

Ridgewater College and Education for Global Learning Present

COSTA RICA



FAQ about the . . .

Costa Rica

Study Abroad

Program

Spring 2017

1. How many credits will I take?

The program consists of 14 credits, six of which will be MnSCU classes from two of the ten transfer goal areas:

- GLST 101 Introduction to Global Studies—3 credits (MNTC Goals 6 & 8)
- CMST 227 Intercultural Communication—3 credits (MNTC Goal 7)

The ICLC courses that will be offered include the following:

- 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)

2. Can I drop a class?

No, you must take and complete 14 credits. However, if you've already taken one or both of the MnSCU courses, you will be able to substitute one or two online Ridgewater courses to take their place.

3. How often do the classes meet?

The program takes place during Spring Semester 2017. You will be in Costa Rica for eight weeks.

The Spanish classes meet 5 days a week, typically from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Each of your other two classes typically meets one afternoon per week.

The two MnSCU classes will begin prior to your departure for Costa Rica, from January 2 through January 6, at the end of winter break. These are classes in which you can expect homework, and they will take place from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. for five days. If you are from greater Minnesota, we will help you find someone to stay with. The week begins with ½ day of orientation to studying abroad.

4. 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/>. The website has a wealth of information as well as pictures and videos.

5. **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. Your two other classes will also require several hours of homework per week.

6. **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 in English by faculty from MNSCU campuses.

7. **Can I take online courses from another institution while in Costa Rica?**

One of your MnSCU classes—for everyone—may actually be an online course, depending upon the number of students embarking on this adventure. The fewer the students that enroll, the more likely it will be that one of the classes will be an online class. There is no guarantee you will have access at your home stay because Internet connectivity is not as common as in the U.S. Students are allowed to access the Internet at the school. This means you might find your only access via an Internet café or at the ICLC. In addition, you will be busy with homework for the classes you are taking in the program. Also remember, it is nice to have some weekends free to travel.

➤ **What does the program cost? How much will I need for personal expenses?**

Costs of the study abroad program in Costa Rica:

- ICLC and homestay cost—approximately \$5,000
- Tuition and fees—approximately \$3,000
- Airfare—approximately \$500-\$900
- Personal expenditures --- this depends on your lifestyle. At the low end it would consist of taxi 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.

8. **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. You will receive the home stay guidelines as part of your orientation materials.

9. **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 \$3 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 a room in a hostel with several other students for very inexpensive lodging, or stay at a nice resort and pay accordingly. It is all up to you.

10. Who arranges the air transportation to Costa Rica?

You will make arrangements for your own 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, and DO NOT BUY your ticket until you communicate with someone else enrolled in the program; if you can travel together, your experience will be just that much more enjoyable. This past year airfares to/from MSP to the San Jose International Airport (Juan Santamaria (SJO)) could be found for as low as \$550.

11. Do I need a passport?

Yes. You can find information at http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
No visas are necessary for U.S. citizens traveling to Costa Rica.

12. Do I need any shots?

You should check with your health care provider to get information relative to your particular needs.

13. 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 a temperature approaching the 90's. Days can sometimes be windy. Both coasts are typically a bit warmer with higher humidity. Shorts and t-shirts are appropriate. You may wish to bring a sweater for the occasional cool evening.

14. What are the key dates and steps to take?

Applications to EGL must be submitted by November 1, 2016. Full payment for the program fees will be due no later than December 31, 2016. Tuition may be due even earlier. If you submit a \$1000 down payment by June 1, you will receive \$300 off the program total; if you submit a \$1000 down payment by October 1, you will receive \$200 off the program total.

Your first step is to complete the EGL Application Form. If you are receiving financial aid, you should 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.** You can find the application at <https://www.ridgewater.edu/programs-and-majors/liberal-arts/Pages/Travel-with-Ridgewater.aspx>

15. Who do I contact for more information?

You can contact your campus EGL coordinator. You can also contact the Costa Rica Program coordinators at Ridgewater College: Kathy Steffen, kathy.steffen@ridgewater.edu (320-234-8554), or Ruth Fairchild, ruth.fairchild@ridgewater.edu (320-222-7520).