



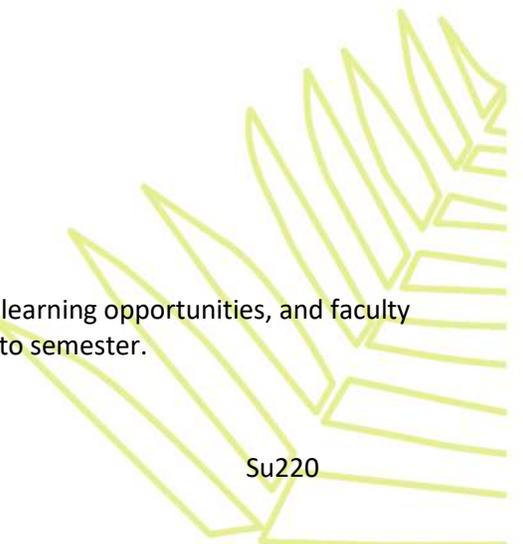
THE SCHOOL
FOR FIELD STUDIES

Tourism and Island Systems: Assessment of Sustainable Practices

Syllabus

The School for Field Studies (SFS)
Center for Tropical Island Biodiversity Studies (TIBS)
Bocas del Toro, Panama

This syllabus may develop or change over time based on local conditions, learning opportunities, and faculty expertise. Course content may vary from semester to semester.



COURSE CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please note that this is a copy of a recent syllabus. A final syllabus will be provided to students on the first day of academic programming.

SFS programs are different from other travel or study abroad programs. Each iteration of a program is unique and often cannot be implemented exactly as planned for a variety of reasons. There are factors which, although monitored closely, are beyond our control. For example:

- Changes in access to or expiration or change in terms of permits to the highly regulated and sensitive environments in which we work;
- Changes in social/political conditions or tenuous weather situations/natural disasters may require changes to sites or plans, often with little notice;
- Some aspects of programs depend on the current faculty team as well as the goodwill and generosity of individuals, communities, and institutions which lend support.

Please be advised that these or other variables may require changes before or during the program. Part of the SFS experience is adapting to changing conditions and overcoming the obstacles that may be present. In other words, the elephants are not always where we want them to be, so be flexible!

Course Overview

This course introduces the concepts and principles of sustainable tourism alongside the evaluation of ecosystem health and diversity. This unique field-based program allows students to determine how natural habitats and human livelihoods coexist in the dynamic socio-economic context of Bocas del Toro, Panama – one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in Latin America. To foster deep learning, assessments will be based on interacting directly with local ecosystems and stakeholders from the tourism industry, government, indigenous communities, and civil society – to understand how each interpret the challenges and the roles they play in fostering sustainable destination development.

This course introduces tourism destination governance as a multi-scalar (local, regional, national, and international) and multi-actor framework for understanding how behavior can be steered towards sustainable outcomes at the destination level. It covers the concepts of sustainable development and includes the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism; positive and negative impacts of tourism development; and principles conducive to sustainable tourism planning, community involvement, and development. The course adopts the problem-based, place-based learning format which promotes critical thinking, analytic skills, and problem-solving skills along with team work.

In short, The Panamanian government has positioned Bocas del Toro as a ‘bull’s-eye’ for targeted increases in tourism. This course examines the social and environmental problems caused in past tourism development phases and examines the tools tourism providers, government officials, tourists, and local people have at their disposal to potentially usher in a new, more sustainable future for the archipelago.

Learning Objectives

The core skills students will learn in this course are field techniques, analytical methods, communication skills and critical thinking, as well as team work and time management. The specific objectives of the course are the following:

1. Understand principles of sustainable development within the context of Bocas del Toro
2. Identify challenges, weaknesses and strengths to sustainable tourism delivery within the context of Bocas del Toro.
3. Identify the socio-economic and environmental impacts of tourism at the individual and community level.
4. Explore and understand the major ecosystems present in the archipelago of Bocas del Toro; their status and health.
5. Recognize different types of niche tourism activities (surf tourism, dive tourism, residential tourism, adventure- / eco-tourism, etc.) and the capacity to foster sustainable community development.
6. Evaluate tourism providers’ performance based on global sustainable tourism indicators.

