

GEOGRAPHY OF LATIN AMERICA  
GEOG 360U

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MWF 10:15-11:20  
Rm 418 CH  
Winter 2008  
4 credits

Office Hours: 11:30-1:00 Monday and Wednesday, and by appointment

This class will cover the main aspects of Latin American geography (physical features, pre-historic and historic origins of the cultural landscape, population characteristics, settlement and urbanization, spatial aspects of the modern economy, contemporary factors affecting people and places, and regional and global integration). Because it is an introduction to the region, the class will cover a lot of topics with a broad brush stroke, then fill in some of the detail regarding contemporary issues facing the region. The purpose of the class is to enhance your understanding of the natural, historical, and social underpinnings of Latin America; the driving forces affecting its transformation in the modern era; and its place in the global system of nations.

The course is part of the Latin American Studies Cluster for junior-senior classes in University Studies. The course primarily addresses the ‘*variety of human experience*’ goal of University Studies: “[To] enhance... appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, [and] gender...” We will also touch on ‘*ethical issues and social responsibility*’ (“...expand...understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially...”) and ‘*communication*’ (“...enhance ...capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies”).

TEXT: Clawson, David. 2006. *Latin America and the Caribbean: Lands and Peoples*. McGraw Hill.  
(Copies will be on reserve in the library.)

WEB PAGE FOR CLASS WITH KEY WORD LISTS: <http://web.pdx.edu/~mworks/index.html> (my home page, then follow links to GEOG 360U)

Course objectives:

There will be 3 exams during the course and 1 project (see lecture and class schedule for dates). Exams will consist of multiple choice questions, map locations, and short answer essay questions. Make-up exams will be given prior to the scheduled exam time only in the case of documented and reasonable conflicts, or after the exam time only in the case of documented emergencies.

GRADES:	3 exams at 100 points each	=	300 points
	Research project	=	100 points
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TOTAL POINTS		=	400

Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of total possible points.

**Policy on incompletes:** University policy now stipulates that I grades convert to F after 1 year. Check the PSU web page: [http://www.pdx.edu/media/r/e/reg\\_I\\_to\\_F\\_students.pdf](http://www.pdx.edu/media/r/e/reg_I_to_F_students.pdf) or see me for more information.

**PLEASE NOTE: Put GEOG360 in the subject header of any e-mails you send to me.**

Assignment: **Research Project: Sustainable Latin America**

The research project for this class revolves around the concept of ‘sustainability’, broadly interpreted: ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, 1987)). You can choose a topic related to social, economic, and/or environmental sustainability. It can be a contemporary topic (such as: Biofuels in Bahia, Brazil) or something more historic (environmental impacts and legacies of colonial mining). You can choose a topic that involves social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (such as the cut flower industry in Colombia and Ecuador), or something more centrally connected to social sustainability (the role of civil society and civic movements in addressing housing concerns in large Latin American cities). In whatever topic you decide on it must clearly relate to ‘sustainable’ (or conversely a critique of ‘unsustainable’) systems and it must be clearly related to geographical concerns of **Location, Distribution, and Spatial Variation; Place and Landscape; Spatial Interaction; and Human/Environment Interactions.**

**Location, Distribution, and Spatial Variation:** Where is it located? What historical, cultural or physical factors have affected the location, distribution and spatial variation of phenomena and why?

**Place and Landscape:** What factors have shaped the place or landscape under consideration? What historical, cultural, social, or economic processes distinguish this place from others? How does physical geography shape this place?

**Spatial Interaction:** Movement, migration, communication, trade, all shape spatial networks and patterns of interaction. What processes shaped these patterns?

**Human/Environment Interactions:** How have humans interacted with the physical environment over time and through space to create places and landscapes? Humans interacting with plants, soils, landforms, and resources, through agriculture, industry, cultural activities, trade, and politics have transformed the world. How is this evident in Latin America?

Your paper must include:

- 1) a clear statement of purpose that relates the topic to sustainability
- 2) a clear statement of the central geographical concept(s) you will use to frame your research
- 3) a bibliography with at least 5 sources (No encyclopedias or Wikipedia, use **.com** sources ONLY if directly relevant to your topic, include at least one peer-reviewed/academic source)
- 4) a map that is directly relevant to your topic
- 5) approximately 10 pages of text

Check the Research Paper Guidelines on my web page for more information.

Other possible topics include: conservation/resource management (cultural, biotic, water, soil, minerals); traditional agriculture as sustainable system (chinampas, terracing, raised fields); agroforestry; deforestation/reforestation; tourism/ecotourism; organic agriculture for export (sustainable or unsustainable?); the oil industry in Latin America; island ecosystems; plantation agriculture; the growth of megacities (Mexico City, Sao Paulo) as sustainable systems? and so on....check with me if you have questions or as you think about this.

