

## HGLO398A - Exploring Global Challenges and Solutions in Panama

**Instructor and Program Leader:** Alfredo Oliveira | [aao@umd.edu](mailto:aao@umd.edu) | 301-314-7100

**Supporting Faculty:** Dr. Sarah Croco | [scroco@umd.edu](mailto:scroco@umd.edu)

**Course Dates:** Spring Semester 2025 (January 27, 2025 - March 31, 2025)

**Course Times:** Mondays, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM or Wednesdays, 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

**Course Location:** Dorchester Seminar Room 0134 (Dorchester Hall)

**Study Abroad Dates:** March 15, 2025 - March 22, 2025

**Study Abroad Location:** Panama City, Panama

### Course Description

This study abroad course, centered around the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offers a rich cultural immersion experience in Panama City, Panama. Through lectures, discussions, reflections, and data analysis, students will explore critical issues impacting both Panama and the United States, including food security, sustainable agriculture, global health (HIV/AIDS education), human trafficking, and indigenous advocacy. Pre-departure seminars will cover Panama's history, politics, and sustainable development initiatives. While in Panama, students will visit NGOs, the United States Embassy in Panama, and Emberá Indian Village, along with significant cultural landmarks. This unique experience provides an in-depth understanding of global challenges and Panamanian culture.

### Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideas in a specific topical area in history or the social sciences.
- Analyze and compare the socio-economic and cultural differences between the United States and Panama, particularly in relation to food security and sustainable agriculture.
- Explain the impact of global challenges, such as climate change and food insecurity, on Panama, and make connections to similar issues in the United States.
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the relationship between social identity (gender, race, nationality, etc.) and systemic inequalities, especially in the context of Panamanian indigenous groups.
- Work collaboratively in diverse teams to engage in discussions and develop solutions related to sustainable development, based on both U.S. and Panamanian contexts.
- Apply cross-cultural communication skills in community service and interactions with local organizations, reflecting on these experiences to identify areas for collaboration.
- Explain how culture, social structure, diversity, or other key elements of historical context have an impact on individual perception, action, and values.
- Articulate how historical change shapes ideas and social and political structures.
- Effectively use skills to negotiate cross-cultural situations or conflicts in interactions inside or outside the classroom.

### Required Resources / Readings

- Course Website: [elms.umd.edu](https://elms.umd.edu).
- Academic Articles & News clips (listed under Modules on ELMS-Canvas). Please read them before class.
- Total Estimated costs of required course materials: \$20.00.

## Course Structure

This course will meet in-person weekly prior to the international visit that will take place over Spring Break. Students are required to attend the weekly classes and any required orientation set forth by the Study Abroad Office. After the group's return, there will be one more in-person meeting.

**Study Abroad Location:** Panama City, the bustling capital of Panama, offers a diverse and captivating study abroad experience for international university-level students. Situated at the crossroads of the Americas, Panama City serves as a cultural melting pot, combining modernity with rich history, making it an ideal destination for academic exploration, cultural immersion, and adventure. Panama City is renowned for its fascinating historical landmarks and modern architecture. Students can explore iconic attractions such as the Panama Canal, a marvel of engineering connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the Casco Viejo, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed historic district with charming colonial-era buildings and vibrant street life.

**In-Country Partner:** We will be working with Neudy Carolina Nuñez, who will serve as our in-country partner and is currently working at the World Food Programme. In addition to that, students will be able to engage with members of the Emberá Indian Village and other local organizations.

**Accommodations:** Students and faculty will stay at TRYP By Wyndham Panama Centro in Panama City, Panama.

**Activity Fee:** Lodging, local transportation, some meals, and selected excursions are included in the program fee. Other activities will be the student's responsibility.

## Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your classmates. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and instructor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** Students are often very busy, and I understand that you have obligations outside of this class. However, students do best when they plan adequate time that is devoted to course work. Block your schedule and set aside plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to ELMS-Canvas several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts. You may need to log in multiple times a day when group submissions are due.
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous content. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with the instructor as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.
5. **Ask for help if needed.** If you need help with ELMS-Canvas or other technology, IT Support. If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me and your classmates for support.

**Engagement:** Engagement in this class is vital due to its interactive style, making attendance essential for effective note-taking and overall performance. Class discussions are a critical component of the learning experience, and each student is expected to contribute substantively. Attendance is required for every session, and students with a legitimate reason to miss a session must communicate with the instructor in advance, except in emergencies. Those who miss a session are responsible for catching up on the material covered. Additionally, completing all readings and assignments on time is necessary to fully participate and engage in class activities.

## Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Courses

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## Grades & Grading Structure

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades or have questions about how something was scored, please email Alfredo Oliveira (aao@umd.edu) to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss.

Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course syllabus and course schedule (and posted in Canvas). Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on those days on Canvas. **Late work will be accepted for partial course credit.** An assignment submitted 24 hours of the due date will only be eligible for 90% of the maximum number of points allotted. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours after the due date will only be eligible for 80% of the maximum number of points allotted. Assignments submitted more than 48 hours after the due date will only be eligible for 50% of the maximum number of points allotted. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

The **last day to submit any late work** is **April 15, 2025 by 11:59 PM**. No work will be accepted or graded after this deadline.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99  $\neq$  90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%	+	
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%	-	

## Course Outline

	Topic	Deliverable
Class 1	<b>Course Intro &amp; Foundational Readings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the syllabus</li> <li>Program overview and Community Building</li> </ul>	Class Activity & Engagement
Class 2	<b>Introduction to Panama (History &amp; Politics)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becoming Panama (Independence and Wars)</li> <li>The Panama Canal and U.S.-Relations</li> </ul>	Class Activity & Engagement + Panama in Focus: Country Overview Presentations
Class 3	<b>Sustainable Development Initiatives in Panama</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanitarian Agencies (United Nations)</li> <li>Food Sustainability</li> <li>UN's 17 Sustainable Goals (SDG)</li> </ul>	Class Activity & Engagement + Research and Memo Creation
Class 4	<b>Human Rights &amp; Social Issues in Panama</b>	Class Activity & Engagement + Spotlight on Social Issues
Class 5	<b>Indigenous People Advocacy and Culture in Panama</b>	Class Activity & Engagement + Spotlight on Social Issues
Class 6	<b>Ethical Service Learning Abroad &amp; Pre-Departure Orientation</b>	Class Activity & Engagement
03/15/25	<b>Travel Day &amp; Intro to Panama &amp; In-Country Orientation</b>	Orientation
03/16/25	<b>Intro to Panama (History &amp; Culture)</b>	In-Country Program Participation + Individual Reflection
03/17/25	<b>Sustainable Development Initiatives in Panama</b>	In-Country Program Participation + Group Reflections
03/18/25	<b>Sustainable Development Initiatives in Panama</b>	In-Country Program Participation + Group Reflections
03/19/25	<b>Cultural Immersion Day</b>	In-Country Program Participation
03/20/25	<b>Indigenous People Advocacy and Culture in Panama</b>	In-Country Program Participation + Group Reflections
03/21/25	<b>Indigenous People Advocacy and Culture in Panama</b>	In-Country Program Participation + Group Reflections
03/22/25	<b>Travel Day (Travel back to Washington, D.C.)</b>	Individual Reflection
Class 7	<b>Post-travel Reflection &amp; Reactions</b> <b>Global Solution &amp; Maintaining Relations with Panama</b>	Class Activity & Engagement

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines.

## Assignments

### Class Activities and Engagement (70 points)

- Prior to departure, several class meetings will take place in person. Students are expected to be on-time and engage in full participation (paying attention, asking questions, etc.) during our in-person meetings.

### Panama in Focus: Country Overview Presentations (30 points)

- Students will start exploring Panama by researching its politics, U.S.-Panama relations, and the Panama Canal. Through concise 3-minute presentations, they will share insights and practice summarizing complex information effectively.

### Research and Fact Sheet Creation (20 points)

- Students will research one of the non-governmental organizations or the United State Embassy in Panama and produce a one-page to two-page professional memo or fact sheet.

### Spotlight on Social Issues: Human Rights and Indigenous Advocacy in Panama (30 points)

- Students will work collaboratively to research, analyze, and present on key aspects of Panama's social landscape, focusing on either Human Rights or Indigenous People Advocacy and Culture. This activity will enhance their understanding of Panama's societal dynamics and their ability to synthesize information as a team.

### In-Country Orientation (10 points)

- Attend one in-country orientation session. To receive full points, students must engage and be attentive. This includes on-time attendance and full participation (paying attention, asking questions, etc.).

### In-Country Program Participation (30 points)

- Successfully complete all activities in Panama. This includes on-time attendance and full participation in service and activities related to the course while in Panama.

### HGLO Influencer of the Day (20 points)

- Students will take on the role of social media influencers to document and share daily experiences from the Panama trip.

### In-Country Individual Written Reflections (20 points)

- For the program students are expected to complete 2 (two) reflections. The purpose of reflection is to give you space to process your experiences and think through what you have learned, what has been challenging, and what questions or feelings are coming up for you before, during and after our time abroad.
- The intention of these written reflections are not to summarize your feelings or experiences only, but rather to dive deep into the *what* and *why* -- what are you experiencing/noticing/observing/feeling, and why do you believe that is?

