Political Science 310
Citizen Participation within a Globalized Economy

“Greater participation by the population is no longer a vague ideology based on the good wishes of a few idealists. It has become an imperative - a condition of survival.”
- UNDP. Human Development Report.

Instructor: Elisa Vanegas holds a Licentiate in Diplomacy and International Relations from the Christian Autonomous University of Nicaragua and a Master’s Degree in Rural Sustainable Development from the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua.

Credits: 4 credits

Course Description
Why is citizens’ engagement and political participation relevant today? Is participation important for the development of a country? Why are citizens and civil society groups around the world demanding greater accountability, participation and transparency from national governments, political parties, international institutions and business entities? What is democracy?

In this course we will explore these questions and analyze key political, social and economic factors in Central America that are shaping citizens’ participation today with a special emphasis on Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

You will also be exposed to forces such as globalization and neoliberal economic policies applied in the region and how these – among other factors – have reshaped the role of governments and its relationship with constituents. As we analyze the interplay between local and global processes, you will also be encouraged to reflect upon your role as a global citizen and an agent for change.

Course Objectives
1. Learn about historical and present events that have shaped Citizen Participation in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. (Unit I)
2. Reflect upon different understandings of development and the role of citizen participation. (I)
3. Analyze the impact of neoliberal economic policies in Costa and Nicaragua, particularly for women, peasant farmers and indigenous communities. (II)
4. Learn about civil society i.e.: Non-governmental organization, social movements and community groups in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and their view on participation. (III)
5. Reflect upon your role as a global citizen and as an agent for change. (III)
Course Design

The course is divided into the following units:

Unit I: Introduction to Political Participation in Central America
This Unit will first explore political concepts that will allow you to understand historical and current key events that have shaped citizen participation in the Central American region. You will be exposed to their common history but will also learn about their individual struggles and participation processes through the lens of the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan’s perspectives and experiences. Do Central Americans believe that participation is important for development? How does participation fare in comparison to other economic and social rights?

Unit II: Citizen's Participation in the Context of Globalization and Neoliberal Policies
In this unit, we will examine structural neoliberal policies applied in Central America and analyze their impact, specifically for women, peasant farmers and indigenous communities. You will analyze the role of governments, International Financial Institutions and civil society groups in setting the agenda for these policies.

As part of this unit, we will be focusing on trade liberalization and free trade agreements. You will critically examine the pros and cons of the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and will analyze the power relations among stakeholders, as well as identify the spaces, challenges and mechanisms for civil society participation in trade policy.

Unit III: Social Participation in Practice
You will be exposed to some efforts of NGOs, the women’s movement and community groups working on social change. At the end of the unit you will be expected to synthesize what you have learned in regard to participation and social change. This will include the presentation of a creative project.

Required Texts
No texts will be required. Students will be given a reading packet upon arrival in the country. Readings include selections from the select bibliography (see below).

Course Requirements

- Class Participation and Facilitation (15%)
- Essay (25%)
- Take-home Exam (30%)
- Creative Project and Oral Presentation (30%)

Class participation is crucial in this course. It includes regular attendance, completion of assigned readings before class sessions, asking probing questions and a demonstrated effort to dialogue with speakers. Feel free to ask questions at any time and see me when other issues are affecting your learning. If you have formally diagnosed learning or physical differences please let me know in order to obtain assistance.
Select Bibliography

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA
“Women’s Work and Neoliberal Globalization” in Maier, E. & Lebon, N. Women’s Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2010. Ch. 2, pp. 47-57.
“Women’s Work and Neoliberal Globalization” in Maier, E. & Lebon, N. Women’s Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2010. Ch. 2, pp. 47-57.

UNIT II: CITIZEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERAL POLICIES
“What Do We Mean by Development?” in Todaro, M. and Smith, S. Economic Development. 8th Ed. pp.15-23

UNIT III: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE
Additional Comments

Explanation of Grades
Augsburg College uses a numerical grading system using the following definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.33</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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A “Pass” grade is C/2.0 or above.

CGEE Grading Policy and Late Assignments
You must submit assignments on time. If you need an extension, you must talk to us in advance to negotiate a new deadline. If you have not been given an extension in advance and you turn in a late assignment, you will be docked half a grade. If you are more than one week late, you will be docked a full grade. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original deadline; a “0” will be given after that. Assignments due near the end of the semester will not be accepted after the last day of the semester.

Re-writing Assignments
If you receive a grade of B- or lower, you may revise a paper as long as you resubmit it within one week of the date it was returned to you. Your final grade will be an average of the two grades.

Augsburg Honesty Policy
You are expected to follow the Augsburg Honesty Policy which is printed in the program manual. We assume that you have read the honesty policy, understand it, and are following it. Except when the assignment expressly encourages group work, it is assumed that all course work will be your own. You may not copy other students’ work. The first occurrence of plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. A student who commits plagiarism a second time will fail the course.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities:
Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. Those who qualify should identify themselves to the instructor as soon as possible in order to obtain extra assistance.