

# Latin America

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Latin America** (GEOG 322) is a systematic analysis of landscapes and social relations in Middle and South America, including the Caribbean. Within the regional perspective several themes are highlighted: economic conditions, political processes; national, ethnic, and racial identities; cultural stability and transformation; environmental change; migration. Basic knowledge of Middle and South America will be helpful in understanding the United States' connections to the region.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Robert N. Gwynne and Cristòbal Kay (2004) *Latin America Transformed: Globalization and Modernity* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Arnold.

Brian W. Blouet and Olwyn Blouet. 2005. *Latin American and the Caribbean: A Systematic and Regional Survey* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Edward Jackiewicz. *Geography 322 Reader*.

## **REQUIRED MATERIAL**

A portable calculator  
A ruler

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will demonstrate awareness of key physical dimensions of Middle and South America and its subregions, including landforms and climates. Students will also demonstrate knowledge of major historical dimensions of the region

and significant contemporary social and cultural dimensions, such as gender relations, ethnic relations, political structures, and economic conditions.

My aim is for this class to be an engaging and productive experience for every student. Please see me if problems arise that may affect your attendance and grades. Also, please see me if any issues develop with the course that may affect your performance or motivation.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

There are three main elements of the course:

- **Lectures.** Lectures are based on the textbooks and are designed to reinforce, clarify, and enhance the readings.
- **Assignments.** Assignments are designed to give students additional perspectives on geographic themes discussed in the textbook and lectures. Assignments usually are presentations of nonacademic material, such newspaper stories, magazine articles, and video documentaries of physical processes or cultural phenomenon.
- **Student Presentations.** Each student will give one ten minute presentation based on newspaper articles, magazine articles, or books. Students will have wide latitude in choosing topics for presentations, however they must be directly related to the topics and themes discussed in the book. A focus on current events is encouraged.

The assignments and presentations are important dimensions of the class. However, the final grades for the course will largely be determined by the scores on the quizzes, the midterm, and the final exam and all three will be based primarily on information in the textbook. It is essential that you read and study the textbook. It will be impossible to pass the class with failing grades on the quizzes and exams.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Academic Integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism are extremely serious offenses and will be dealt with accordingly. Any incident of cheating or plagiarism is grounds for administrative action in accordance with university rules and may result in failing the course. If you are having trouble maintaining a satisfactory grade in the class, please contact me to discuss how I can be of help in improving your study skills.

### **Attendance & Tardiness**

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Coming to class late or leaving class early are disruptive to the teaching and learning processes and will be recorded as absences if they are patterns of behavior. Being in class entails more than just a physical presence, it also means being involved through active

processes, such as responding to questions from the instructor and less active processes, such as listening and note taking. Sleeping in class, students talking among themselves inappropriately, such as during lectures, and other disruptive activities will count as absences. There will not be opportunities to make up quizzes, exams, presentations, or assignments.

### **Drop Deadline**

Please be aware of official deadlines for withdrawing. If you find for any reason that you cannot successfully complete this class, it might be better to withdraw, rather than have a failing grade on your record. Keep track of your scores and evaluate your overall grade after the midterm. I recommend that students who have a D or F average for the quizzes and a D or F on the midterm, officially withdraw soon after the midterm and redirect their time and energy to other classes they have a better chance of passing. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from the class.

### **Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete grades (I) are not granted. Students are expected to complete the coursework in the required time frame stipulated by the course syllabus. In extraordinary cases, the instructor may consider granting an "I," but only in cases where most of the work for the course has been successfully completed and there are mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control.

### **Prerequisites**

The only official prerequisite for this class is the successful completion of a lower-division writing class.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

In order for this class to be a success every participant must make a commitment to maintaining a productive learning environment. Every student must make a commitment to participation by giving their full attention for the entire time the class is in session every time it meets.

- Being in class entails more than just a physical presence, it also involves practices, such as listening carefully and taking notes.
- Participation also includes more active processes, such as responding to questions from the instructor and asking questions.
- Coming to class late and leaving class early are disruptive to the teaching and learning processes and will negatively impact the grade for participation if the instructor notices that they are patterns of behavior.
- Sleeping in class, students talking among themselves inappropriately, such as during lectures and assignments are not only examples of failure to participate they are distracting and disruptive. **Students engaging in distracting and disruptive behavior will be asked to leave and their participation grade will be adjusted downward.**
- Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. The participation grade of a student whose phone is on during class will be negatively impacted.
- **Do not miss exams!** There will not be opportunities to make up quizzes, exams, presentations, or assignments.

- I encourage student participation in the form of questions and comments. I also encourage students to raise questions and comments with each other. Please be civil and respectful in all of your verbal and written interactions.

