

GEOGRAPHY 4720/6720 (83-474)
Geographies of Latin America and the Caribbean
FALL SEMESTER 2008

A hard copy of the syllabus is provided the first day of class to every student. Remember that “the Syllabus is the general plan of the course; deviations announced by the instructor in class may be necessary”. Students are encouraged to refer to the syllabus regularly. Further reference can be seen either at the course WebCT site, the instructor’s teaching page website or the Departmental homepage for syllabi.

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Class times: M-W-F 9:05am-9:55am. Room 200D GG Bldg 1002
Office Hours: M-W-F 2:30pm-3:30pm (or by appointment)

GENERAL INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course engages students in geographical literacy of Latin America and the Caribbean, developing their understanding of environmental complexities of regional systems, particularly related to the role of history and socioeconomics on landscape interactions that have modified culture sustaining countries’ institutional governance that determined unique developmental trends. Regional geographies will be stressed with the use of *aide memoire*, such as exploration bits, language and cultural insights.

This course will explore geocological principles in today’s cultural landscapes, analyzing the underlying factors of environmental sustainability and forecasting its likelihood of success. Current debates on development models associated with conservation of bio- and cultural diversity, as well as with economic/ecological imperatives for current global trends, will be held as professional training. As geographic instruction, the fate of Latin American nations will be untangled from the scientific interpretation of balanced, documented discussions to investigate the drivers of global and regional change that foster both USA and Latin America well-being and/or hemispheric degradation. Graduate students will develop their research skills as well as their coordination and moderation abilities by introducing discussions, moderating debates, presenting speakers, preparing a paper or organizing a conference-type final .

TEXTBOOKS REQUIRED

Students are expected to procure the textbooks and other reading materials as soon as possible, during the first week of classes. Willful failure to have the textbooks may result in adverse effects on the student’s grades or continued enrollment.

- **Kent, Robert B.** 2006. *Latin America: Regions and People*. The Guilford Press. New York. 422 pp. ISBN 1-57230-909-1
- **Helferich, Gerard.** 2005. *Humboldt’s Cosmos: Alexander Von Humboldt and the Latin American Journey that Changed the Way we See the World*. Gotham Books-Penguin Group. New York. 360pp. ISBN 1-592-40052-3
- **De Grave, Analisa. Eva Santos-Phillips and Jeff DeGrave.** 2007. *Taking Sides: Clashing views on Latin American Issues*. McGraw Hill. Dubuque, Iowa. 380 pp. ISBN: 1932-9296

Graduate Students Readings: *Bulletin of Latin American Research. Journal of Latin American Studies. Inter American Development Bank Reports. Organization of American States Reports. Council of Hemispheric Affairs. Latino watch. GeoTropics.*

COMMUNICATING

I encourage my students to communicate **through WebCT** via e-mail. The University of Georgia requires each student to have a UGA e-mail account (a *login* name followed by *@uga.edu*). Use this address to communicate for all course-related matters **within WebCT**. Non-UGA addresses are not acceptable. It is the student’s responsibility to check their mailboxes regularly, to keep them clear so as to avoid being over their memory quota, and to address any other e-mail account problems promptly. Assignments that are missed because of delivery errors due to an incorrect e-mail address furnished, or to the account being over quota, are forfeited and graded zero.

The **WebCT will house** the syllabus, handouts, presentations or PDFs for reading assignments, homework, and other relevant information that will be posted. A course discussion list will be enabled so everyone is kept abreast of any advance in the class and students chats and questioning. Communication within WebCT is one click away.

GRADING POLICY AND EXAMS

I grade all assigned coursework on the basis of 100. Calculated grades are computed to the nearest hundredth of a point (.01), except for the grade to the entire course, which is rounded to the nearest whole number. If a grade computes for example to 89.4, it will be rounded down to 89/100 and reported as a “B”; if it computes to 89.5, it will be rounded up to 90/100 and reported as an “A”. Unless a factual error of computing can be demonstrated, I do not change a grade once it has been assigned. Interim grade reports: from time to time during the semester, I release an interim grade report to each student via email. This is only an indication of how the student is performing at that particular point. It does not in any way constitute on my part a promise, much less a guarantee, that the grade for the course will be the same, or even comparable.

