English 319  Studies in Literary Diversity  
Topic: The Politics of the Murals and Literature

We will study contemporary Costa Rican literature and the emergence of the modern mural in the city of San Jose. Murals are key public and artistic expressions that reflect economic, cultural, and political features of its city and people. Walking throughout the barrios of San Jose and its downtown, one discovers a city of murals that narrate the key issues of its time, portray the important figures of its culture, document the key movements of its history, and protest in vibrant and creative ways. To better understand these “texts”, we will read the literary work of several Costa Rican writers such as Carmen Naranjo, Alfredo Aguilar, Samuel Rovinski, Carlos Salazar Herrera, Jose Leon Sanchez, and others. Using Costa Rican poetry and fiction, we will study the murals in the city to write about topics such as national identity, cultural legacies, a barrio or street’s official and unofficial image, socioeconomic marginalization, gender politics, and other topics. In short, the study of Costa Rican literature will help us to better understand and keep the “text” in a specific public space that is rich in cultural and social practices, deep in history, and thoughtfully situated on the architecture of San Jose.

English 513  (Advanced Creative Writing in Specialized Genres)  
Topic: Poetics of Pilgrimage and Travel

The course explores the relationships between three ancient human practices: the walk, the song, and the story, on the supposition that they inform one another. The course will draw upon our unique opportunities to walk and write in fascinating and astonishing places: the streets and neighborhoods of San Jose, rain forests, cloud forests, volcanic mountain ranges, coffee plantations, and strands where rain forest meets the Pacific. Our course readings, drawn from the literature of walking and traveling poets and writers, will include poetry, fiction, and non-fiction deeply rooted in an experience of bodily motion, including various understandings of pilgrimage, of the connection between song and motion, of the walk as a kind of language, of prose fiction as spread out along the temporality of a walk (as in Flaubert’s idea of the flanuer). Our own creative writing will arise from a dialogue with these sources and from our experience of being at large and afoot, in new places. We’ll begin our inquiry by embarking on the annual pilgrimage from San Jose to Cartago, attending to our experience closely, pausing to write and reflect as we go. Since students will embark on this pilgrimage before their first class meeting, the first round of readings, investigating pilgrimage, will be emailed before we leave the States.

On August 2 Friday
Steve and Juan will organize students, so they can take part in the pilgrimage from San Jose to Cartago. There will be two options: Walking the 13 miles from San Jose to Cartago or taking a bus to Tres Rios and walking 6 miles into Cartago and visiting the basilica of Our Lady of the Angels. Along the way, we will reflect on the pilgrimage in the journals. (8 to 10 hours)

August 9 (Thursday) Field Trip – visit Doka Coffee Estate in the morning and then visit Poas Volcano National Park where we will visit the main crater, then take a walk, observing ecosystem in this wonderful park. We have several opportunities to stop and write and reflect on the area. (8 to 10 hours)

August 15 (Thursday) Field Trip We will visit La Paz Waterfall and garden where we will tour all the sites, find key landmarks and write in our journals. There are several places in the park where
we can write about the animals, birds, and flora. We also plan on taking the walking tour that parallels the rivers and waterfalls; once again, students will be asked to write about these sites. (8 to 10 hours)

**August 21, 22, and 23 (Wednesday through Friday)** Field Trip-Monteverde (Cloud Forest); we will visit Monteverde Cheese factory and then arrive at Hotel Fonda Vela. We will send time writing about the surroundings near the hotel. On Thursday, we will spend most of the day on the hanging bridges or Sky Walk. On Friday, we hope to visit Patricia Jimenez's women's cooperative in Santa Elena. Then we would return to San Jose.

**August 29 (Thursday)** Field Trip We will visit Central Pacific, Jaco Area. We stop to see the American Crocodiles near the Tarcoles River bridge. Near the bridge, we will write about crocodiles and surrounding area. We will then go snorkeling and kayaking and then have lunch. After lunch, we have several writing exercises based on the sea and activities.