

Population and Geography of Latin America (Fall B 2024)

GEA 3400

Instructor: Dr. Ricardo M. González

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE:

This course is intended to introduce students to Latin America through the region's contemporary and historical geography. In other words, by taking this course you will gain a broad knowledge of the physical, cultural, social, political, and economic factors that have shaped, and continue to shape, this region of the world. The subject matter in this course will be addressed from a geographic perspective frequently referred to as human-environment geography, which means lectures, readings, and activities will tend to emphasize the social/cultural and physical processes that have helped shaped the landscapes of Latin America. This human-environment focus means that in this course even when we focus on the physical landscape, humans will not be ignored. Along this path, we will cover the physical environment, historical geography, population shifts, language and religious values, the political landscape, urban issues, economic trends, agricultural systems, environmental concerns, and globalization in Latin America.

Overall, our goal is to develop a comprehensive understanding of human-environment relations in Latin America over time (historically) and over space (geographically). By the end of the course, you should have a clear sense of how the region was shaped through natural-physical, political economic, and sociocultural processes. You will also develop your critical thinking skills: reading, writing and research, which will support your professional development and beyond.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- Explain how Latin American landscapes have been shaped by geomorphological, climatic, biogeographical, and cultural processes;
- Introduce students to key debates, developments, and themes in Latin America geography through conceptually oriented lectures and contemporary and historical case studies;
- Develop and improve students' map-based knowledge of key Latin American geographical features;
- Develop and improve students' ability to write and think critically about the world.
- Know where to find information and how to conduct basic research on topics related to Latin American geography;
- Be motivated to keep up with and analyze current events reported in the news media.

TEXTBOOK

Kent, R. 2016. *Latin America: Regions and people*. 2nd edition. New York and London: The Guilford Press.

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 on this course. You are responsible for having access to a well-functioning computer. This is of the utmost importance, especially with regards to the online quizzes.

If you have computer problems, you MUST contact FIU Online Support Services IMMEDIATELY by calling FIU Online Support Services 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.

If you are not sufficiently computer savvy to meet these conditions, or do not have access to a good computer, you may wish to reconsider taking an online course. You must take the Practice Quiz (the questions have nothing to do with the material taught in this course, and count nothing) in order to make sure you know how the process works and to make sure 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.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started Information located in the Course Content.
- **Take the Syllabus Quiz on the first day of the term.** Students will not be allowed to access the course material until they take this quiz and pass it with a 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 their instructor and peers and keep up with all assignments.
- Review and follow the course calendar.
- Log in to the course website at least three times per week.
- Respond to messages within two days.
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course three times per week.
- Respond to discussion questions and postings within one week (except on weekends or holidays);
- Respond to messages within 48-72 hours (except on weekends or holidays);
- Grade rough drafts within a week and grade final projects within two weeks of the corresponding deadline, unless otherwise noted.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication on this course will take place via CANVAS **message feature ONLY**. **Your professor 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 the CANVAS system 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 important 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 detailed questions or explain your concerns so your professor is better prepared to answer them in 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 the 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](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

All quizzes will be online.

There will be three (3), non-cumulative quizzes in this course based on the readings, videos, outlines and other materials reviewed, including map questions. In addition to these (3) quizzes, students will have the opportunity to take an Optional Quiz (cumulative) 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. It is impossible to find a time that suits everyone, and tests cannot be timed for the convenience of every individual student. **If this schedule is impossible for you, then unfortunately it is probably better for you not to take this class.** It is simply impossible to find a time that suits everybody, but, at the same time, it is my responsibility as a professor to try to maintain the academic integrity of the course.

Each quiz is worth 10% of the final grade in our course. The total value of the quizzes is 30% of the course's final grade.

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 taking a quiz will take the Optional Quiz as a make-up test.