**A working title for your paper is due at the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> exam on February 22.**

If you need more basic information about spatial and geographical concepts:

Some general web sites on geography include: <http://geography.miningco.com/cs/basics/> and <http://www.colorado.edu/geography/virtdept/resources/contents.htm> (includes list of geography journals).

I will have an introductory human geography textbook (Fellmann, Getis and Getis, *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*) and an introductory physical geography textbook (Oberlander and Muller, *Essentials of Physical Geography Today*) on reserve in the library for you to consult in studying for the exams and for understanding basic concepts in geography as a basis for your research project.

**Policy on Academic Honesty:** Any type of academically and ethically dishonest work (plagiarism, copying someone else's work, etc.) may result in an automatic "F" for the assignment and, when appropriate, a report filed with the Office of Student Affairs. The PSU Bulletin includes the following statement on Academic Honesty: "The Student Conduct Code, which applies to all students, prohibits all forms of academic cheating, fraud, and dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, buying and selling of course assignments and research papers, performing academic assignments including tests and examinations for other persons, unauthorized disclosure and receipt academic information, and other practices commonly understood to be academically dishonest."

Please see the PSU Bulletin or the following web sites for more information:

<http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/>

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>

Classroom expectations: **The class begins at 10:15 am and ends at 11:20.** Please make every reasonable effort to arrive on time and to stay for the entire class. It is a matter of common courtesy to avoid behavior that disrupts the classroom (i.e., cell phones, text messaging, chatting of any kind). I do not take attendance, it is your responsibility to come to class and be an effective participant.

**Requests for Academic Accommodation:** If you are a student with a documented disability and are registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange needed support.

**Lecture, Exam, and Assignment Schedule for GEOG 360U --- Geography of Latin America**

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings in Text:</i>
Jan. 7	Introduction to the class and to the region	Chapter 1: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean
	<b><i>Part I. : The Physical Environment:</i></b>	<b><i>Environmental Issues and Human Environment Interactions</i></b>
Jan. 9	Landforms: Mexico	Chapter 2: Landform Regions
Jan. 11	Landforms: Mexico	
Jan. 14	Landforms: Central America	
Jan. 16	Landforms: South America	
Jan. 18	Landforms: South America	
Jan. 21	No Class – Martin Luther King Day	
Jan. 23	Weather and climate	Chapter 3: Weather and Climate
Jan. 25	Weather and climate	
Jan. 28	Vegetation	Chapter 4: Natural Regions
Jan. 30	<b>1<sup>st</sup> exam: Physical Geography</b>	<b><i>Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4; plus Key Word Lists 1, 2, 3, 4</i></b>
	<b><i>Part II: Cultural Geography</i></b>	
Feb. 1	The Making of a Contemporary Landscape:	Chapter 7: Race, Ethnicity, and Social Class
Feb. 4	Pre-European Cultures and	
Feb. 6	Indigenous Culture History	
Feb. 8	The Conquest Era	Chapter 5: Iberian Heritage, Conquest, and Institutions
Feb. 11	Colonial Culture History	
Feb. 13	Modernity and Independence	
Feb. 15	The Agricultural Landscape	Chapter 10: Agriculture and Agrarian Development
Feb. 18	and Rural Land Use:	Skim: Chapter 9: Religion and
Feb. 20	Social and Environmental Issues	Skim: Chapter 8: Latin America as a Culture Region
Feb. 22	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> exam: Cultural Geography</b>	<b><i>Chapters 5, 7, (8, 9), 10; Plus Key Word Lists 5, (5a), 6, 7</i></b>
	<b>Part III: Latin America Transformed</b>	
Feb. 25	Human Geography: Urbanization	Chapter 12: Urbanization, Population Growth and Migration
Feb. 27	Population Growth	
Feb. 29	Migration	
Mar. 3	Economic Geography: The Modern Economy	Chapter 11: Mining, Manufacturing, and Tourism
Mar. 5	Mining, Manufacturing and Tourism	
Mar. 7	Impacts of Economic Policies	
Mar. 10	Globalization and Regional Integration	Chapter 13: Development and Health
Mar. 12	Latin American Development in Perspective	
Mar. 14	Latin America in the World Economy	
Mar. 19	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> exam: Latin America Transformed</b>	<b><i>Final Exam, Wednesday, 10:15-12:05 Chapters 11, 12, 13; Plus Key Word Lists 8, 9, 10</i></b>