In this course we will go on many field trips. Come prepared for many days of intensive activities that demand strength and stamina! You will wake up early and sometimes get back to the center just before dinner. You will learn experimental design, field techniques in sustainable development and tourism assessment, interviewing techniques, basic descriptive statistics, proposal writing and communication skills.

Assessment

We expect active participation in all aspects of the course, from the discussion and analysis of the assigned readings to the review of literature, classes and field work. Some of the course experience is a group effort; some represents your individual work. In the first few weeks of the course the students will engage in short exercises to gain practical skills in the field and understand the natural and human dynamics of the region. In the remaining weeks you will take part in a SWOT analysis project - the subject of which will be determined in part by your interests. You will then organize your findings and observations to create a sustainable development proposal for Bocas del Toro (or a sector of the tourism industry) that clearly outlines your preliminary findings and supports your goals.

Student performance in this summer course will be evaluated based on the assessment items and their proportional weight to your final grade described below:

Assessment Item	Grade Value (%)
I. Ecosystem field report	20
II. Provider assessment/Sustainability	20
III. Community-based tourism assessment	20
IV. Tourism SWOT analysis and proposal	30
• Prospectus / plan	
• Data gathering / investigation	
• Analysis of findings	
• Project write-up	
• Presentation	
V. Participation and contribution	10
TOTAL	100

I. Ecosystem field report: We explore marine, coastal, and terrestrial environments throughout the duration of the course. You will be asked to write accounts of the condition of these environments based on your observations, faculty lectures, and comparisons with the literature. Students are welcome to include video and photographs along with their written reports. Please refer to the Guidelines for Writing Field Reports located in the summer 2019 folder on the Z drive. The Z drive is accessible on the student computers in the laboratory. *Note: To access the Z drive, the computers must be connected to the staff wifi.*

II. Assessing tourism providers in action:

Using the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC, 2016) Industry Criteria for Sustainable tourism providers, assess one of the following hotels' (EcoVenao, La Loma, Palmar or Red Frog Resort) performance as a tourism operation based on the categories listed in the GSTC (2016) document. You may use information from their website, interviews with owners, and observations during site visits to discuss how each category and sub-category is addressed by the provider (or not). If you were to make one practical suggestion for improving their practices to better conform to the GSTC's criteria, what would it be, why, and what category would it fall under?

III. Community tourism assessment:

Students will compare each Community-based tourism initiative visited using criteria outlined for defining inclusive tourism (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). These site visits include a visit to Timorogo (June 12th) as well as Oreba and AAMVECONA (trips are May 19 and 20)

IV. Tourism SWOT analysis and report: This assignment is designed to be a formal assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of a policy, business, or practice. Students will design a project that assesses these factors related to the sustainability of a sector of the tourism industry in Bocas del Toro. The goal is to determine which practices and policies are consistent with sustainable practice and which practices are not. Each student will then make recommendations to stakeholders based on current information and findings. This applied project in BDT will help students to develop skills they can use in environmental evaluation in contexts around the world and potentially to influence actors and agencies involved in tourism governance.

V. Participation: A student’s ability to be a good colleague is important. Participation in class and a general high contribution to group learning is expected at SFS. One’s ability to be a strong member of a learning community will enhance the grade assigned at the end of the program.