Each quiz will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions, including map knowledge questions, 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 included in the quizzes, with the exception of the map questions. For this reason, we would strongly suggest you 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 (with the exception of the Optional Quiz, all other 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, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9. November 10 at 2:00 PM and until Wednesday, November 13 at 10:00 PM.**
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: Chapters 12, 14, 4, 6 and 8. From Sunday, November 24 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, November 27 at 10:00 PM.**
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: Chapters 10, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 19. From Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, December 4 at 10:00 PM.**
- **Optional Quiz: Chapters 1 to 15, 17, 19. Friday, December 6, from 12:01 AM to 10:00 PM.**

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

APPLIED EXERCISE

There will be one applied exercise based on the analysis of a Latin American traditional dish and related to the topics discussed in the course. Only one student will be allowed to work on a specific dish. **Students must send the professor of the course a message with the name of three dishes that are considered traditional from any Latin American country/countries, including their name/s and country of origin of each one they wish to use to compose their exercise before Saturday, October 26.** In turn, your professor will send you a reply message with your assignment. The distribution of the work will be done on a first-come first-served basis, so it is a good idea to start this project as soon as possible by sending the professor of the course a message with your dish selections.

The exercise is composed of four major sections, including a table; a map; an analysis of the information provided where you will summarize your findings and in the form of an essay; and a bibliography page. The exercise is worth 30% of your final grade. Once you complete your paper, you must submit your work using the link provided on our course website to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com by the due date. **Please note that works that are submitted late will be accepted but will receive a 10-point discount for each week they are late. The last day we will be able to accept any late written assignments is Saturday, December 7.**

Dates for the completion of the Applied Exercise activities are as follow:

- **Selection of Traditional Dish: Saturday, October 26.**
- **Rough Draft – Table and Map: Saturday, November 9. [No late work accepted after Monday, November 11]**
- **Rough Draft – Essay and Bibliography: Saturday, November 16. [No late work accepted after Monday, November 18]**
- **Final Project: Saturday, November 30.**
- **Last day to submit any written: Saturday, December 7.**

TERM PAPER

You will be assigned individually a research article from a geography journal in which the research focuses or site is located in Latin America. You will then summarize the elements of that paper, including the introduction, argument, structure of the article, methodology, literatures, conclusions, and bibliography. This will be based on the summary format provided in the Research Paper Instructions file. The term paper is worth 40% of your final grade.

- **The due date of the term-paper final project is Saturday, December 7 (this is the last day of the term). Please note that no papers will be accepted after this day.**
- For the paper, you will need to **STRICTLY** follow the format provided in analyzing and summarizing the components of the research article about which you are writing (this is included in the **Research Paper Instructions** file). Remember that you are only using ONE article in this project. In completing the following format, you will need to read each section of the article you are researching very carefully, possibly more than once. Your paper should be at least 6 pages in length (not including the Cover Page); you must follow the formatting procedure listed at the beginning of this section.
- **Selecting an Article (due date is Saturday, November 2):** The first step in completing this assignment is finding three articles that you are interested to research. The articles you use must comply with the overall assignment – it must be geography articles in which the research focus or site is located in Latin America, the research must be related to one of the topics covered in the course textbook, it must be a full-length, research article (not book reviews, editorials, commentaries, country reports, or special issue entries), and it must be from one of the peer reviewed geography journals listed in the Research Paper Instructions. They must also be published in the year 2001 or later.
- Only one person will be allowed to review an article, so it is a good idea to pick out a few that interest you.

- To submit your article preferences, you will have to send the professor of the course a message in CANVAS with a list of three articles you have picked out in order of preference – your list must consist of full citations for the articles selected following the samples provided: author'/s' last name/s, first name/s, year of publication, title of article, journal where it was published, volume, number, page numbers. **You must also attach the PDF files for the articles to your message; web links are not acceptable.**
- If a student fails to submit an appropriate article by the due date, not only this person loses points towards the final grade of this assignment (10 points), but the professor will assign an article to you – I can't promise it will be interesting or easy to read. The professor will send individual messages to each student with their assigned article no later than on Tuesday, November 5.
- Once you complete your paper, you must submit your work to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com using the link provided in our course website by the due date. **IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT PLAGIARIZE ANY PART OF THE PAPER OR YOU WILL RECEIVE A FAILING GRADE IN THE COURSE.**

Dates for the completion of the Term-Paper are as follow:

- 1. Article Selection: Saturday, November 2.**
- 2. Rough Draft - Saturday, November 23. [No late work accepted after Monday, November 25]**
- 3. Final Project: Saturday, December 7. [No late work accepted after this day: Saturday, December 7]**

IMPORTANT NOTE ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, TURNITIN, 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.

