

Cultural Geography (Spring 2018)

GEO 3421

Instructor: Dr. Ricardo M. González

What is “culture”? Why is it so important to how we understand and live in the world around us? Is culture a thing, an idea, a set of practices, or a myth? Is culture connected to people and places, or is it mobile? Does culture unite or divide us? Does it bring peace or conflict? How do cultures mix? How does culture change? What does geography have to do with how culture works, and does thinking about culture geographically give us a different understanding of it?

GEO 3421 addresses these and other questions about something called culture. It will introduce students to the field of cultural geography and to the ways that a geographic approach helps us make sense of cultural politics in the world around us. In this course, we will examine how questions of culture are always already questions of politics, economics, history, and place and how a geographic approach to such questions helps us understand the world in more critical ways. This course focuses on the changing and multifaceted relationships between people and the environments in which they reside. This course provides knowledge of and about the creation of places and regions, an understanding of both the interdependence of places and regions in a globalizing world, and the major changes that have taken place in global, regional, and local landscapes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- **Help students understand the complexities of culture as both place based and mobile, historically enduring yet constantly changing, simultaneously local, global, and transnational.**
- **Provide a framework to help students understand the differences and similarities, connections and gaps, among people around the world – differences often read through a framework of culture.**
- **Help students understand what a geographic approach to culture gets us in understanding its complexities.**
- **Introduce students to key debates, developments, and themes in cultural geography through conceptually oriented lectures and contemporary and historical case studies.**
- **Develop and improve students’ map-based knowledge of key location in world regions.**
- **Develop and improve students’ ability to write and think critically about the world.**

TEXTBOOK

Domosh, Mona, Neumann, Roderick, Price, Patricia and Terry Jordan-Bychkov. 2013. *The Human Mosaic: A Cultural Approach to Human Geography*. 12th edition. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

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 utmost importance, especially with regards to the online tests. The professor does not allow for retakes of tests or give extra credit when students perform poorly due to computer problems.

If you have computer problems while taking a quiz, you **MUST** contact FIU Online Support Services by calling them at (305) 348-3630 or by clicking on the “Technical Support” link in the Course Menu **immediately**, NOT THE PROFESSOR or your CLASSMATES. In addition, we ask you to gather all available evidence that support your claim and send it to Support Services as well. Please note that because students are allowed to take the Reading Comprehension Quizzes as many times as they wish, there are no make-ups available in this course.

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) and the syllabus quiz in order to have access to the course,** and to make sure you know how the process works and to make sure that your computer is compatible with FIU’s Blackboard system.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started Information located in the Course Content
- Take the Syllabus Quiz. Students will not be allowed to access the course until they take this quiz and pass it with a perfect score.
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week of by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard.
- 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 two times per week
- Respond to discussion questions and posting within two days
- Respond to emails/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)
- Respond to emails/messages within three days (except on weekends)
- Grade assignments within two weeks of the assignment deadline unless otherwise noted

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via **Blackboard message feature ONLY**. I will **respond within 72 hours (except on weekends)**.

The message feature is a private, internal Blackboard only communication system. Users must log on to the Blackboard system to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Blackboard 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.

The email feature is **external** communication that allows users to send emails to users enrolled in the course including the instructor and other students. Emails are sent to the student's FIU email on record. This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

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 map quizzes and exams, 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.

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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](#).

- There will be three, non-cumulative reading comprehension quizzes in this course based on the readings, outlines, and other materials covered in this course, including the location of countries on a map. All quizzes will be online. **Students will be allowed to take the quizzes as many times as they wish during the testing period, and only the best grade**

earned will be used to calculate your final grade in our course. **Please note that no make-up quizzes will be given.**

