Coffee Ecologies & Livelihoods at UVM, El Salvador & Beyond!

A 6-credit, integrated classroom & field-based learning experience

January 2 to 13, 2011
(tentative-12 Full days, including travel)

Course Overview - The sequence starts with the required PSS 003 Coffee Ecologies and Livelihoods (3 credits-Fall) of the PSS 296 offered in the UVM campus. Here we do an in-depth overview of coffee production and consumption, from ‘bean to cup’, and with emphasis on the social and environment dimensions related to coffee roasting and consumption. We then transport ourselves to the coffee landscape of Tacuba, El Salvador, and learn how coffee is produced by different types of growers, help the Association of Organic Coffee Producers of Western El Salvador (ACOES) harvest their red, ripe beans, and engage in field agroecological and social research related to conservation and rural livelihoods. This sequence is designed to expose students to the complexity of global coffee networks, the actors that play a role in them, and the challenges and opportunities facing more ecologically sound and socially just coffee production and consumption.

Course Structure and Expectations - The on campus courses provide students with a variety of lectures, invited speakers, fieldtrips and hands-on projects. We do a broad overview of the journey of the coffee bean from production to your morning coffee cup. In El Salvador, students will collaborate with the Community Agroecology Network (CAN), and its partner organizations, the Association of Organic Coffee Producers of Western El Salvador (ACOES), and Advising & Interdisciplinary research for Development and Conservation (ASINDEC).

3-Course, 7-credit, Sequence (Required)

1. Summer or Spring Required course on-campus (choose 1):
   a. PSS 296 Coffee Agro-Food Systems Summer 2010 (3 credits-VE Mendez, instructor)
   b. PSS 003 Coffee Ecologies & Livelihoods, Fall 2010 (3 credits-M. Moser & K. Morris, instructors)
2. PSS/ENVS 295: Café (en) Tacuba: Ecologies and Livelihoods in a Coffee Landscape of El Salvador, Winter Break (3 credits, Study Abroad in El Salvador for 12 days)
3. Course # to be determined: Reflection and completion of assignments (1 credit, Spring semester).
Students will learn field agroecological methods and practices, and work side-by-side with local small-scale coffee farmers, including coffee harvesting. A portion of your fee goes to ACOES, ASINDEC and CAN, and directly supports conservation and local development efforts in Tacuba. For more information about CAN, visit: www.communityagroecology.net

About the Instructors Ernesto Méndez is an Assistant Professor of Agroecology and Environmental Studies at UVM. His research focuses on interdisciplinary approaches that analyze interactions between agriculture, rural people’s livelihoods, and environmental conservation in tropical and temperate landscapes. He is a native of El Salvador, and your participation in this course supports his life’s work with coffee farmers in the western part of the country. For more information on his research and teaching visit his website: www.uvm.edu/~emendez. Karen Nordstrom is a Program Specialist with the UVM Greenhouse Residential Program, and a doctoral student in the Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources. She has an MA in Education and extensive experience in experiential learning. She is currently working on research on alternative food systems and sustainability curriculum in higher education.

Course Fees: In addition to tuition fees, students going on the El Salvador course will have to cover approximately $2,500 for all expenses (airfare included).

Registration - Pre-register now at: http://learn.uvm.edu/studyabroad

Enrollment is limited to 15 students.

For more information -
Contact lead professor Ernesto Mendez at: Ernesto.Mendez@uvm.edu or phone 656-2539.

Also visit: http://www.uvm.edu/~emendez/?Page=Teaching.html
To speak with a Continuing Education Advisor, email learn@uvm.edu, or call 800.639.3210 or 802.656.2085.