### In-Country Group Reflections (40 points)

- The in-country group reflections will be in-person conversations at the end of the day. There will be 4 total sessions while we are in Panama.
- During this time together, we want you to reflect on your experiences and feelings via the lens of social identities (e.g. my gender, race, sexual identity, religious identity, ability, nationality, socioeconomic status, etc.). What parts of your identity stood out to you during an experience or moment that you want to reflect on?

## HGLO in Panama Digital Magazine Article (30 points)

- Students will create a magazine-style article that highlights their experience in Panama, focusing on one specific day of their choosing. The article will combine personal reflection, descriptive writing, and connections to the course themes.

## Course Guidelines

### Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

In this class, you may use AI tools (TerpAI, ChatGPT, Copilot, Elicit, DALL-E, etc.) for brainstorming and research (getting suggestions for research topics, defining complex terms for your own understanding, etc.). But you must develop your final assignments independently in order to hone your writing voice, which is a major goal of this class. If you have questions or suggestions for potential exceptions, please email me at [aao@umd.edu](mailto:aao@umd.edu) and I would be happy to talk more. All data and facts provided by AI must be checked and cited by the student. Students are responsible for finding credible and reliable sources.

### Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications:

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Keep in mind that the pronouns someone uses are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity.

Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

### Communication with Instructor:

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at [aao@umd.edu](mailto:aao@umd.edu). Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

While I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours, you will more likely receive email responses from me on Mondays - Fridays from 10:00am-5:00pm EST.

ELMS-Canvas: I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and ELMS-Canvas inbox with regular frequency.

### Communication with Peers:

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions. I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind, of course, that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Keep in mind, that free speech has its limit and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or






silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

## Academic Integrity

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course Canvas/ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#).

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.**

Finally, if you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity violation, please reach out to me straight away. Also, **if you are ever unclear** about acceptable levels of collaboration, **please ask!** To help you avoid unintentional violations, **the following table** lists levels of collaboration that are acceptable for each graded exercise. Each assignment will contain more specific information regarding acceptable levels of collaboration.

	 <b>OPEN NOTES</b>	 <b>USE BOOK</b>	 <b>GATHER CONTENT with AI</b>	 <b>ASK FRIENDS</b>	 <b>WORK IN GROUPS</b>
Canvas/ELMS Discussions	✓	✓	✓	No	No
In-Country Individual Reflections	✓	✓	No	No	No
In-Country Group Reflections	✓	✓	No	✓	✓
Final Paper Reflection	✓	✓	✓	No	No
Research and Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Resources & Accommodations

### Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The [Accessibility & Disability Service \(ADS\)](#) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at [adsfrontdesk@umd.edu](mailto:adsfrontdesk@umd.edu). Information about [sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance](#) and more is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

### Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [UMD's Student Academic Support Services website](#) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can use some help sharpening their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [UMD's Writing Center](#) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need ([UMD's Student Resources and Services website](#) may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit [UMD's Counseling Center](#) or [one of the many other mental health resources on campus](#).

### Notice of Mandatory Reporting

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible University Employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as [CARE to Stop Violence](#) (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the [Counseling Center](#) (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD's Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing [titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu](mailto:titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu).

To view further information on the above, please visit the [Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's](#) website at [ocrsm.umd.edu](http://ocrsm.umd.edu).

### Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit [UMD's Division of Student Affairs website](#) for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

## Veteran Resources

UMD provides some additional support to our student veterans. You can access those resources at the office of [Veteran Student life](#) and the [Counseling Center](#). Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

## Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the [Student Feedback on Course Experiences](#) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

## Class Schedule - Spring 2025

Based on everyone's responses, I will be offering **two class sessions each week**, and you only need to attend one of them. However, **once you select your preferred day and time, you must stick with that choice for the entire first six weeks** we will be meeting. You can attend either date for Class 7. The content for both sessions will be the same.

	<b>Mondays 5:00pm to 6:00pm</b>	<b>Wednesdays 4:30pm to 5:30pm</b>
<b>[Class 1] Module 1</b>	January 27, 2025	January 29, 2025
<b>[Class 2] Module 2</b>	February 3, 2025	February 5, 2025
<b>[Class 3] Module 3</b>	February 10, 2025	February 12, 2025
<b>Working Time for Group Presentations</b>	February 17, 2025	February 19, 2025
<b>[Class 4] Module 4</b>	February 24, 2025	February 26, 2025
<b>[Class 5] Module 5</b>	March 3, 2025	March 5, 2025
<b>[Class 6] Module 6</b>	March 10, 2025	March 12, 2025
<b>[Class 7] Module 7</b>	March 31, 2025*	March 26, 2025

**Note:** You can attend Class 7 on March 26, 2025 **or** March 31, 2025. This is the only class meeting where you can switch your regularly scheduled day and time.

## Copyright Notice

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