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Always come to class prepared. Preparedness involves having done the readings assigned for that day. Keeping up with readings, attending class, and giving every class session you attend your full attention are the best strategies for doing well. Below are some specific and general suggestions for doing well in college.

- Be sure you have the contact information of several students taking the class. If you miss class be sure to copy another student's notes. Do not email or ask instructors to review a lecture that you missed. Instructors are willing to be of help to students and students should never hesitate to approach instructors with specific questions and issues, but instructors are very busy people. We cannot review lectures for individual students. If you do miss a lecture, get the notes from another student and study the material in the book extra carefully. If you miss an assignment, copy another student's.
- This class will require that you process a large amount of information. Studying in groups has proven to be a successful strategy.
- **In order to pass this class you will have to read and study the textbooks.** If you have trouble reading and retaining information be sure to seek out the help of the services offered to students by the university.
- **Your grade will largely be determined by your scores on the quizzes, the midterm, and the final exam. The other grading elements are important, but success in them alone cannot overcome failing grades on the quizzes, midterms, and exams.**
- Always bring the textbooks to class.

## GRADING

The grading formula for this class is:

Quizzes	20%
Assignments	10%
Student Presentations	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Participation	10%
Total	100%

The final grades will be determined by the addition of the following numbers for each student:

- The average of the quizzes multiplied by .20
- The score of the presentation multiplied by .10
- The average score of the assignments multiplied by .10
- The score of the midterm multiplied by .25
- The score of the final multiplied by .25
- The participation grade multiplied by .10

### **Grading Scale**

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

### **GRADING/ LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESMENT ELEMENTS**

#### **Quizzes**

Quizzes are worth 20% of the final grade. Quizzes are given at the end of one theme or subregion and before the beginning of the next theme or subregion. Quizzes are given at the beginning of class. Failure to take a quiz on its scheduled date and time will result in a grade of zero for that quiz. Respect everyone's right to a quiet testing environment. Talking during a quiz or using a cell phone or other electronic device even by a person who has finished his or her own quiz, may result in a zero for that quiz. ***Do not miss quizzes!*** There will not be opportunities to make up quizzes, exams, presentations, or assignments.

#### **Presentations**

Presentations are worth 10% of the final grade. Each student must do one ten minute presentation on a current event in Latin America. Presentations can be based on newspaper articles, academic journals, news magazines, or books. It is not acceptable to simply read an article or newspaper story. Rather, a synopsis should be given and the information should be put in the context of the processes and themes discussed in the textbooks and the lectures. After the presentation other students and the instructor will have the opportunity to ask questions. The web site for the class has links to online news sources. A library tour will take place early in the semester. The quality of each student's presentation will be evaluated and graded by the instructor with input from the entire class. Students that do not give a presentation will receive an F for the class. An additional presentation may be done for extra credit. A high quality extra credit presentation will result in 2 points being added to a student's total score for the class.

### **Assignments**

Assignments are worth 10% of the final grade. Most of the assignments will consist of written responses and discussions of non-textbook material provided by the instructors, such as newspaper accounts of current events or excerpts of documentary films.

### **Class Participation**

Class participation is worth 10% of the final grade. The frequency and quality of students' contributions to the classroom environment will be evaluated and graded by the instructor. Examples of positive participation, include asking relevant questions, sharing personal experiences, and providing commentary on current events. Positive participation contributes to thinking complexly about places and provides opportunities for constructive dialogue that facilitates learning. Positive participation also includes contributing to a productive classroom environment by refraining from disruptive practices. Disruptive practices will be considered negative participation and will result in the withholding or the loss of participation points. Students talking among themselves is the most common reason that people do not earn participation points. Other practices that detract from participation include sleeping in class, using cell phones and other electronic devices, and any other behavior that is distracting or shows a lack of attention.

### **Exams**

There are two exams -- a midterm and a final. The exams are worth 50% of the final grade. There are no make up exams. Failure to take an exam on its scheduled date and time will result in a grade of zero for that exam. Respect everyone's right to a quiet testing environment. Talking during a quiz or using a cell phone or other electronic device even by a person who has finished his or her own exam, may result in a zero for that exam. ***Do not miss exams!*** There will not be opportunities to make up quizzes, exams, presentations, or assignments. Students who fail to take the midterm or the final will receive a grade of F for the class.

### **GENERAL EDUCATION**

**Latin America** is an upper division social science general education class. The General Education Student Learning Outcomes for this class are:

1. Apply social science methods to identify and examine diverse perspectives;
2. Critically analyze and explain the multiple social science perspectives that underlie debates on important contemporary issues;
3. Apply social science methods to analyze, evaluate, explain, and/or solve problems.

