



THE SCHOOL
FOR FIELD STUDIES

Environmental Governance, Development, and Conservation

SFS 3020

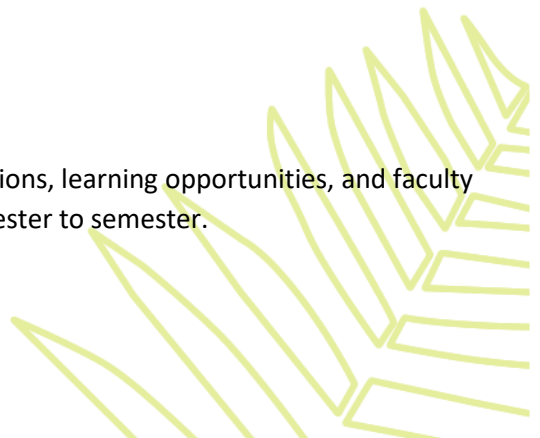
Syllabus
4 credits

The School for Field Studies (SFS)
Center for Tropical Island Biodiversity and Conservation Studies (CTIBCS)
Isla Colón, 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.

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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 they may present. In other words, this is a field program, and the field can change.

Course Overview

This course examines environmental policy and socioeconomic values through the lens of tourism development in Bocas del Toro, Panama (Bocas). After discussing environmental and social challenges historically connected with international tourism development, we will then explore the ideological thrust towards sustainable tourism, as well as critique this concept – always asking: **“what are we sustaining and for whom?”**



'THE BEACH'

The course will then move on to explore and examine the ways that international development (i.e., foreign investment and aid from global financial institutions) manifest locally in Bocas and explore the associated challenges and opportunities. This discussion will be situated using governance as a theoretical context so that we may better understand the multifaceted and multi-actor way human behavior is controlled and organized, as well as how natural resources are allocated. This will require observing tourism in the field to understand the tourism hosts and guests, as well as, how they interact, and the environmental and social implications of these interactions. This will be a part of preparing for conducting directed research geared towards better understanding tourism related challenges and potential solutions (policy, private sector, grassroots, etc.) on the archipelago.

Every moment during this semester is a learning opportunity. Every trip to the store, boat ride, long walk, or dinner outing is a chance to learn, to speak to people, and observe. The coursework is meant to situate what you are “seeing” and “experiencing” and organize a forum for dialogue. The goal is to give you tools to research social science topics that both interest you and spark your intellectual curiosities - or at the very least, understand and respect how field social science is conducted.

Thematic Components and Research Direction

The overarching question we address in the SFS Panama curriculum is:

How can the natural resources of the BDT archipelago best be managed to promote conservation and sustainable use considering the complex socioeconomic environment?

To address this rather broad question in this course we will focus on:

Local livelihood & natural resource nexus

We will explore the complexity associated with how economic livelihoods are tied to ecosystems. The goal will be to understand pathways for preserving ecosystems through collaborative governance in economically viable and socially appropriate ways.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of Panama’s current and historical positionality in the global political arena.
2. Develop theoretical and practical tools for utilizing governance as a concept to critically examine social and environmental challenges/solutions.
3. Identify drivers of environmental and social change as well as develop and present informed governance approaches for improving outcomes.
4. Enhance appreciation for the challenges and opportunities tourism development brings for local and Indigenous communities.
5. Craft a feasible research proposal - that links theory, research methods, and data analysis in a way that shows an understanding of the social science field research process.
6. Gather qualitative data from tourism stakeholders and organize it using theoretical frameworks (e.g., sustainable tourism, tourism governance, and etc.,) demonstrating an ability to uncover and elucidate trends in how different groups experience and interpret environmental changes.
7. Creatively and collaboratively develop an informative presentation utilizing social science data collection (i.e., observations, interviews, etc.,) to explore the connection between Indigenous led tourism and sustainable development.

Assessment

Some of the assessments presented below could change, but updated information will be given ahead of time. Each assessment item is evaluated individually.

Assessment Item	Value (%)
Participation	10
Tourism and Sustainability Assessment	20
Indigenous Tourism and SDGs	20
Research Proposal	30
Final Exam	20
TOTAL	100

Participation (10%)

Everybody should be prepared for each academic session. This involves reading the materials for each session with enough detail to be able to ask relevant questions; and to participate in discussions about the key issues. This is the most critical part of your grade and requires being prepared for class (having completed readings and being ready to discuss them). This also means you are active and engaged in the field – asking questions from our guests and informants, taking detailed notes, and conducting interviews. There will also be group assignments conducted in class periodically. Each student will also present a course reading as part of a group in class. Details will be discussed in the intro session (this presentation will count as 50% of participation grade).

