríguez, Environmentalist, Natura Tours

Session 9: Evaluating Tools and Policies to the Successful Blending of Conservation and Sustainable Development

Lecturer: William Powers, NYU Adjunct Professor and author

Required Readings:

Powers, W. (2006). *Whispering in the giant's ear: A frontline chronicle from Bolivia's war on globalization* (pp. 1-50). New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Alperovitz, G. (2011, May). The New-Economy Movement. *The Nation* (May). Retrieved from: <http://www.thenation.com/article/160949/new-economy>

Samaipata en Transición, (2015). Unpublished pamphlet.

Macy, J. and Johnstone, C. (2010). A Richer Experience of Community. *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy*. Novato: New World Library.

Jensen, D. (2009, July 8). Forget Shorter Showers. *Orion*. Retrieved from: <http://www.commondreams.org/views/2009/07/08/forget-shorter-showers-why-personal-change-does-not-equal-political-change>

Session 10: Urban Environmental Justice: Santa Cruz's Plan 3000

Lecturers: Juan Pablo Sejas, Coordinator and Founder of *Centro Cultural San Isidro* in Plan 3000, Santa Cruz and Eliana Torrico Tejada, lawyer and member of *Colectivo Arbol*

Required Reading:

Chavez, M. (2009). Weaving the Rebellion: Plan 3000, Center of Resistance in *Eastern Bolivia in Eastern Bolivia, Socialism and Democracy*, 23:3, 101-116.

Fabricant, N. & Postero, N. (2014). Performing the 'wounded Indian': a new platform of democracy and human rights in Bolivia's autonomy movement, *Identities*, 21:4, 395-411.

Chalquist, C. (2009). Critical Ecotherapy, Public Health and Environmental Justice in Ecotherapy Research and a Psychology of Homecoming. In Buzzell, L. and Chalquist, C.. Eds. *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Recommended Reading/Video:
<http://www.centrosanisidro.blogspot.com/>

Video: Plan 3000, Ismael Saavedra

Session 11: Amboro National Park: Environmental Issues and Eco-tourism

Lecturer: Saul Cossio, Deputy Town Councilman (for a citizen-driven local party), owner of Tucandero Tours eco-business, and former director of ecotourism for the municipal government of Samaipata

Day-long field excursion to the Amboro National Park

Session 12: The “Other” Perspective: Farming and Migration to Bolivia Lowlands

Lecturer: Local Migrant Farmer in Los Alisos, Samaipata

Session 13: Local Government Perspectives on Environmental Conservation

Lecturer: Karina Mariaca Olivera, M.A. in Sustainable Tourism, Eco-entrepreneur and Director of permaculture farm and Paradones ecotourism community

Session 14: Alternative therapies and personal interior transition

Lecturer: Juan Carlos Martinez Maigua, Alternative Healer and Owner of “Saber Vivir” Centro Eco Tao, Samaipata

Required Reading:

Robinson, L. (2009). Psychotherapy as if the World Mattered. In Buzzell, L. and Chalquist, C.. Eds. *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Session 15: Local Initiatives for Sustainable Living in Samaipata

Lecturer: Oscar Crespo, OTB President del Casco Viego de Samaipata, Apiculturalist

Session 16: Discussion and Analysis of Module 2

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Description of Assignments

A more detailed description with specific grading criteria will be made available for each of the assignments below.

- *Module Analysis Paper*: Students are required to write a paper at the end of either module 1 or module 2. This paper must critically address the main theme of the module by drawing on lectures, field visits, and readings.
- *Leading of Group Analysis and Discussion*: At the end of either module 1 or module 2, a group of students will be assigned to prepare and lead a stimulating class discussion of the concepts and controversies introduced in this module, including readings, lectures,

and field visits. Students must prepare well-thought out discussion questions ahead of time for approval.

- Participation. This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions, and excursions.

Assessment:

Critical Reflection Paper	50%
Module Discussion Preparation & Facilitation	40%
Participation	10%

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

Alternative Forms to Written Assignments

In this course, as for all courses on this program, students are invited to submit some or all of the assignments in formats other than the traditional written paper. Alternative (or nontraditional) formats could include photography, video, music, creative writing, painting, etc. Students must obtain prior approval from the AD for nontraditional formats and set up clear criteria for insuring academic rigor.

Video Students

Students who plan to produce their ISP in video format are required to submit the journal either partially or completely in video format.

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: 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. Students are expected to be respectful and curious as they engage with these experiences.
- 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 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>