COURSE SYLLABUS

ULACIT
LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COSTA RICA

ULACIT – GLOBAL EDUCATION

BUSINESS & MARKETING SUMMER PROGRAM:
Business, Marketing & Innovation for Sustainable & Emerging Markets

Total: 6 US credits / 90 contact hours
Program Length: 6 weeks (Summer Term)
Location: San José, Costa Rica (ULACIT)

Integrated from ULACIT Study Abroad syllabi (core):
BUS 360 – Business Innovation & Lean Startups (45 contact hours / 3 US credits)
BUS 350 – Digital Marketing in Emerging Markets (45 contact hours / 3 US credits)

Complementary sustainability + trade lens
(selected concepts and readings integrated across both modules)
- **CS 430 – Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Business**
- **LAS 360 – Free Trade Agreements in Latin America**

Structure
- **Weeks 1–3: Lean Startup + Innovation Sprint** (BUS 360 backbone)
- **Weeks 4–6: Digital Marketing + Growth + Impact** (BUS 350 backbone)
- **Across Weeks 1–6 (embedded): AI for Sustainability (ESG/SDGs) + Trade/FTA lens** (CS 430 + LAS 360 selected competencies, cases, tools)

Prerequisites: None (Recommended background in business, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, international business, sustainability, communications, or related fields)

AUDIENCE

This Summer program is designed for international study-abroad students and local degree-seeking students in Business Administration, Marketing, Management, Entrepreneurship, International Business / International Relations, Communications / Digital Media (business-facing), Sustainability / Development / Public Policy or related fields.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 6-week Summer Abroad experience immerses students in Costa Rica's innovation and sustainability ecosystem to understand how businesses launch, grow, and market responsibly in emerging markets, while integrating sustainability strategy, ethical digital transformation, and cross-border (trade/FTA) realities.

The program integrates **entrepreneurial innovation, digital marketing execution, responsible use of data and artificial intelligence, and international trade frameworks** to provide a holistic understanding of how organizations compete, grow, and create impact in Latin America.

Building on **Lean Startup and business model innovation principles**, students learn to identify market opportunities, test assumptions, and design value propositions adapted to emerging economies.

These competencies are complemented by selected content from **Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Business (CS 430)**, enabling students to understand how **data analytics, AI-enabled decision-making, and ESG-aligned metrics** support responsible innovation, transparency, and sustainable growth. Students explore how AI tools can inform marketing performance, consumer insights, impact measurement, and strategic decision-making, while critically assessing ethical considerations related to data use, bias, and governance.

Students will:

- Build and iterate a **lean startup concept** using rapid experimentation and customer discovery (BUS 360).
- Design a **data-driven digital marketing campaign** adapted to Latin America and emerging-market dynamics, balancing profitability with responsibility
- Integrate **ESG/SDG frameworks** and **ethical AI** to enhance decision-making, reporting, and responsible innovation.
- Apply a practical **trade + policy lens** to assess how trade agreements, market access, and regulatory conditions shape cross-border strategy and scaling.

Two mandatory field visits and lectures with industry professionals connect classroom learning to real organizations and communities, and feed directly into graded deliverables (field logs, briefs, and capstone strategy).

Lessons are developed Monday through Thursday, providing long weekends preserved for study, travel and leisure. This study abroad program blends academic excellence, hands-on learning, and cultural immersion, giving students a global competitive edge while discovering the Land of Pura Vida.

COMPETENCIES, CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE

Competencies for the ULACIT programs are reflexive and integral actions that respond to the professional profile and to the problems of the context, integrating theory and practice with contextual understanding of disciplinary challenges.

Below are both the disciplinary and general competencies, linked to their criteria and evidence of performance for this course.

Competencies	Key Competences (Criteria for Performance)	Evidence of Learning
1) Design and validate an innovation-driven business model for an emerging-market context.	Apply lean startup logic; define customer problem/segment; develop value proposition and business model; test assumptions with evidence.	Venture Sprint workbook (problem-solution fit); Business Model Canvas; experiment logs; pivot rationale; mini-pitch.
2) Apply digital marketing tools understood as drivers of sustainable growth in Latin America.	Identify emerging-market adoption gaps and cultural dynamics; differentiate ethical vs. extractive strategies; align campaign intent with responsible outcomes.	Diagnostic memo on market context; campaign positioning statement; class debate notes; reflection #1.
3) Build responsible, culturally-sensitive digital campaigns using core channels (SEO, Social, Email, Mobile).	Configure SEO keywords (Spanish/English), develop ethical ad concepts, create inclusive messaging, and apply privacy-aware flows.	Channel toolkit deliverables (SEO sheet, ad mockups, email flow); creative brief; peer review notes.
4) Measure, interpret, and optimize marketing performance using KPIs + sustainability indicators.	Produce dashboards; interpret results; benchmark and propose optimizations; integrate marketing KPIs + impact indicators (incl. efficiency / footprint logic).	KPI dashboard; analytics brief; optimization plan; final defense Q&A.
5) Use AI concepts to strengthen sustainable business decision-making aligned to ESG frameworks.	Use ESG/SDG frameworks (GRI/SASB/SDGs) and basic predictive/insight logic to recommend improvements responsibly.	ESG-AI mini-case analysis; “AI x ESG” insight memo; sustainability-by-design checklist.

