

Introduction to Geography (Spring 2024) GEO 2000

Instructor: Dr. Ricardo M. González

Do we have to decide between the environment and the economy?
What role do I/we play in the health (sustainability) of these systems?
How do my actions affect/impact these systems?

Course Description and Purpose:

Many scientific models predict that the ocean will rise 6 feet by the end of this century, a fact that is constantly repeated by the media. That would mean most of Miami (and South Florida) would be partially underwater in a few decades. What will the path to that time look like? In what year will flooding become excessively difficult to drain? In what year will the sea water infiltrate the drinking water, the foundation of life? These are critical questions that need to be understood for a metropolitan area of 6 million people (and constantly growing): we cannot make long-term financial investments without a clear vision of the area's future.

In this course we will explore the major concepts of Geography that we have introduced in this example of Miami. Each topic that we will cover is one of many areas in this field and we will be synthesizing them to build an understanding of our world. You will be introduced to some tools for geographical exploration that range from searching for information to critically processing it using real-world examples. You will be challenged to critically reflect upon the way human society shapes and is shaped by the physical world using 'real world' case studies.

University Core Curriculum:

This course satisfies the following University Core Curriculum requirement for Social Science Group Two (university-required):

- Students will demonstrate the ability to examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from a variety of points of view.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavioral, social, and cultural issues, past and present, local and global.

It is supported by the following learning outcomes for the course:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the discipline of Geography including key concepts and areas of research, and how to apply them in our daily life for the benefit of the human and ecological systems: Geography is the interactions of humans and the environment.
- To be aware of the effects/impacts of our actions on the Earth systems attuned with principles of sustainability.

- To be more interested and be ready for the many challenges that we face in the 21st century, and be active participants in the solution of these issues.
- Apply our own experience to the field of Geography as a foundation for absorbing and internalizing its content. Understand that we are all born geographers! Moreover, as educated individuals, we need to be keen critics of the information that we receive.

Learning Goals:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the discipline of Geography including key concepts and areas of research, and how to apply them in our daily life for the benefit of the human and ecological systems: Geography is the interactions of humans and the environment.
- Geography is an interdisciplinary (holistic) field and plays a major role in our life (and future career). If it's happening on Earth, its geography!
- Human and ecological systems are intertwined and every action in one system will have an impact on the others. "For every action, there's a reaction..."
- To be aware of the effects/impacts of our actions on the Earth systems attuned with principles of sustainability.
- To be more interested and be ready for the many challenges that we face in the 21st century, and be active participants in the solution of these issues.
- Apply our own experience to the field of Geography as a foundation for absorbing and internalizing its content. Understand that we are all born geographers! Moreover, as educated individuals, we need to be keen critics of the information that we receive.

Textbook

Getis, A, Getis, J. and J. Fellmann. 2009. *Introduction to geography*. 12th edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

[You may use a newer edition of the textbook. Please see note included in the syllabus section, ***Important Note on Written Assignments, Turnitin.com, and Plagiarism*** for important information on the citation of our textbook in all written assignments.]

Academic Integrity Statement, Including the Use of Artificial Intelligence

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#). All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Content generated by an artificial intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible.

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students. When you sign up for this online course you are expected to be sufficiently computer savvy to keep your computer in a condition that can well support the software used in this course. You are responsible for having access to a well-functioning computer. This is of the outmost importance, especially with regards to the online quizzes.

If you are not sufficiently computer savvy to meet these conditions, or do not have access to a good computer, you should reconsider taking an online course. You must take the Syllabus Quiz and the Practice Quiz (the questions have nothing to do with the material taught in this course, and count nothing) to make sure you know how the process works and that your computer is compatible with FIU's CANVAS system. It is also important to note that **students must take and pass with perfect score the Syllabus Quiz in order to get access to the course materials.**