Tourism and Sustainability Assessment (20%)

This is the first written assessment where you will be asked to merge theory with praxis. The goal is for you to convey an understanding of different types of tourism and begin considering how to assess their sustainability based on merging your theoretical framing with field observations. You will be asked to use descriptive definitions and normative frameworks to define and analyze a tourism initiative you visited. This early assessment is meant to be an opportunity to practice utilizing social science techniques, which you will build upon later when submitting your own research proposals. A detailed explanation of the expectations and a grading rubric will be available in the SharePoint drive.

Indigenous Tourism and SDGs (20%)

See Assessment folder in SharePoint for detailed explanation. This is a collaborative assignment. You will create and present material along with the entire group you attended your fieldtrip with. As a group you will explain the organization you visited and their general approach to tourism delivery. You will then discuss how its operations do (or do not) contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) found at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. Finally, you will offer practical suggestions for how the organization may either deliver on new goals or more effectively deliver upon those they are already addressing in some capacity.

Research Proposal (30%)

A detailed instruction sheet will be provided in class and posted to SharePoint outlining the proposal requirements. The goal is that you will submit a proposal to do funded research in Bocas showing that you understand the process of inquiry – you set the context, demonstrate that you can present a relevant literature review, pick a clear research question, plan out a viable methodology, and outline how gathering this data and analyzing it will have implications on furthering knowledge and/or practically setting up for a positive community intervention addressing an identified need.

Final Exam (20%)

This will be cumulative, testing the knowledge gathered throughout the semester. Format will be discussed in class.

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 - You are expected to have read all the assigned articles prior to each class. Readings might be updated or changed during the course of the semester.

Honor Code/Plagiarism – SFS places high expectations on their students and we hold students accountable for their behaviors. SFS students are held to the honor code below. SFS has a zero-tolerance policy towards student cheating, plagiarism, data falsification, and any other form of dishonest academic and/or research practice or behavior. Using the ideas or material of others without giving due credit is

cheating and will not be tolerated. Any SFS student found to have engaged in or facilitated academic and/or research dishonesty will receive no credit (0%) for that activity.

“SFS does not tolerate cheating or plagiarism in any form. While participating in an SFS program, students are expected to refrain from cheating, plagiarism and any other behavior which would result in a student receiving credit for work which they did not accomplish on their own. Students are expected to report any instance of cheating or plagiarism by others.”

Deadlines – Deadlines for written and oral assignments are instated to promote equity among students and to allow faculty ample time to review and return assignments before others are due. As such, deadlines are firm; extensions will only be considered under extreme circumstances. Late assignments will incur a penalty of 10% of your grade for each day you are late. After two days (past the deadline) assignments will not be accepted anymore. Assignments will be handed back to students after a one-week grading period.

Content Statement – Every student comes to SFS with unique life experiences, which contribute to the way various information is processed. Some of the content in this course may be intellectually or emotionally challenging but has been intentionally selected to achieve certain learning goals and/or showcase the complexity of many modern issues. If you anticipate a challenge engaging with a certain topic or find that you are struggling with certain discussions, we encourage you to talk about it with faculty, friends, family, the HWM, or access available mental health resources.

Participation – Since we offer a program that is often more intensive than you might be used to at your home institution, missing even one lecture can have a proportionally greater effect on your final grade simply because there is little room to make up for lost time. Participation in all components of the course is mandatory, it is important that you are prompt for all activities, bring the necessary equipment for field exercises and class activities, and simply get involved.

Course Content

Type- L: Lecture, **D:** Discussion, **W:** Workshop, **FEX:** Field Exercise, **GL:** Guest Lecture

No	Topics covered	Type	Hours	Required Readings
EPSV01	Film - Historias del Canal	L	2.0	
EPSV02	Course Introduction	L	1.0	
EPSV03	Situating Bocas del Toro within the History and Culture of Panama	L	1.5	Pleasant & Spalding, 2021 García Soto, 2022
EPSV04	Making Social Science Matter Processes of Social Inquiry. We are not mimicking natural sciences, but developing interpretations, explanations, and value-laden recommendations.	L	1.5	Flyvbjerg, 2005
EPSV05	Tourism and Sustainable Development	L	2.0	Honey, 2008
EPSV06	Sustainable Tourism Field Visits	FEX	3.0	
EPSV07	Field Trip Debrief and discussion	D	1.5	
EPSV08	Tourism Destination Governance as the guiding framework for this course: Understanding various actors, networks and scalar dimensions involved.	L	1.0	Laws, Agrusa, Scott, & Richens, 2011 Mach & Ponting, 2018