Competencies	Key Competences (Criteria for Performance)	Evidence of Learning
6) Reason ethically about technology, marketing, and governance in sustainability contexts.	Identify ethical risks (bias, transparency, governance); propose safeguards; communicate responsible recommendations.	Ethics debate brief; reflection #2; risk-mitigation section in capstone.
7) Apply a trade/FTA lens to cross-border growth strategy in Latin America.	Interpret how trade rules, market access, and policy/regulatory settings shape pricing, sourcing, market entry, and scaling decisions.	Trade lens 1-page brief; market entry constraints/opportunities map; capstone "cross-border & compliance" section.
8) Collaborate effectively in multicultural teams and communicate professionally.	Demonstrate leadership, respectful collaboration, and clear storytelling for mixed audiences (peers + partner organizations).	Peer feedback; team contribution logs; pitch delivery; final report quality.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1 (Weeks 1–2): Costa Rica as a Living Lab – Emerging Markets, Sustainability, and Opportunity Discovery

- Emerging markets & Latin America context; adoption gaps, culture, inclusive growth
- Opportunity discovery: problem framing, customer segments, value proposition
- Sustainability positioning: SDGs in business narratives; responsible innovation framing
- Trade/FTA lens primer: how cross-border conditions shape opportunity spaces

Unit 2 (Weeks 2–3): Lean Startup & Innovation Sprint

- Business model design; assumptions; MVP logic; experiment design
- Customer discovery interviews and iteration cycles
- Pricing/value capture basics + impact-conscious choices
- **Field Visit #1 (mandatory):** Startup / accelerator / innovation hub (data gathering for venture assumptions)

Unit 3 (Weeks 4–5): Digital Marketing for Responsible Growth

- Digital marketing foundations in emerging markets (BUS 350 Unit I)

- Channel toolkit: SEO/SEM, social, email, mobile-first strategy; ethical targeting & transparency
- Creative strategy: inclusive branding, culturally-respectful storytelling
- Trade lens integration: messaging + compliance + claims discipline for cross-border audiences

Unit 4 (Weeks 5–6): Analytics + AI + ESG + Capstone Integration

- Analytics, dashboards, benchmarking, optimization and growth experiments (BUS 350 Unit III)
- ESG frameworks + ethical AI use cases for business performance and reporting (CS 430)
- Governance and responsible innovation: bias/transparency risk awareness (CS 430)
- **Field Visit #2 (mandatory):** Organization applying sustainability strategy and/or export + compliance realities (feeds the capstone strategy)

METHODOLOGY

The program uses a project-based, experiential, and interdisciplinary pedagogy designed to integrate ethical business reasoning, intercultural competence, data-informed decision-making, and sustainability-aligned innovation in emerging market contexts. The learning experience intentionally combines entrepreneurship, digital marketing, responsible use of data and artificial intelligence, and international trade perspectives to reflect the complexity of real-world business environments.

Students prepare for each session through assigned readings, case studies, and multimedia materials, enabling class time to be dedicated to active problem-solving, applied discussions, workshops, simulations, and collaborative project work. Fieldwork and experiential learning activities are central to the program, incorporating Costa Rican business, innovation, sustainability, and market-access realities directly into the academic experience.

The role of the professor is to facilitate, mentor, and guide students throughout their learning process and team-based projects, connecting theoretical frameworks with practical applications and encouraging critical reflection. This student-centered methodology promotes collaborative learning, professional communication, and collective problem-solving, while enabling students to develop practical skills, ethical awareness, and strategic thinking relevant to global business and marketing careers.