Grading Scheme

A	95.00 – 100.00%	B+	86.00 – 89.99%	C+	76.00 – 79.99%	D	60.00 – 69.99%
A-	90.00 – 94.99%	B	83.00 – 85.99%	C	73.00 – 75.99%	F	0.00 – 59.99%
		B-	80.00 – 82.99%	C-	70.00 - 72.99%		

General Reminders

Readings: Assigned readings will be available on the student server. It is important that you read all materials before class since the volume of the material in the class requires a brisk pace. You are expected to have read all of the assigned articles, and to demonstrate your comprehension by participating in class discussions each day.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Using ideas and materials of others without giving due credit is cheating and will not be tolerated. A grade of zero will be assigned to anyone caught cheating or aiding another person to cheat, either actively or passively. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all assignments should be individual pieces of work.

Appropriate use of technology: SFS has worked hard to provide internet access to all its staff and students. Inappropriate uses include gaming or excessive video/music downloading. **No screens (laptops/tablets/phones) are permitted during lessons** unless otherwise dictated by faculty. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of this privilege.

Deadlines: Deadlines for written and oral assignments are instated for several reasons:

1. Deadlines are a part of working and academic life to which students need to become accustomed.
2. Deadlines promote equity among students.
3. Deadlines allow faculty ample time to review and return assignments before others are due.

As such, deadlines are *firm* and extensions will only be considered under the most extreme circumstances. Late assignments will incur a 10% penalty for every day that they are late. This means an assignment that is five minutes late will have 10% removed, an assignment that is one day and five minutes late will have 20% removed, and so on.

Course Content

Type- L: Lecture, **FEX:** Field Exercise, **E:** Exam, **FT:** Field Trip, **GL:** Guest Lecture, **CS:** Case Study

<i>Type</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>TIME (hrs.)</i>	<i>Reading</i>
TIS01 L	Course introduction – Expectations and Excitement!	1	(Harding, 2006)
TIS02 FT/L	FT to BIOMUSEO- Introduction to the Panama's Geological and Ecological History and Importance	1	
TIS03 FT/GL	History of Panama I- Casco Antiguo – Colonial history and its revival as a tourism product and development strategy for the city	1	
TIS04 FT/L	Visit to Miraflores locks, Panama Canal - From dream to reality and from foreign ownership to Panamanian control and expansion.	1	(Carse, Keiner, Henson, Lasso, & et al., 2016)
TIS05 L	Sustainable surf tourism and social inquiry – While on the pacific coast in Playa Venao, we will discuss surf tourism, as a form of nature-based adventure tourism with the power to change coastal towns. We will also discuss research questions and design.	1	(Krause, 2012)
TIS06 FEX/L	The Marine Environment – How and what does coastal development impact? A walk along the beach in Playa Venao.	1	
TIS07 FT/GL	Tour of Eco Venao	1.5	
TIS08 L	History of Tourism	1	(Mowforth & Munt, 2003)
TIS09 L	Tourism in the tropical highlands of Panama	1	(Benson, 2015)
TIS10 FT/L	The Cloud Forest – Forest tour/walk	2	
TIS11 FT/L	Agro tourism – Student groups attend Finca dos Jefe's to learn about the history of the Coffee industry and direct trade as a driver sustainable production.	2	(Lyon, 2013)

