

Paradigms of Development and Political Discourse in Ecuador

LACB 3005 (3 Credits)

Ecuador: Development, Politics, and Languages

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

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:

- Critically appraise the successes and failures of different paradigms of development in Ecuador with reference to the larger Latin American context.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

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:

- Escobar, A. (2012). *La invención del desarrollo*. Popayán: Editorial Universidad del Cauca.
- Lucas, K. (2000). *Indigenous uprisings in Ecuador*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- Portes, A., & Hoffman, K. (2003). Latin American class structures: Their composition and change during the neoliberal era. *Latin American Research Review*, 38(1), 41-82.

- Rist, G. (2002). *El desarrollo: Historia de una creencia occidental*. Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata.

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:

- Fairclough, N. and I. "Political Discourse Analysis and the Nature of Politics." *Political Discourse Analysis* (Routledge, 2012).
- Dávalos, P. (2014). *Alianza País o la reinención del poder. Siete ensayos sobre el posneoliberalismo en el Ecuador*. Bogotá: Ediciones Desde Abajo.
- Lang, M., López, C., & Santillana, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Alternativas al capitalismo/colonialismo del Siglo XXI*. Quito: Fundación Rosa Luxemburg and Ediciones Abya Yala.
- Martínez Alier, J. (2014). *El ecologismo de los pobres*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Quimantú.
- Sawyer, S. (2004). *Crude chronicles*. London: Duke University Press.
- Acosta, A., & Martínez, E. (Eds.). (2009). *El buen vivir: Una vía para el desarrollo*. Quito: Ediciones Abya Yala.
- Oviedo, A. (2011). *¿Qué es el sumak kawsay?* Quito: Sumak Editores.

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:

- Espinosa, F. (2008) *An Attempt to Decolonize the Ecuadorian State*. Quito: Boletín ICCI.
- Falconí, D., Castellanos, S. & Viteri, M.A. (2014) *Resentir lo queer en América Latina. Diálogos desde y con el sur*. Barcelona: Editorial Egales
- Handelsman, M. (2001). *Lo afro y la plurinacionalidad*. Quito: Ediciones Abya Yala.
- Walsh, C. (2009). *Interculturalidad, estado y sociedad: Luchas (de) coloniales de nuestra época*. Quito: FLACSO, UASB y Ediciones Abya Yala.

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:

- Quiroga, Diego. Crafting nature: the Galápagos and the making and unmaking of a 'natural laboratory,' *Journal of Political Ecology* Vol. 16, 2009. Do you know him? Could he lecture? He is at the Univ. de San Fco. Yes, I do know him. He serves as lecturer on interethnic relations and cultural identities. He is affiliated to Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). He also promoted the construction of a USFQ campus in the Galapagos.
- Hennessy, E. and A. McCleary. *Nature's Eden? The Production and Effects of 'Pristine' Nature in the Galápagos Islands* *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 131-156.
- <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:

- Echeverría, B. (2011). *Discurso crítico y modernidad. Ensayos escogidos*. Bogotá: Ediciones Desde Abajo.
- Handelsman, M., & Berwald, O. (Eds.). (2009). *Globalization and its apparitions. Intercultural engagements and disengagements seen from the south and the north*. Quito: Editorial El Conejo.

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 Galápagos, 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

Program Expectations

- 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.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.