FIELDWORK & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COMPONENT

Primary Field Visit (Week 3): Costa Rican Innovation & Business Ecosystem Organization
Students examine:

- real-world **business decision-making** in emerging market contexts
- **data-informed marketing and growth strategies**
- **ethical and sustainability considerations** in business operations and customer engagement
- **organizational challenges**, trade-offs, and strategic responses related to scaling, market access, and competitiveness
- **Evidence:** Field Reflection Report and Integration into Capstone Project

Supplemental Experiential Components (Weeks 1–3)
1. Stakeholder Simulation Panel: Structured interviews and simulated interactions with entrepreneurs, marketing professionals, managers, or ecosystem actors to map:

- business and market constraints
- ethical considerations in marketing and data use
- sustainability and ESG pressures
- trade, regulatory, or scaling challenges

2. Market & Consumer Insight Micro-Interviews
Short, guided interviews designed to identify:

- consumer behavior patterns in emerging markets
- cultural and socio-economic influences on purchasing decisions
- trust, transparency, and sustainability expectations
- barriers to adoption and engagement

3. Opportunity & Problem Landscape Mapping Workshop
A facilitated systems-thinking workshop applying innovation and market analysis tools to:

- map the competitive and stakeholder landscape
- identify value creation and capture opportunities
- surface ethical, sustainability, and policy constraints
- prioritize problems for the team innovation sprint

4. Applied Data & Analytics Exercise Series (Weeks 4–6)
Guided applied labs focused on **business, marketing, and sustainability analytics**, including:

- cleaning and structuring market and campaign datasets
- interpreting digital marketing and customer performance metrics
- analyzing trends related to growth, engagement, and impact
- visualizing data to support strategic decision-making and reporting

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

To guarantee good development of the course, and learning, the following resources are available: an updated bibliographic database, multimedia equipment that students can use for their individual presentations; whiteboards and other school equipment for weekly sessions, and readings provided by the professor. All of these complement the suggested projects and provide the students with higher possibilities of knowledge ownership. Most of the lessons will take place in the classroom. A campus library, study rooms, and computer labs are available for the student's independent work time. Free Wi-Fi connection is available.

LEARNING EVALUATION

Evaluation compiles and assesses evidence throughout the 6-week program according to pre-established criteria and rubrics. Grading aligns with ULACIT's competency-based assessment model and reflects the accelerated nature of the summer term.

The following assessment components integrate the **ethical analysis and global-health inquiry phase (Weeks 1–3)** and the **biomedical data and bioinformatics phase (Weeks 4–6)**.

Assignment	Value
Venture Sprint Portfolio (Lean Startup Evidence Pack)	**2 points**
Digital Campaign Prototype (Channel Toolkit Pack)	**2 points**
Field Visit #1 Reflection Brief (Innovation Ecosystem)	**2 points**
ESG/AI + Trade Lens Applied Brief	**2 points**
Final Capstone: Integrated Growth Strategy + Pitch Day	**2 points**
Total	**10 points**

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RUBRICS

The following learning strategies will be developed:

1) Venture Sprint Portfolio (Lean Startup Evidence Pack) – 2 points

Description: Teams develop a venture concept for an emerging-market opportunity in Costa Rica, documenting the business model, hypotheses, experiments, customer discovery evidence, and iteration logic (pivot/persevere).

Deliverable: Venture Sprint Portfolio (canvas + experiment log + insights + next steps).

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Problem-Solution Fit	Clear, evidence-backed problem and compelling solution	Good clarity; some evidence	Basic fit; limited evidence	Unclear or unsupported
Validation Logic	Strong experiments + learning; clear pivots	Adequate testing; learning present	Minimal testing; weak learning	No testing; assumptions only
Business Model Coherence	Strong alignment across segments/value/revenue	Mostly coherent; minor gaps	Fragmented or incomplete	Incoherent
Professional Quality	Polished, organized, persuasive	Minor weaknesses in structure	Basic formatting; uneven clarity	Disorganized/unclear

2) Digital Campaign Prototype (Channel Toolkit Pack) – 2 points

Description: Students build a responsible digital campaign prototype adapted to emerging-market realities: SEO keyword set (EN/ES), sample ad creatives, social content plan, and an email automation flow emphasizing ethical messaging and transparency.

Deliverable: Campaign Prototype Pack (toolkit bundle).

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Channel Fit & Strategy	Strong channel choices tied to goals and context	Mostly aligned; minor gaps	Generic channel use	Misaligned or missing
Ethical/Inclusive Messaging	Transparent, understood, culturally sensitive	Good tone; small issues	Basic ethics mention	Risky/insensitive/unclear
Technical Soundness	Correct SEO + coherent flows + usable creatives	Mostly correct; minor errors	Several issues; usable	Not functional/incomplete

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Creativity & Differentiation	Memorable and relevant creative concept	Good creative direction	Basic concept	Weak/derivative

3) Field Visit #1 Reflection Brief (Innovation Ecosystem) – 2 points

Description: Individual brief connecting field observations to course frameworks: customer discovery, validation logic, partnerships, and local constraints/opportunities.

