

1-2013

## ENST 494.80: Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development - Views from Nicaragua

Daniel T. Spencer

*University of Montana*, [daniel.spencer@umontana.edu](mailto:daniel.spencer@umontana.edu)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

### Recommended Citation

Spencer, Daniel T., "ENST 494.80: Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development - Views from Nicaragua" (2013). *Syllabi*. 700.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/700>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: VIEWS FROM NICARAGUA

ENST 494.80, Spring 2013; ENST 493.80/593.80 Summer 2013

Davidson Honors College 118

Thursday evenings, 6:40 -- 8:00 pm

CRN: 36149

Dr. Dan Spencer

Rankin Hall 103, Tel. 243-6111

e-mail: [daniel.spencer@umontana.edu](mailto:daniel.spencer@umontana.edu)

Office Hours: MW 11:10-12; Tu 10-12 or by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar is an interdisciplinary course built around a 15-day travel seminar to Nicaragua. The organizing axis for the course is a firsthand examination of the historical and present-day dynamics of environmental justice, social change, human rights, and efforts toward sustainable development within the current context of global economic neoliberalism in Latin America. Specific topics addressed by the seminar include issues related to environmental and human rights concerns in Nicaragua; Nicaragua's place in the global economy; the environmental and social consequences of privatization and free trade; grassroots and governmental efforts at achieving environmental justice and sustainable economic and cultural development; historical and contemporary relations between Nicaragua and the U.S.; the role of culture in social change and environmental justice; the place of women's and indigenous people's movements in Central America. The style of the travel seminar is intensive and includes encounters with people and organizations representing many sectors of society, as well as opportunities for group reflection, analysis, and collective learning.

### TEXTS

#### Required

1. On-Line Reading Packet from the Center for Global Education: eReader
2. ERES collection of essays and articles on Nicaragua
3. *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle* by Thomas Walker (Westview Press, 2011)
4. *In Focus Nicaragua: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture* by Hazel Plunkett (In Focus Guides: Interlink Publishing Group, 2001)

#### Recommended

1. *Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America* by Roberts, J. T. and Nikki Demetria Thanos (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).
2. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* by Walter LaFeber (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993)
3. *National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America* by Lars Schoultz (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).
4. *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* by Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans, editors (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).
5. *Contested Nature: Promoting International Biodiversity Conservation with Social Justice in the Twenty-first Century* by Brechin, Steven, Peter R. Wilhusen, Crystal L. Fortwangler, and Patrick C. West, editors (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press).
6. *Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics, and Revolution in Central America* by Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994).
7. *A Popular History of Two Revolutions: Guatemala and Nicaragua* by Guillermo Toriello Garrido, Guillermo Toriello Garrido, Rebecca Schwaner (Synthesis Publications, 1985).

## Websites:

1. *Human Rights Watch Nicaragua*: [www.hrw.org/americas/nicaragua](http://www.hrw.org/americas/nicaragua)
2. US State Department Report on Nicaragua 2012: [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1850.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1850.htm)
3. *Nica Times*: <http://www.ticotimes.net/Region>

### **News and Analysis on Nicaragua**

- *Envio* monthly magazine: <http://www.envio.org.ni/index.en>
- Hotline News from NICANET for weekly headlines: <http://www.nicanet.org/?cat=5>
- News updated daily from thousands of sources around the net: <http://www.topix.com/world/nicaragua>

### **Regional News and Analysis**

- *latinamericapress*: <http://www.lapress.org/buscador.asp> (Fill in top blank with Nicaragua and hit enter)
- Weekly articles Upside Down World magazine: <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/nicaragua-archives-62>
- NACLA online search engine: <https://nacla.org/search/node/nicaragua>

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

- Regular class attendance and participation that demonstrates a careful reading of the assigned texts.
- Critical response essay to the Walker text
- (Graduate only): 5-page literature review essay on a selected issue

