FAQ about the . . .

Costa Rica
Study Abroad
Program
Spring 2014

How many credits will I take?
This year the program consists of 14 to 15 credits.

The courses offered this year are:
- Spanish: 107 (Beg. Sp. I); 108 (Beg. Sp. II); 207 (Inter. Sp. III); 208 (Inter. Sp. IV); 295 (Special Topics) – Each class is 4 credits and fulfills MNTC Goal 8
- Culture of Costa Rica SPAN 210 – 4 credits (MNTC Goals 6 & 8)
- Sociology—Introduction to Sociology – 3 credits (MNTC Goals 5 & 7)
- English—Creative Writing – 3 credits (MNTC Goal 6)
- Biology – Environmental Science – 4 credits (MNTC Goals 3 & 10)
You must enroll in a Spanish language class, the Culture of Costa Rica class, and two of the three other classes.

Can I drop a class?
No, you must take and complete 14/15 credits.

How often do the classes meet?
The program is during Spring semester 2014. You will be in Costa Rica from January 26th until March 23rd.
The Spanish classes meet 5 days a week, typically from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Each of your other two classes typically meets one afternoon per week.
The Biology, English, and Sociology classes will also meet prior to your departure for Costa Rica. The tentative dates for those meetings are, from January 6 - 10, 2014, and again on January 20, 2014. These meeting will take place from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. If you are from greater Minnesota, we can attempt to help you find someone to stay with.

Where are the classes held in Costa Rica?
The classes are held at the Instituto de Cultura y Lengua de Costarricense (ICLC). The institute is located in Alajuela, Costa Rica. You can learn more about the institute at their website - http://www.iclc.ws/
Their website has a wealth of information as well as pictures and videos.
How much time does homework require?
You are not on a vacation; this is college course work. You can expect several hours of Spanish homework every day. Remember the reason you are going to Costa Rica is to learn Spanish, not to party. Your two other classes will also require several hours of homework per week.

Who teaches the classes?
The Spanish classes are taught by highly qualified native-speaking Spanish instructors. The typical class size for the Spanish classes is 4 students per teacher. The other courses are taught by faculty from MNSCU campuses.

Can I take online courses from another institution while in Costa Rica?
You can certainly take courses online from other institutions while in Costa Rica. But keep in mind that internet access may not be what you are used to. There is no guarantee you will have access at your home stay (internet connectivity is not as common as in the U.S.). There is access at ICLC, but the campus closes around 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and is closed on weekends. This means you might find your only access via an internet café.

In addition, you will be busy with homework for the classes you are taking in the program. And remember, it is nice to have some weekends free to travel.

What does the program cost? How much will I need for personal expenses?
Cost of the program in Costa Rica (including home stay):
- Approximately $4,600
- Tuition and fees—approximately $2,300
- Airfare—Approximately $700
- Personal expenditures --- this depends on your lifestyle. At the low end it would consist of bus fare to and from the school in Costa Rica, lunches and snacks, simple day-to-day costs, and a small amount of traveling. At this basic level, one could expect to spend $1,000 while in Costa Rica. From there it depends on what you want to do. You can certainly spend more money on entertainment, purchases, and travel. The more traveling you do while in Costa Rica, the greater your costs would be. It is, therefore, possible to spend $2,000 or more while there.

The costs of the program can be covered with financial aid.

Where will I be living?
While participating in the program, you will live with families in Alajuela, Costa Rica. All families are carefully screened and selected by ICLC. You will be matched with families based on the information that you provide on your ICLC application. You will have your own room, and breakfast and dinner will be provided daily. Laundry service is also included.

What type of house rules are there?
You are a guest in someone’s home and also an ambassador of your country, and thus must behave accordingly. The ICLC website has a complete discussion of the rules regarding your home stay. You can find this information at http://accommodation.iclc.ws/rules.html

Can I travel when there?
The question shouldn’t be “can I travel,” but “how much can I travel?” Costa Rica is a beautiful country offering an amazing variety of travel opportunities. The staff at ICLC is very helpful in assisting you with your travel plans. The cost of travel will depend on your personal needs. If you want to meet the “Ticos”, riding the local bus can be a great way to use your Spanish, meet new people, and save money. The fares on public busses are very reasonable, on average $5 each way. There are also private tourist busses that frequent the popular tourist destinations. These are more expensive, which means an average cost of about $25 each way. You can share at room in a hostel with several other students for very inexpensive lodging, or perhaps stay at a nice resort and pay accordingly. It is all up to you.
- **Who arranges the air transportation to Costa Rica?**
  You will make arrangements for your travel. We do not arrange group travel because it tends to be more expensive. DO NOT buy your ticket until you have been notified to do so. This past year airfares to/from MSP to the San Jose International Airport (Juan Santamaria (SJO)) could be found for as low as $650.

- **Do I need a passport?**
  Yes. You can find information at [http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)
  No visas are necessary for U.S. citizens traveling to Costa Rica.

- **Do I need any shots?**
  You should check with your health care provider to get information relative to your particular needs.

- **What is the weather like in Alajuela?**
  On a typical day you will find yourself going to school under clear blue skies with a temperature around 70°. By the time you return home in the afternoon, you will encounter party cloudy skies, the temperature approaching the 90’s, and a chance of a short burst of rain. Days can often be rather windy.

- **What are the key dates and steps to take?**
  Applications to EGL must be submitted by November 1, 2013. The down payment on the Costa Rica portion is due no later than November 25, 2013, with full payment due no later than December 25, 2013. Tuition to Ridgewater is due by the beginning of the spring semester.
  Your first step is to complete the EGL Application Form. If you are receiving financial aid, you can also check with your home campus financial aid director to discuss your needs for the Costa Rica program. Once you have received notice you have been accepted into the program, we will put you into contact with ICLC in Costa Rica. **Do not apply directly to ICLC or purchase your plane ticket until you have been notified to do so.**

- **Whom do I contact for more information?**

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  Nancy Claycomb, EGL Costa Rica 2014 Sociology Faculty (Phone: 952 358-8443   Email: nancy.claycomb@normandale.edu)

  Tom Rapp, Costa Rica Program Coordinator at Ridgewater College (phone: 320-222-5633 Email: [tom.rapp@ridgewater.edu](mailto:tom.rapp@ridgewater.edu))