FINAL GRADE	LETTER GRADE
100 - 96	A (4.0)
95 - 90	A- (3.7)
89-86	B+ (3.3)
85-83	B (3.0)
82-80	B- (2.7)
79-76	C+ (2.3)
75-73	C (2.0)
72-70	C- (1.7)
69-60	D (1.0)
< 60	F (0.0)

Grades in the course will be assessed by combining periodic quizzes, midterm and final exams, writing assignments, and class participation and attendance, as follows:

Periodic quizzes	20%
Individual exposé	5%
Midterm exam	20%
Final group conference	20%
Debate as clashing views.....	10%
Publishable manuscript as final	20%
Participation and attendance	5%
TOTAL	100%

Periodic quizzes (20%): There will be four quizzes. These are short tests that will gauge progress in specific topics. They will be given during class period some Fridays and will consist of objective (either multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill in questions. No make-up quizzes will be given for any reason.

Midterm exam (20%): A comprehensive halfway evaluation of the theory presented up to the midpoint of the semester. It will include sections for a take-home, open-book examination, and will allow for essays or short-answers questions. No make up exam will be given for any reason.

Individual exposé (5%): Each student will prepare a 5-minutes presentation to the class about specific geographic trivia on geographers of the region or on famous geographical features. Each student will procure the most information and present to the class as a power point and one page written handout with a mandatory map, a computer graphic (table, diagram or figure) or summary statistics. There shall be copies to give to each student and the professor, so a glossary of Latin American geography can be collated at the end of the course.

Final group conference (20%): A comprehensive professional group presentation about the theory and practice dealt with during the course, about specific topics of choice. Each group should work together as a unit and have responsibilities equally distributed for the preparation and delivery of the Powerpoint presentation in a formal conference (*Geographica Latinamericana*), during the three hours of the final's schedule, to be held at the Tate center, with the presence of other students, Latin Americanist faculty on campus, faculty from the Americas Council of the Board of Regents, family members and guests from the greater Athens community). Mandatory, no make-up possible.

Debate as clashing views (10%): A dialog about a polemic, unresolved issue that advocates (either pro or con) an environmental concern relevant to specific Latin American issues that will influence your future professional field, whether physical, human, nature/society and humans and the environment. Using the textbook to follow the themes and arguments, students will present and lead class discussion of their issue as a group. Each group will be able to develop a technique's output (i.e., cartographic, visualization, modeling, GIS-based mapping) to sustain their argumentation.

Publishable manuscript (20%): A literature review paper will be prepared for submission to geographical journals. Scientific, sound theorizing and research methods expected along with extensive bibliography to produce a literature review-type of manuscript. Outline and 1/2 literature (5%). Final version (15%). See attached Term Paper Requirements, Guidelines, and Expectations sheet for details. Mandatory. No make-up possible.

Participation and attendance (5%): Active participation, students' discussion and class debate is expected, as well as prompt compliance of writing assignments and group presentations. In addition, tests will incorporate questions based on class discussion and debate, not only from the textbooks. No make-up possible. However, there will be up to 5 points of possible extra credit for a one-page report about each of extracurricular activities on campus (e.g., the Lusophone Fair, Hispanic Heritage Month, LACSI and CLASE guest speaker series) available at the campus calendar database and as announced by the instructor the previous class period.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students must know how to draw a map of the region, listing its countries, capitals and few important geographical features, as a requisite to having a passing grade. Memorize the area well and comprehend the physical/cultural attributes so you can map them correctly.

Every day the class is held it is mandatory to be punctually present. Habitual tardiness (more than 10 minutes late) will have negative effects on the grade.

No unexcused absences will be allowed: missing a significant announcement in class, or failing to turn-in a written assignment because of an unexcused absence may have adverse consequences to the grade.