If you have computer problems while trying to submit a written assignment or taking a quiz, you MUST contact FIU Online Support Services IMMEDIATELY by calling FIU Online at (305) 348-3630 or by clicking on the "Technical Support" link in the Course Menu, NOT THE PROFESSOR OR YOUR CLASSMATES. If such issues occur while taking a quiz, you must gather as much evidence of the issue you are confronting (i.e., take pictures) and include it in the message sent to Technical Support, otherwise, unfortunately, we will be unable to provide you with the opportunity to re-take the missing or incomplete assessment.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started Information located in the Course Content.
- Take the Syllabus Quiz on the first week of the term. Students will not be allowed to access the course until they take this quiz and pass it with perfect score.
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week of the term by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum.
- Take the Practice Quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with CANVAS.
- Interact online with the instructor and peers, and keep up with all assignments.
- Review and follow the course calendar.
- Log in to the course at least three times per week.
- Respond to discussion questions and posting within two days.
- Respond to messages within two days.
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course twice per week.
- Respond to discussion questions and journal postings within one week (except on weekends or holidays).
- **Respond to messages within 48-72 hours (except on weekends or holidays).**
- **Grade assignments within two weeks of the assignment deadline unless otherwise noted.**

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the **CANVAS message feature ONLY**. I will respond within 48-72 hours (except on weekends or holidays).

The message feature is a private, internal, CANVAS-only communication system. Users must log on to CANVAS to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in CANVAS to inform users when a new message has been received; therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

In addition, **your professor will post course announcements, alerting students of upcoming deadlines, feedback on assignments, and other important information. Please make sure to read them carefully and get back to your professor immediately if you have any questions or concerns. Please make sure to include detail questions or explain your concerns so your professor is better prepared to answer them on a timely-manner.**

Discussion Forums

What will make this class interactive is everyone's active participation in class discussion. Therefore, a number of forums have been established under "Discussions" tab. There are spaces for you to ask your classmates for help with studying for quizzes, for discussing and posting current events, and navigating the logistics of an online course. While the instructor will monitor the discussion forums and post replies, the answers will be given more quickly and thoroughly if the entire class agrees to communicate with each other. The chat feature is also enabled if anyone wants to communicate with each other in real time. Be courteous and respectful to your peers. Failing that, the instructor reserves the right to remove posts that are aggressive or offensive, and dock participation points from the offender.

Reading Comprehension Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

- All quizzes will be online.
- There will be three, non-cumulative reading comprehension quizzes in this course based on the readings, outlines, videos and other materials reviewed, including map questions. All quizzes will be online, and each one is worth 6.67% of the final grade in our course. The total value of the exams is 20% of the course final grade.
- In addition to these (3) quizzes, students will have the opportunity to take an Optional Quiz at the end of the term. This quiz will replace the lowest grade earned in the first three quizzes, unless you earn a lower grade (dropped), and will include all the material covered in the course (cumulative).
- Students will be allowed to take the quizzes two times during the testing period, and only the best grade earned will be used to calculate your final grade in our course. **IF YOUR SCHEDULE PROHIBITS YOU FROM BEING AVAILABLE DURING THESE TIMES, then unfortunately you probably should not take this class.**

- The quizzes will be available from Sunday's at 2:00 PM and until Wednesday's at 10:00 PM. **IF YOUR SCHEDULE PROHIBITS YOU FROM BEING AVAILABLE AT EITHER OF THESE OPTIONAL TIMES, then, unfortunately, you probably should not take this class.**
- Just like any other in-campus test taken in a classroom, students are not allowed to take the quizzes in teams or share any information with classmates or any other individual. If you are in doubt, please read the FIU Academic Honesty Policy [here](#).
- **No make-up quiz will be given. Students that miss to take a quiz will take the Optional Quiz as a make-up test.**
- Each quiz will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions, including map questions (location of countries only), and each question will be worth 5 points. The quizzes will be limited to 30 minutes (past experience with a number of online courses has shown that this is sufficient time for the student who knows the material).
- Students are provided with Study Guides for each chapter/topic covered in this course. The study guides contain all questions that will be include in the quizzes, except for the map questions. For this reason, we would strongly suggest you to use them while reviewing the course material to be better prepared for the quizzes, and to improve your learning experience and your performance in our course.
- Results will be available after the testing period has ended. You will be able to see the total score only.

Dates for the quizzes are as follow **(all quizzes will be available from Sunday's at 2:00 PM and until Wednesday's at 10:00 PM):**

- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1:** Chapters 1 to 4. From Sunday, February 4 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, February 7 at 10:00 PM.
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2:** Chapters 5 to 8. From Sunday, March 17 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, March 20 at 10:00 PM.
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3:** Chapters 9 to 12. From Sunday, April 15 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 18 at 10:00 PM.
- **Optional Quiz:** Chapters 1 to 12. From Sunday, April 22 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 25 at 10:00 PM.