No late work will be accepted after Saturday, December 7.

Each written assignment must include references from our 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: (Kent 2016). You may also introduce this source at the beginning of a sentence following this example: According to Kent (2016), ... 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 ..." (Kent 2016: 35).

Kent, R. 2016. *Latin America: Regions and people*. 2nd edition. New York and London: The Guilford Press.

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) -must use the same letter font and style in the entire document.
- One-inch margins all around and with no indentations
- 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**. 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 assignments will be available in the Assignment Dropbox section of the course website.

All work submitted on 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 |
|---|--------|
| Applied Exercise | 30% |
| Term-Paper | 40% |
| Reading Comprehension Quizzes (4 @ 7.5% each) | 30% |

| | |
|--------------|------|
| TOTAL | 100% |
|--------------|------|

| LETTER GRADE | RANGE | LETTER GRADE | RANGE | LETTER GRADE | RANGE |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
| A | 95 or above | B+ | 87 - 89 | C+ | 77 - 79 |
| A- | 90 - 94 | B | 83 - 86 | C | 70 - 76 |
| | | B- | 80-82 | D | 60 - 69 |
| | | | | F | 59 or less |

Weekly Schedule

| DATE | TASKS |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Week 1: October 21 - 26 | <p>Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Latin America as a Culture Region and Chapter 3: The Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the Syllabus Quiz on the first day of the term. • 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. • Complete the Academic Honesty Policy attestation under the Start Here folder. • Applied Exercise: Selection of Traditional Dish; due: Saturday, October 26. |

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|---|---|
| Week 2: October 27 – November 2 | Chapter 5: Peopling Latin America , Chapter 7: Early Cities and Urban Development , and Chapter 14: Contemporary Cities and Urban Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term Paper Article Selection; due: Saturday, November 2. |
| Week 3: November 3 - 9 | Chapter 12: Land and People since the Conquest and Chapter 9: Migration, Population Change, and Race <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Exercise: Rough Draft: Tables and Map; due: Saturday, November 9 [no late works accepted after Monday, November 11.]. |
| Week 4: November 10 - 16 | Chapter 4: The Hispanic Caribbean , Chapter 6: The Mesa Central of Mexico , and Chapter 11: The Central American Highlands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9. From Sunday, November 10 at 2:00 PM and until Wednesday, November 13 at 10:00 PM. • Applied Exercise: Rough Draft: Essay and Bibliography; due: Saturday, November 16 [no late works accepted after Monday, November 18.]. |
| Week 5: November 17 – 23 | Chapter 8: The Andes , Chapter 10: The Central Valley of Chile , and Chapter 17: The Pampa. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper Rough Draft; due: Saturday, November 23 [no late works accepted after Monday, November 25.]. |
| Week 6: November 24 – 30 | Chapter 13: Brazil's Atlantic Coastal Plain , Chapter 15: Southern Brazilian Highlands , and Chapter 19: The Amazon Basin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: Chapters 12, 14, 4, 6 and 8. From Sunday, November 24 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, November 27 at 10:00 PM. • Applied Exercise: Final Project; due: Saturday, November 30. |
| Week 7: December 1 - 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: Chapters 10, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 19. From Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, December 4 at 10:00 PM. • Optional Quiz: chapters 1 to 15, 17, 19 (Friday, December 6 from 12:01 AM until 10:00 PM). • Term-Paper Final Project; due: Saturday, December 7. • No late assignments accepted after Saturday, December 7. |