**Latin America** addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes for Natural Sciences:

1. identify and explain basic facts, rules, principles, and laws in the biological and physical sciences;
2. explain how the methods of scientific inquiry are used to obtain new scientific data and to advance the current level of knowledge;
3. recognize the assumptions and limitations of science;
4. recognize the role of science in human society and how scientific achievements affect everyday life.

**Latin America** addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes for Applied Arts and Sciences:

1. identify and apply behaviors leading to individual well-being and development;
2. identify and apply factors leading to community well-being and development;
3. describe the roles of science and technology, and apply them in daily life situations at the individual and/or community levels.

**Latin America** addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes for Comparative Cultural Studies:

1. describe and compare different cultures;
2. explain how different cultures have contributed to the development of today's world;
3. describe and explain how race, class, and/or gender shape experiences and relations;
4. define racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and/or stereotyping and explain their deleterious impact.

**Latin America** addresses the following Information Competence Skills Student Learning Outcomes for all General Education Sections

1. recognize and define information needs;
2. demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information;
3. locate and retrieve relevant information;
4. evaluate and organize the information for use;
5. create and communicate information effectively;
6. explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information;
7. describe points of view and practices employed in presentation of information from all sources.

## **CLASS OUTLINE AND READINGS**

### **Week 1 -- February 1 & 3**

T. Introduction and Class Overview

Assignment 1: Introduction

Assignment 2: Course web site

TH. Physical Environments

Read *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Systematic and Regional Survey* (LAATC), pp. 13-50.

Assignment 3: Blank outline maps

### **Week 2 -- February 8 & 10**

T. Physical Environments

Assignment 4: Library Resources

TH. Physical Environments

Assignment 5: Map Reading & Interpretation

### **Week 3 -- February 15 & 17**

T. Historical Geography- The Peopling of the Americas

Read LAATC, pp. 51- 63.

Assignment 5: Human Journeys

Quiz 1

TH. Historical Geography - The Peopling of the Americas

**Week 4 -- February 22 & 24**

T. Historical Geography - Encounter, Conquest, and Resistance

Read LAATC, pp. 63- 76.

TH. Historical Geography - Colonialism and The Age of Revolution

Read LAATC, pp. 76 – 96.

**Week 5 -- March 1 & 3**

T. Latin America and Globalization

Read LAATC, pp. 97-126.

Quiz 2

TH. Latin America and Globalization

Read *Latin America Transformed: Globalization and Modernity* (LATGAM), pp. 22 – 38.

**Week 6 -- March 8 & 10**

T. Population Growth, Distribution, and Migration

Read LAC, pp. 127- 160.

Quiz 3

TH. Population Growth, Distribution, and Migration

Assignment: 6: Population Dynamics in Middle and South America

**Week 7 – March 15 & 17**

T. The Latin American City

Read LATGAM, pp. 93-116 and pp. 210 – 231.

Assignment: 7: Mexico City

TH. **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 8 – March 22 & 24**

T. **SPRING RECESS**

TH. **SPRING RECESS**

**Week 9 – March 29 & 31**

T. Mexico

Read LAC, pp. 235- 268.

TH. Holiday: Cesar Chavez

**Week 10 – April 5 & 7**

T. Mexico

Read *Traversing the Mexican Odyssey: Reflections on Political Change and the Study of Mexican Politics* by Mark Eric Williams in *Mexican Studies* Winter 2002. Available online through CSUN Library's EBSCOhost Research Database.

TH. Mexico

Read LATGAM, pp. 3 – 21.

**Week 11 – April 12 & 14**

T. Mexico

Assignment 8: Mexican Indigenous People and Globalization

TH. Central America

Read LAATC, pp. 269 – 309.

Quiz 4

**Week 12 -- April 19 & 21**

T. Central America

Read LATGAM, pp. 67 –92.

TH. Brazil

Read LAATC, pp. 401 – 458.

Quiz 5

**Week 13 -- April 26 & 28**

T. Brazil

Read LATGAM, pp. 157 – 170.

TH. Brazil

Read LATGAM, pp. 232 – 250.

**Week 14 – May 3 & 5**

T. Andean America

Read LAATC, pp. 367-399.

Quiz 6

TH. Andean America

Read LATGAM, pp. 193 – 209.

**Week 15 – May 10 & 12**

T. The Southern Cone

Read LAC, pp. 459 – 504.

Assignment 9: Civil Society and the Economic Crisis in Argentina

Quiz 7

TH. The Southern Cone

Read LATGAM, pp. 117 –138.

**Week 16 – May 17 & 19**

T. The Caribbean

Read LAATC Chapter 10, pp. 311-366.

Assignment 10: Religious Syncretism in Haiti

TH. The Caribbean

Quiz 8

**Week 17 – May 26**

TH. Final Exam

10:15 – 12:15 PM