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

## **Assigned Reading**

IFN = *In Focus Nicaragua*; ERES = Electronic Reserve Readings

- |    |      |   |                             |
|----|------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | 1/31 | Introduction to the course  | IFN: 4-6                    |
|    |      | <u>Recommended</u> : US State Dept Report on Nicaragua;<br>The CIA factbook on Nicaragua; BBC News report       | CGE eReader                 |
|    |      | <b>I. General Overview of Nicaragua</b>   |                             |
| 2. | 2/7  | Introduction to Nicaragua:<br>Early History through the Somoza Dictatorship                                     | Walker: 1-31<br>IFN: 7-16   |
| 3. | 2/14 | The Sandinista Insurrection and Revolution  | Walker: 31-58<br>IFN: 16-24 |
| 4. | 2/21 | The Conservative Restoration: 1990-2006   | Walker: 58-70<br>IFN: 25-38 |
|    |      | <u>Film</u> : First part, <i>Under Fire</i>   |                             |
| 5. | 2/28 | The Sandinista Period and Aftermath   |                             |
|    |      | <u>Film</u> : Second part, <i>Under Fire</i> (Dan out of town)  |                             |
|    |      | <u>Recommended</u> : A. Bendaña: "The Rise and Fall of the FSLN"  | ERES #1                     |
| 6. | 3/7  | A House Divided: Religion in Nicaragua and the<br>Influence of Liberation Theology; Introduction to Solentiname | IFN: 78-83                  |

Robert MacAfee Brown: Excerpts from <i>Liberation Theology</i>	ERES #2
Leonardo & Clodovis Boff: "A Concise History of Liberation Theology"	ERES #3
Excerpts from Ernesto Cardenal, <i>Gospel in Solentiname</i>	ERES #4

**Graduate Student Paper Topic Due**

- |     |      |   |                                      |
|-----|------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 7.  | 3/14 | Nicaraguan Culture, Society, Human Rights   | Walker: 105-135<br>IFN: 38-42; 73-86 |
|     |      | <u>Recommended:</u> State Department Human Rights Report: Nicaragua   | CGE eReader                          |
| 8.  | 3/21 | Nicaragua: Government and Politics  | Walker: 139-171                      |
|     |      | "Understanding Populism and Political Participation: The Case of Nicaragua,"  | CGE eReader                          |
|     |      | "How to steal an election," <i>The Economist</i>  | CGE eReader                          |
|     |      | <u>Recommended:</u> Articles in CGE On-line Reader: Nicaragua: Politics and History   |                                      |
| 9.  | 3/28 | Economics in Nicaragua  | Walker: 77-101<br>IFN: 43-57         |
|     |      | <u>Recommended:</u> María Lourdes Arce: "Maquila Workers Tolerate Abuse"  | ERES #5                              |
| 4/4 |      | <b>Spring break: no class</b>   |                                      |
| 10. | 4/11 | Nicaragua: International Issues   | Walker: 175-197                      |
|     |      | <u>Film:</u> <i>The World is Watching</i> (1988)  |                                      |
| 11. | 4/18 | Nicaragua since 1990: The Whole World Stopped Watching  |                                      |
|     |      | <u>Recommended:</u> Read ahead for next 2 classes   |                                      |
|     |      | <u>Film:</u> <i>The World Stopped Watching</i> (2003)   |                                      |
|     |      | <b>Critical Response Essay on Walker text due in class</b>  |                                      |
| 12. | 4/25 | Neoliberalism, Globalization, Free Trade, Sustainable Development   |                                      |
|     |      | Rebecca Todd Peters: "Globalization as New World Order"   | ERES #6                              |
|     |      | Xabier Gorostiaga: "World has Become a 'Champagne Glass'"   | ERES #7                              |
| 13. | 5/2  | Environmental & Fair Trade Issues in Nicaragua  |                                      |
|     |      | "Can Nicaragua Protect Plundered Forest Reserves?"  | CGE eReader                          |
|     |      | Christopher Bacon: "Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Can Fair Trade, Organic, and Specialty Coffees Reduce Small-Scale Farmer Vulnerability in Northern Nicaragua?" | ERES #8                              |
|     |      | Laura Reynolds, Douglas Murray, and John Wilkinson, <i>Fair Trade:</i>  |                                      |