Note: While taking a quiz, you should save your answers after each question, in case you run out of time.

Reflection Essays

- There will be 6 reflection essays, which require you to apply concepts learned in our course. The lowest grade earned will be dropped. Each discussion topic is worth 12% of the final grade in our course.
- **Students must compose a 1-2 page summary essay of at-least 500 words, highlighting the most important aspects of each assigned reading/video. The word count does not include the student's name, PID, date, title of the essay, or the required Bibliography/References/Works Cited. Students must upload their work using the corresponding plagiarism detection website Turnitn.com links included in our course website before the deadline.**
- **Students must post well thought-out comments based on the assigned topics – the corresponding textbook chapter/s of the week, which must be cited in your essay and in a**

bibliography page –, showing knowledge of the subject by using key definitions used in the textbook, and **upload them to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com.** Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade.

- Students will have to comply with all requirements of this activity, including the minimum required number of words, show knowledge of the topic, originality, and to format their work following the Technical Aspects (see section: **IMPORTANT NOTE ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, TURNITIN, AND PLAGIARISM**) and upload their posts to Turnitin.com.
- The reflection topics will be available for the entire week (from Sunday to Saturday) **ONLY**. Late work will be accepted but will incur in a 10-point discount for each week they are late.

Dates for the Reflection Essays are as follow:

- **Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 27.**
- **Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, February 3.**
- **Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 17.**
- **Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 24.**
- **Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, March 16.**
- **Reflection Essay # 6; due: Saturday, March 30.**

Portfolio

- **The dictionary defines a portfolio as a set of works [drawings or photographs] either bound in a book form or loose in a folder. In this course we will define a *portfolio* as a collection of reflection essays completed during the term, and which requires you to apply concepts learned in this course.**
- Since we have defined the portfolio as a collection of reflection essays, this [portfolio] must first introduce the topics covered in each essay and their scope in a Introduction.
- After the topic is introduced, the next step would be to include your six reflection essays.
- **After the reflection essays, we must include a Conclusion section where you will summarize the most important findings highlighted in your essays.**
- **To complete your portfolio, this must include a bibliography page with all the references you have used in all reflection essays, including our course' textbook.**
- **Structure of the Portfolio (minimum 500 words): Introduction (~200-250 words), Conclusions (~250-300 words) and Bibliography page. You must separate each section clearly using titles: Introduction, Conclusions, Bibliography.**
- **Include a title in your first page that reflects the nature of this assignment. The title "Reflection Essay Portfolio" is accurate, but... boring!**
- **The portfolio is worth 20% of the final grade in our course.**
- Your work must be uploaded to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com by the due date (see Important Dates and Course Schedule for specific due dates). **Works that are submitted late will be accepted but will receive a 10-point discount for each week they are late. No late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 20.**
- **Any works that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade in the class.**

Dates for the completion of the Portfolio are as follow:

- **Portfolio Rough Draft; due: Saturday, April 6 [no late work will be accepted after this day: Monday, April 8].**
- **Portfolio Final Project; due: Saturday, April 20. No late work will be accepted after this day (Saturday, April 20).**

Important Note on Written Assignments, Turnitin.com, Artificial Intelligence and Plagiarism

Students must submit all written assignments in a word document.

Works that are submitted late will be accepted but will receive a 10-point discount for each week they are late. In the case of the reflection essays, the weekly point deduction will be applied starting on the 7th day after the deadlines mentioned above. In other words, you may submit your essays six (6) days after any deadline without incurring in any point deduction. In the case of the Portfolio Rough Draft, no late work will be accepted after Monday, April 8.

No late assignments will be accepted after Saturday, April 20.

Each written assignment must include references from the course textbook, including but not limited to key definitions and other important aspects related to the topics covered in each project. Students must include in text citations of the course textbook in their essays, as well as complete reference of this source in a Bibliography page. You can find a complete reference of our course textbook below. Use the following format for the in-text citation: (Getis *et al.* 2009). You may also introduce this source at the beginning of a sentence following this example: According to Getis *et al.* (2009), ... In case you are including a quote from this source, you must include the page number/s where we can find this information following this example: "The spatial distribution of ..." (Getis *et al.* 2009: 35).