<i>Type</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>TIME (hrs.)</i>	<i>Reading</i>
TIS12 FT/L	Introduction and orientation to Bocas del Toro: A walk through Bocas town and guest lecture from one of Bocas' first tourism entrepreneurs on the history of the archipelago and tourism.	1	(Stephens, 2008)
TIS13 L	Travel Debrief – From Panama City, to the Pacific Coast, To Boquete, to Bocas. Why not fly?	1	(West & Carrier, 2004)
TIS14 L	Tourism Destination Governance Framework	1	(Laws, Agrusa, Scott, & Richens, 2011)
TIS 15 L	Socio-ecological Systems and Tourism – Understanding how tourism is reliant upon a basket of common pool resources and thinking about the processes in which they can be governed.	1	(Ostrom, 2009)
TIS 16 L	The Rainforest	1	Chapter 1 (Forsyth & Miyata, 1984)
TIS 17 L/FEX	The Marine Environment: Introduction to marine ecosystems in Bocas del Toro	2	(Cramer, 2013) AND (Lirman and Mate, 2018)
TIS18 L/FEX	Tourism's Ecological Impact & Marine Tours and Tourism: Dolphin Bay	2	(May-Collado, 2014 OR Sitar 2016/2017)
TIS19	Forest preserves and tourism: Visit to the Floating doctors preserve	1	
TIS20 FEX/L	Tourism and protected area management in Bocas del Toro, Isla Bastimentos National Marine Park / Zapatilla Island visit.	2	(Guerrón-Montero, 2005)
TIS21 L	Indigenous community tourism	0.5	(Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018)
TIS 22 L	Ecotourism	0.5	
TIS 23 FT	Assessing tourism providers: La Loma	1	
TIS 24 FT	Indigenous Community tourism: paddle up the river and forest walk with Rutilio	2	(Mach & Vahradian, 2019)
TIS25 FT /L	Community based tourism, aid agencies, and NGOs: Floating Doctors Visit	1	
TIS25 FEX	Making Jannicakes in San Cristobal: The potential and challenges associated with using cultural tourism as a mechanism for economic growth in indigenous communities.	1	
TIS26 FEX	Assessing environmental impacts of tourism on Coral Reefs	1	
TIS27 L	Voluntary Private sector initiatives and sustainable tourism: Assessing the impacts of tourism providers using standardized criteria. We will also interrogate the	1.5	(GSTC, 2016) (Geerts, 2014)

<i>Type</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>TIME (hrs.)</i>	<i>Reading</i>
	problems associated with certification schemes (such as, greenwashing, costs, and institutional oversight).		
TIS28 & 29 FEX	Assessing tourism providers in action: Visits to Red Frog Resort forest walk (Data collection) and visit to Palmar Lodge	2	
TIS30 CS/FT	Semi-structured interviews: Introduction to group projects	2	(Bernard, 2006)
TIS31 FT/FL	Tourism & Environmental Sinks: Overburdening the island system with waste. What are the main drivers? What strategies are in place to correct the problem? What still needs to happen?	2	(Bourque, 2006)
TIS 32	Foreign Investments in Tourism and Land Rights: Paraiso for Sale: Film screening looking at land rights and development issue in Bocas	1.5	
TIS33 L/CS/FT	Tourism management: Starfish Beach: Livelihood dependence on tourism: boats, beds, bars, and beaches Case study trip: Starfish Beach and the degradation of Bocas del Drago area – snorkel survey, human observations, and discussion with management board	3	(Kovacs, 2019)
TIS34 CS/FT	Community-based Tourism Assessment: Oreba Chocolate Tour – cacao cultivation and chocolate production	1	
TIS35 FEX/FT	Community-based Tourism Assessment: AAMVECONA – environmental tourism: manatee viewing, kayaking in the RAMSAR site wetlands San San Pon Sak, and learning about sea turtle conservation and research	3	
TIS36 L	SWOT Introduction	1	
TIS37 & 38 L/CS/FT	Tourism management: environmental dimensions - mangroves Case study trip: Mangroves as an important habitat and tourism destination, and the impacts of development on mangroves	2	
TIS39 FEX	Over the course of about a week students will analyze a sector of the tourism industry in Bocas (eg. Surfing, diving, sport fishing, sailing, hosteling, “eco-tours”) or analyze a policy or practice related to tourism (waste management, recycling). Using a SWOT analysis perspective, students will assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the sector or policy and write a report which aims to be informative and provide potential avenues for solutions	15	

Type	DESCRIPTION	TIME (hrs.)	Reading
	to local Bocatoreños who engage in the sector for livelihood. The Sustainability themes- economic, socio-cultural, environmental- must have prominent roles in the student projects. The projects will have collaborative elements; students may work together in teams no larger than 2 or 3 and may produce a co-written proposal at the end. Details will be provided during the first week of the program. Each student group will give a presentation to peers and / or community members.		
TIS40	Course Wrap-up	1.5	
TIS41	Student group presentations		
	Total Hours	68	