Deliverable: 2–3 page reflection brief + observation log.

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Observation Quality	Specific, insightful, well-documented	Clear observations	General observations	Vague or minimal
Framework Integration	Strong linkage to lean innovation tools	Good linkage	Limited linkage	No linkage
Critical Thinking	Original insights + implications	Some analysis	Mostly descriptive	Superficial
Writing & Structure	Clear, professional, well organized	Minor issues	Basic clarity	Disorganized

4) ESG/AI + Trade Lens Applied Brief – 2 points

Description: Students produce a concise applied brief showing (a) how ESG/SDG logic and ethical AI could improve decision-making or reporting and (b) how trade/FTA/regulatory realities shape go-to-market or scaling.

Deliverable: 1–2 page applied brief + simple risk/mitigation checklist.

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
ESG/SDG Reasoning	Accurate + strategic + actionable	Mostly accurate	Basic mention	Incorrect/absent
Ethical/AI Reasoning	Clear risks + governance logic	Some risks identified	Minimal ethics	Missing/unsafe
Trade/Policy Lens	Strong application to decisions	Partial application	Generic mention	Missing/incorrect

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Actionability	Concrete recommendations	Mostly practical	Vague recommendations	Not actionable

5) Final Capstone: Integrated Growth Strategy + Pitch Day – 2 points

Description: understood as a consulting-style final: teams deliver an integrated plan combining lean model, digital campaign, analytics KPIs, ESG/SDG + ethical AI considerations, and trade/market-entry constraints/opportunities. BUS 350 emphasizes SDG-aligned, data-driven strategies for SMEs.

Deliverables: Final written report + pitch presentation.

Criterion	Excellent	Very Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Strategic Integration	All elements align coherently	Mostly aligned	Some disconnects	Fragmented
Evidence & Analytics	KPIs + logic + benchmarks support choices	Adequate support	Limited evidence	Unsupported
Sustainability & Ethics	Strong ESG/SDG + ethical safeguards	Good inclusion	Minimal inclusion	Absent
Communication & Pitch	Persuasive, clear, professional	Clear; minor issues	Basic delivery	Unclear/disorganized

ATTENDANCE

Regarding classes:

1. Students are allowed **2 absences.** From 3 absences onwards it **is a fail of the course.** *Note that a minimum of 80% attendance is necessary to pass each course.*
2. Attendance is registered by the professor. The administration does not control attendance.
3. Three **late arrivals** to class (arrival after the first 15 minutes) are treated as one absence. Attending class 30 minutes late without an official justification will also be considered as absence.
4. Students will have a 0/ F on any assignment assessed in class (presentations, evaluations, field trips, etc.) if they are absent unless the student presents an **official document** no later than one week after the absence.

5. As per official document, only **local** doctors' notes, transport delays/ cancellations or similar notifications provided by transport companies are valid.
6. If a student presents an official document to excuse the absence, the missed assignment will be presented on that same day.

Regarding Lab or field trips –which are mandatory, as part of the course contact hours:

1. An unjustified **absence on a field trip** will immediately result in losing all points assigned to that specific trip. However, if an official document justifying the absence is presented, 50% of the assignment points may be obtained upon presentation of a complementary research assignment, to be agreed upon with the professor, within one week of the field trip.

2. An absence on a field trip may be justified should two-course field trips coincide. In such a case, and to avoid losing points, students shall be able to opt for carrying out a research assignment. As a reminder, make sure to check the schedule of your courses' field trips at the beginning of the trimester, and avoid any excursions clash.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Professors have the right to expel a student from the classroom should he / she/ they:

1. Be disruptive in the classroom.
2. Behave in a disrespectful way.
3. Be under the influence of alcohol.
4. Be under the influence of any illegal drug.
5. Shows hygiene or odor problems that may disturb other students.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of cell phones, smartphones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive and is therefore prohibited during class. **Please turn all devices OFF and put them away** when class begins. Devices may be used only when the professor assigns a specific activity and allows the use of devices for internet search or recording. Those who fail to comply with the rule must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Using devices while the professor or other peers are lecturing, or presenting is perceived as a lack of interest and disrespectful.