No late work will be accepted under any circumstances. Late work is graded zero and no make-ups will be allowed. However, works turned in before the deadline will be received and graded. Up to one point extra credit for alacrity will be available.

Exception: If the student is able to document within a reasonable time (one week before or after the fact) that forced circumstances beyond his/her control prevented him/her from submitting the assigned work on the specific date, the late work could be accepted and the grade granted.

Excusable absence. Being in class is your first and foremost responsibility. If an absence occurs it will be exceptionally and only due to circumstances beyond student's control. A request for excuse must be presented to the instructor ahead of time. As the course instructor, I am the only one who decides whether an absence is excusable or not. I reserve the right to request proper documentation from an authorized source (i.e., parents, employers, health-care providers):

missing class for "personal reasons" can never constitute an excuse.

Examples of excusable absences include but are not restricted to:

- **Personal emergency:** serious illness (requiring bed confinement or hospital stay) or accident. Doctor's note, Emergency Hospital Report or any other formal documentation must be furnished.
- **Family emergency:** death, serious illness, or accident affecting a parent, sibling, or close relative. A letter from parents describing the need of absence must be filed as documentation for the emergency.
- **Civic duty:** having to appear in court in any official capacity, such as being summoned as juror for institutional legal jury. Documentation describing the event must be furnished.
- **Military duty:** having to appear in the base to fulfill a military obligation. Letter for the call of duty must be shown.
- **Academic duty:** having to appear in classroom or sport arenas representing UGA or to attend a University-sponsored activity that bears directly on the student's core enrollment, such as athletic, band or similar meet directly related to scholarship or financial aid. A note from supervisor, coordinator or faculty in charge must be provided
- **Religious duty:** observing religious holidays, which are officially announced by the University. Documentation of church affiliation and letter from the church superior explaining the mandatory observance must be provided.
- **Important family event,** such as funerals or weddings of a parent, sibling, or close relative, in which the student's attendance is expected. Written explanation from the organizer should be furnished.
- **Having to be away on business** that affects directly the student's livelihood or continuing enrollment to the University. Documentation from the Psychology Clinic or the Bursar Office must be provided.

Whether documented or not, activities that are not directly University-sponsored or mandated by employment, or other compelling need as stated above, do not qualify for excusing an absence. Too many absences (how many is the instructor decision to make), even if excused, will affect the

participation grade. A student who has not attended at least 75% of the classes, regardless of the reason for absence, will not be permitted to take the final examination.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

Make every effort to arrive punctually and remain seated and attentive until class periods are completed and the class is dismissed. Please respect the rights of fellow students by not talking to neighbors during class periods. Students are responsible for conduct themselves according to the policies outlined in the *Scholastic Dishonesty Code*. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, lying, tampering, bribery, copying others' tests, theft or sabotaging others work, shall not be tolerated.

For further details, please visit the Office of Vice President for Instruction webpage:

http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture-honesty.htm

The instructor prosecutes all instances of academic dishonesty.

Classroom etiquette: Respect to others in the classroom environment entails that:

- Pagers, mobile phones, walky-talkies or any other remote device, including laptop computers and voice/video recorders, *shall remain turned off*. No text messaging is allowed in class.
- Mutilating or defacing University-own furniture or equipment is a serious offense. If witnessed, *it shall be reported* to the University law enforcement authorities.
- Feet must be kept off tables or chair seats, out of respect for other users. Similarly, hats, caps, sunglasses or any other *distractive attire must be avoided*.
- Neither *food nor drinks will be allowed* during the class period. It is compulsory to read only subject related materials. Newspapers, other textbooks or alternate course assignments from other classes *shall not be tolerated*.
- All relating and communicating *must be conducted with courtesy and civility*. Rude, insulting or threatening speech or behavior, whether directed at another student or at the instructor, is totally unacceptable and *shall be properly reported*.
- Students should stand up and leave only after the Instructor has dismissed the class period at the end. Early departure *will adversely affect* the student grade.