Readings

- Benson, M. C. (2015). Class, Race, Privilege: Structuring the Lifestyle Migrant Experience in Boquete, Panama. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 14(1), 19-37.
- Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (4th Edition)*. Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Bourque, O. R. (2006). *Analyzing the recent rapid tourism development in Panama's Bocas del Toro Archipelago: is socioenvironmental justice attainable?* MA Thesis, Clark University.
- Carse, A., Keiner, C., Henson, P., Lasso, M., & et al. (2016). Panama canal forum: From the conquest of nature to the construction of new ecologies. *Environmental History*, 21(2), 206-287.
- Cramer, K. (2013) History of human occupation and environmental change in Western and Central Caribbean Panama. *Bulletin of Marine Science*, subsection saved as PDF.
- Forsyth, A. & Miyata, K. (1984). In the realm of the tropics. In: *Tropical Nature*. New York.
- Geerts, W. (2014). Environmental certification schemes: Hotel managers' views and perceptions, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 39, 87-96.
- GSTC. (2016). *GSTC Industry Criteria*. GSTC. Retrieved from http://www.gstcouncil.org/images/Integrity_Program/Criteria/GSTC-Industry_Criteria_only_v3_21Dec-2016_Final.pdf
- Guerrón-Montero, C. (2005). Marine Protected Areas in Panamá: Grassroots Activism and Advocacy. *Human Organization*, 64(4).
- Harding, R. (2006). *The History of Panama*. Connecticut.: Greenwood Press.
- Kovacs, C. (2019) TCE DR 2019 report.
- Krause, S. (2012). Pilgrimage to the playas: Surf tourism in Costa Rica. *Anthropology in Action*, 19(3), 37-48.
- Laws, E., Agrusa, J., Scott, N., & Richens, H. (2011). *Tourist Destination Governance: practice, theory and issues*. Wallingford, UK: CAB International.
- Lirman, D. & Mate, J.L. Satus of coastal habitats of Bocas del Toro, Panama: Coral reefs and

- seagrass meadows. In: *Coastal Resources of Bocas del Toro, Panama: Tourism and Development Pressures and the Quest for Sustainability*. University of Miami.
- Lyon, S. (2013). Coffee tourism and community development in Guatemala. *Human Organization*, 72(3), 188-198.
- Mach, L., & Vahradian, D. (2019). Tourists want to be spooked, not schooled: Sustainable Indigenous tourism in Bocas del Toro, Panama. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 1-33.
- May-Collado, L.J, Quinones-Lebron, S.G., Barragan-Barrera, D.C, Palacios, J.D., & Gamboa-Poveda, M. (2014). The dolphin watching Industry of Bocas del Toro continues impacting the resident bottlenose dolphin population.
- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (2003). *Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalisation and New Tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge.
- Ostrom, E. (2009). A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems. *Science*, 325, 419-422.
- Scheyvens, R., & Biddulph, R. (2018). Inclusive tourism development. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4), 589-609.
- Sitar, A., May-Collado, L.J., Wright, A.J, Peters-Burton, E., Rockwood, L, & Parsons, E.C.M. (2016). Boat operators in Bocas del Toro, Panama display low levels of compliance with national whale-watching regulations. *Marine Policy* 68(2016):221-228.
- Sitar, A., May-Collado, L.J, Wright, A.J, Peters-Burton, E., Rockwood, L, & Parsons, E.C.M. (2017). Tourists' perspectives on dolphin watching in Bocas del Toro, Panama. *Tourism in Marine Environments* 12(2):79-94.
- Stephens, C. (2008). *Outline of History of the Province of Bocas del Toro, Panama*. Eustis, Florida: SPS Publications.
- West, P., & Carrier, J. (2004). Ecotourism and Authenticity: Getting away from it all? *Current Anthropology*, 45(4).