EPSV09	Protected Area Governance	L	1.5	Mach, Winner, Rojas, & Klemond, 2020
EPSV10	Zapatillas Site Visit Isla Bastimentos National Marine Park	FEX	2.0	
EPSV11	Protected Areas and Dispossession	L	2.0	Treuer, 2021
EPSV12	Technology, Tourism and Authenticity	L	1.5	Tribe & Mkono, 2017
EPSV13	Ecotourism and Authenticity	L	1.0	West & Carrier, 2004
EPSV14	Film and discussion – Gringo Trails	L	2.5	
EPSV15	Proposal Writing	L	1.5	Labaree, 2009
ESPV16	Sustainable Hospitality and Tourism/Certifications	L	2.0	GSTC, 2016 Mkono & Hughes, 2020
EPSV17	Hotel Visit Prep	L	1.0	
EPSV18	Observing Sustainable Tourism Providers	L	4.0	
EPSV19	Sustainable Indigenous Tourism	L	2.0	Scheyvens, et al., 2021 United Nations, 2021
EPSV20	Sustainable Indigenous Tourism and SDGs	L	1.0	
EPSV21	Sustainable Indigenous Tourism Site Visits (Oreba, Darklands, Cacao Blessings)	FEX	5.0	Mach & Vahradian, 2019
EPSV22	Indigenous tourism presentations, debrief and discussion	L; D	2.0	
EPSV23	Volunteer Tourism	L	1.5	Everingham, Young, Wearing, & Lyons, 2022 Staton, 2015
EPSV24	Volunteer Tourism Guest Speakers	GL	2.0	
EPSV25	Proposal Writing Workshop	W	3.0	
EPSV26	Wildlife tourism	L	1.0	Mach, McPherson, & Hayes, 2023
EPSV27	Contemporary Tourism Issues in Bocas Discussion and Debate	D	1.0	
EPSV28	Wildlife tourism – Site Visits	FEX	4.0	
EPSV29	Final Exam Review and Prep	L	1.0	
Total			59	

Reading List

1. Everingham, P., Young, T., Wearing, S., & Lyons, K. (2022). A diverse economies approach for promoting peace and justice in volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(2-3), 618-636. doi:10.1080/09669582.2021.1924179
2. Flyvbjerg, B. (2005). Social Science that Matters. *Foresight Europe*, 38-42.
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4. 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

5. Honey, M. (2008). *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development : Who Owns Paradise?* (Second ed.). Washington, D.C: Island Press.
6. Labaree, R. V. (2009). *Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Writing a Research Proposal*. Retrieved from USCLibraries: <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/assignments/researchproposal>
7. Mach, L., & Ponting, J. (2018). Governmentality and surf tourism destination governance. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
8. 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.
9. Mach, L., McPherson, B., & Hayes, R. (2023). Wildlife tourism maps and the governance of environmental collapse. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(5), 1465-1482. doi:10.1080/14616688.2023.2231423
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11. Mkono, M., & Hughes, K. (2020). Eco-guilt and eco-shame in tourism consumption contexts: understanding the triggers and responses. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(8), 1223-1244.
12. Pleasant, T., & Spalding, A. (2021). Development and dependency in the periphery: From bananas to tourism in Bocas del Toro, Panama. *World Development Perspectives*, 24. doi:10.1016/j.wdp.2021.100363
13. Scheyvens, R., Carr, A., Movono, A., Hughes, E., Higgins-Desbiolles, F., & Mika, J. (2021). Indigenous tourism and the sustainable development goals. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 90, 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2021.103260
14. Staton, M. L. (2015). 7 Reasons why your two week trip to Haiti doesn't matter: Calling bull on "service trips" and Voluntourism. Retrieved from The Almost Doctor's Channel: almost.thedoctorschannel.com/14323-2/
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16. Tribe, J., & Mkono, M. (2017). Not such smart tourism? The concept of e-lienation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 105-115.
17. United Nations. (2021). *The 17 Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
18. West, P., & Carrier, J. (2004). Ecotourism and Authenticity: Getting away from it all? *Current Anthropology*, 45(4).