*The Challenges of Transforming Globalization* pp 4-11, 15-29  
Recommended: R.K. Blamey: "Principles of Ecotourism"  
Joni Valkila & Anja Nygren: Impacts of Fair Trade Certification on  
Coffee Farmers, Cooperatives, and Laborers in Nicaragua

ERES #9  
ERES #10  
ERES #11

**End of Academic portion of class; Graduate student essays due**

14. 5/9 Wrap-up / Trip Preparation (Travel Seminar Participants only)

For Travel Seminar Participants:

From CGE eReader Introduction: "Education for Life", "Pointers for the Travel Seminar", Cultural Guidance for Sojourners", Five Ingredients to Dialogue", "Stages of Critical Thinking", "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack", "The Center for Global Education"

## DESCRIPTION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Response Paper: This is 5-6 page critical essay written in response to the Walker text: *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*, and is due in class on **April 18**. The paper should contain (a) a clear summary exposition of the main points of the reading (3-4 pages) as well as (b) your thoughtful assessment of and response to the materials and ideas presented in the text (1-2 pages). (Total Length: 5-6 pages, double-spaced)

Graduate Students: Each graduate student will pick a topic on a current issue in Nicaragua in consultation with the Instructor, and write a 5-6 page literature review on the topic. Your topic is due no later than **March 7**; the paper is due **May 2**. For graduate students going on the travel seminar, your topic should be one that you can research further on the trip and then write a 10-12 page research paper upon return from the trip (see description below).

Grades: The class is offered on a credit/no credit basis only. Papers will be returned with comments and a grade of credit or no credit. The final course grade will reflect student attendance and participation in class sessions and the paper grade.

ERES: To access the ERES readings:

- a. Go into <http://eres.lib.umt.edu/>
- b. Click on Electronic Reserves and Course Materials
- c. Under Instructor, find and select SPENCER, Daniel
- d. Click on the course name (EVST 491).
- e. Enter the password, "Nicaragua"
- f. The first entry, "Reading List," is a Table of Contents. The rest of the readings are entered in the order of the Table of Contents and are numbered on the first page of the reading. The readings are in PDF format.

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE NICARAGUA TRAVEL SEMINAR

### Travel Seminar to Nicaragua (May 27 – June 10, 2013).

- Full attendance and participation in scheduled meetings and discussion sessions
- Facilitation of at least one discussion session

### GRADING POLICY

1. Attendance and Participation in Program Schedule during Travel Seminar: 30%
2. Attendance and Participation in Discussion Sessions during Travel Seminar: 10%
3. Daily Journal during Travel Seminar: 40%
4. Editorial/Op-Ed piece: 20%
5. Graduate Students only: Research paper (see below) (25% of final grade)

Attendance: You are expected to attend each scheduled session during the Nicaragua travel seminar.

### DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Active participation in the scheduled meetings and discussion sessions. Students are expected to attend, be on time, and actively and respectfully participate in all scheduled activities.
2. Daily Journal: Keep a daily journal during the travel seminar in which you record your observations, interpretations, thought, responses, and questions as a result of the experiences of each day. Recommended that you begin the journal before departure with the questions you plan to investigate and a framework of how you plan to obtain the needed information, as well as to record your hopes, expectations, questions, etc. before arriving in Nicaragua. See handout for suggestions and guidelines. (Due: June 24, 2013)
3. Letter to the Editor/Op-Ed Piece: In the first week following the travel seminar, write a 500-word opinion piece or letter to the editor about some aspect of the Nicaragua trip (such as land and labor questions, historical and social struggles, human rights issues, development and economic issues, environmental issues, U.S. policy, etc.) and submit it to a newspaper or magazine of your choice. Submit another copy with a copy of your cover letter to the course instructor. See samples for examples and ideas. (Due: June 24, 2013)
4. (Graduate only): Research Paper. During the spring semester reading course, each graduate student, in consultation with the instructor, will select a topic of interest to research both before and during the travel seminar. Following the travel seminar, students will write a 10-12 page paper analyzing the issue. (Due: June 24, 2013).