Getis, A, Getis, J. and J. Fellmann. 2009. *Introduction to geography*. 12th edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

Students are not allowed to use WIKIPEDIA in this course and will result in a significant point deduction if this source is use in any written assignment.

All written assignment must conform to the following formatting - Technical Aspects:

- Submitted in a word document.
- 12-point font (Arial, Times New Roman, Garamond, or Book Garamond, or Book Antiqua).
- One-inch margins all around, double-spaced.
- Number the pages.
- **Any written assignment that does not include any one of the required technical aspects mentioned above will receive a 10-point deduction in their grade.**

All written assignments must be uploaded to the plagiarism detection system Turnitin.com. The Turnitin.com links to submit your work are embedded in our course website – you do not have to create a Turnitin.com account.

Please note that we have set up the Turnitin.com system so students will be allowed to submit their draft work as many times as they wish until the deadline. This is done so you can review the Originality report generated by Turnitin.com and make any adjustments or improvements so no portion of your work is considered plagiarized. A link to all assignment will be available in the Assignment Dropbox section of the course website.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. In fact, it is expected that most of the written assignments submitted are written using the student’s own words. Because writing, analytical and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments must be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. **Contributions from anyone or anything else, including artificial intelligence (AI) sources, must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used. Failure to do so constitutes an academic integrity violation, and I will follow our institution’s policy in those instances.**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any assignments that have been plagiarized will earn an automatic failure grade in the course. Your work must be your own, original thoughts. If you plagiarize your thoughts from a website, journal, or any other source, not only you will be sad because you cannot write the small number of words of your own, but, as mentioned above, you will earn a failing grade in our class.

Plagiarism is cheating. Don’t do it. The disciplinary action that will be taken in the case of plagiarism is explained in the section on “Academic Misconduct” in the *Student Handbook*.

If you are uncertain about what plagiarism is, check out the FIU website: [FIU Libraries](#)

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
Reading Comprehension Quizzes (3 @ 6.67% each)	20%
Reflection Essays (5 @ 12% each)	60%
Portfolio	20%

TOTAL	100%
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LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RA
A	95 or above	B+	87 - 89	C+	77
A-	90 - 94	B	83 - 86	C	70
		B-	80-82	D	60
				F	59

Weekly Schedule

DATE	TASKS
Week 1: January 8 - 13	Chapter 1: <i>Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the Syllabus Quiz. • Review the Start Here folder located in the course content. • Review the Policies Page as is important to the quality of your education. • Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum under the "Discussion Board" tab. • Take the Practice Quiz under the Start Here folder to ensure that your computer is compatible with CANVAS.
Week 2: January 14 – 20	Chapter 2: <i>Maps</i>
Week 3: January 21 - 27	Chapter 3: <i>Physical Geography: Landforms</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 27.
Week 4: January 28 – February 3	Chapter 4: <i>Physical Geography: Weather and Climate</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, February 3.
Week 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: chapters 1 to 4 (From Sunday, February 4 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, February 7 at 10:00 PM).

February 4 – 10	
Week 6: February 11 – 17	Chapter 5: The Geography of Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 17.
Week 7: February 18 – 24	Chapter 6: Population Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 24.
Week 8: February 25 – March 2	Spring Break – No classes
Week 9: March 3 - 9	Chapter 7: Cultural Geography
Week 10: March 10 – 16	Chapter 8: Spatial Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, March 16.
Week 11: March 17 – 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: chapters 5 to 8 (From Sunday, March 17 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, March 20 at 10:00 PM).
Week 12: March 24 – 30	Chapter 10: Economic Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 6; due: Saturday, March 30.
Week 13: March 31 - April 6	Chapter 9: Political Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio rough draft; due: Saturday, April 6.
Week 14: April 7 – 13	Chapter 11: An Urban World and Chapter 12: Human Impact on the Environment
Week 15: April 14 – 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: chapters 9 to 12 (From Sunday, April 14 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 17 at 10:00 PM). • Portfolio Final Project; due: Saturday, April 22. • No late assignments accepted after Saturday, April 20.
Week 16: April 21 - 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Quiz: chapters 1 to 11 (From Sunday, April 21 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 24 at 10:00 PM).