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM POLICIES

The student must comply with the provisions of the Study Abroad Program Policies available on the platform.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Selected Bibliography (Only from Reference Syllabi)

Digital Marketing in Emerging Markets

1. Rosário, A. T., & Dias, M. (2025). *The Role of Digital Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: A Scopus-Based Review.* Sustainability, 17(17), 7784. https://doi.org/10.3390/su17177784
2. White, K. (2025). The past, present, and future of sustainability marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, – (forthcoming).
3. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296324005605
4. Kumar, S., et al. (2025). Smart, sustainable, and green: The digital transformation of green-marketing. *Sustainable Marketing Journal* (or substitute name) / Springer. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43621-025-01242-5

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Business

1. Jungwirth, D., & Haluza, D. (2023). Artificial intelligence and the Sustainable Development Goals: An exploratory study in the context of the society domain. *Journal of Software Engineering and Applications, 16*(4), 131–149. https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=124905
2. Raihan, A., Paul, A., Rahman, S., Islam, S., Paul, P., & Karmakar, S. (2024). Artificial intelligence (AI) for environmental sustainability: A concise review of technology innovations in energy, transportation, biodiversity, and water management. *Journal of Technology Innovations in Engineering, 3*(2), 64–73. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383155734_Artificial_Intelligence_AI_for_Environmental_Sustainability_A_Concise_Review_of_Technology_Innovations_in_Energy_Transportation_Biodiversity_and_Water_Management
3. Ozili, P. K. (2025). *Artificial intelligence and the Sustainable Development Goals: AI applications for each SDG. SSRN Electronic Journal.* https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5271772

CHRONOGRAM

Week	Topic / Lesson	Contents (Unit Association)	Evidence of Learning	Key Readings
1	Emerging Markets & Opportunity Discovery	**Unit 1:** Emerging markets in Latin America; sustainability positioning; SDGs in business narratives; trade/FTA primer; Lean Startup foundations; stakeholder & ecosystem mapping workshop.	Opportunity Landscape Map; SDG Alignment Worksheet; Reflection #1 (Market Context & Ethics).	Rosário & Dias (2025); White (2025); Jungwirth & Haluza (2023).
2	Lean Startup & Business Model Design	**Unit 1–2:** Business Model Canvas; hypothesis design; customer discovery; MVP logic; pricing/value capture; ethical data collection; trade constraints in market entry.	Business Model Canvas (v1); Experiment Design Log; Interview Guide; Trade Opportunity/Constraint Map.	Kumar et al. (2025); Jungwirth & Haluza (2023); Ozili (2025).
3	Validation, Innovation Ecosystem & Field Visit #1	**Unit 2:** Customer interviews; experiment iteration; pivot vs persevere; scaling realities in emerging markets; ecosystem partnerships; ethical scaling risks. **Field Visit #1 (Innovation Hub/Startup).**	Venture Sprint Portfolio (Lean Evidence Pack); Field Visit #1 Reflection Brief; Mini-Pitch Presentation.	Rosário & Dias (2025); Raihan et al. (2024).
4	Digital Marketing Strategy in Emerging Markets	**Unit 3:** Digital adoption gaps; channel strategy (SEO, Social, Email, Mobile); inclusive & ethical messaging; green marketing vs greenwashing; AI for customer insight (intro).	Market Diagnostic Memo; Campaign Positioning Statement; SEO Keyword Sheet (EN/ES); Creative Concept Draft.	White (2025); Kumar et al. (2025); Rosário & Dias (2025).
5	Analytics, ESG Integration & Field Visit #2	**Unit 3–4:** KPI design; dashboards; benchmarking; growth optimization; ESG/SDG frameworks	KPI Dashboard Draft; ESG/AI + Trade Lens Applied Brief; Risk-	Jungwirth & Haluza (2023); Raihan et al.

Week	Topic / Lesson	Contents (Unit Association)	Evidence of Learning	Key Readings
		(GRI/SASB/SDGs); ethical AI in reporting; trade/FTA compliance in claims. **Field Visit #2 (Sustainability / Export Organization).**	Mitigation Checklist; Field Notes Log.	(2024); Ozili (2025).
6	Capstone Integration & Growth Strategy Defense	**Unit 4:** Integrated growth strategy; cross-border scaling; sustainability-by-design refinement; AI-informed decision logic; governance & bias safeguards; professional pitch workshop.	Final Capstone Report; Integrated Growth Strategy; Pitch Day Presentation; Team Contribution Log.	White (2025); Ozili (2025); Rosário & Dias (2025).

Please note that this chronogram is tentative and subject to change.