- All quizzes will be online, and will be available starting on **Sunday's at 2:00 PM, and until Thursday's at 10:00 PM.** **IF YOUR SCHEDULE PROHIBITS YOU FROM BEING AVAILABLE AT THESE TIMES, then unfortunately you probably should not take this class.**
- Each quiz will cover the assigned chapters of the textbook and other assigned articles, videos, etc., and have 20 multiple-choice and true-false questions worth 5 points each for a total of 100 points.
- The quizzes will have a duration of 30 minutes (past experience with a number of online courses has shown that this is sufficient time for the student who knows the material). Hence, just as you have experienced with on-campus classes, you "must be on time for the quiz"; if you are late opening the test, you will lose valuable time. It is important to mention that, in order to have all the available time, students must start taking a quiz on the last day of the testing period no later than 9:29 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.
- 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 made available from Sunday at 2:00 PM, and until Thursday at 10:00 PM):**

- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1:** Chapters 1 to 4. From Sunday, February 4 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, February 8 at 10:00 PM
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2:** Chapters 5 to 8. From Sunday, March 18 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, March 22 at 10:00 PM
- **Quiz # 3:** Chapters 9 to 12. From Sunday, April 15 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, April 19 at 10:00 PM

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

TEAM EXERCISE

There will be one team exercise related to the topics discussed in the course, which requires you to apply concepts learned in class and your personal experience. In this activity, students will be randomly assembled in teams of 5-6 students each, and will develop a paper based on an assigned topic chosen by the instructor of the course. After receiving instructions on the composition of the groups, each team will select a leader that will be in charge of the overall project and coordination. Grades will be based on the contribution of each member to the overall project. A brief report of the performance of each member of the team by your peers will also be required. The team will compose a paper that must include an outline of the project, an

analysis of the information provided, and a conclusions section. The format of the team project must include four major sections: Introduction (which must be composed by the entire team), Case Studies (individual activity), Conclusions (team activity), and Bibliography. It is also required to produce a map in which the team will summarize their findings.

This exercise is worth 25% of your final grade. We will be using the Wiki feature as a platform for this team activity. Nevertheless, once the team completes their project, the Team Leader only will submit your work on a word document file to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com by the **due date: Saturday, March 24.** It is also required to submit **a rough draft of the team exercise, which is due on Saturday, March 3.** It is also important to mention that teams must **select a Team Leader by Monday, February 12. In addition, after discussing the indigenous culture that each team member will research to complete their individual case study; each member of the team must send the professor of the course a message with the name of the culture they wish to research and the indigenous cultures' website/s they will analyze; due: Saturday, February 17. Finally, all team members are required to submit an assessment of their contributions to the team project and that of each member of their team to the final project; this is due on Saturday, March 24.** Details for the completion of the exercise will be provided in the third week of classes.

Works that are submitted late will be accepted but will have a 10-point discount for each day they are late.

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

- **Team Composition (assigned randomly by your professor): Thursday, February 15.**
- **Selection of Team Leader: Monday, February 19.**
- **Submission of selections of case studies (the Team Leader will send a message to your professor with name of the region (case study) that each team member will research: Monday, February 19.**
- **Rough Draft: Saturday, March 3.**
- **Final Project: Saturday, March 24.**
- **Assessment of individual and team members' contributions: Saturday, March 24.**

TERM PAPER

You will be assigned individually a research article from a major geography journal in which the research focus on any of the topics covered in the course. You will then summarize the elements of that paper, including the argument, methodology, literatures and conclusions based on the summary format provided in the Research Paper Instructions file.

- **The due date is Saturday, April 14. Works that are submitted late will be accepted but will have a 10-point discount for each day they are late. No Late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 21.**
- For the paper, you will need to **strictly** follow the format provided in the Instructions file analyzing and summarizing the components of the research article about which you are writing. 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 using 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, February 3)**: The first step in completing this assignment is finding an article. The article you use must comply with the overall assignment – it must be a geography article, 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, country reports, editorials, commentaries, or special issue entries), and it must be from one of the peer-reviewed geography journals listed in the Research Paper Instructions file. They must also be published in the year 2000 or later. Only one person will be allowed to review an article, so it is a good idea to pick out a few that interests you. To submit your article preferences you will have to send the Instructor of the course a message (using the course messaging system only) with a list of three articles you have picked out in order of preference – your list should consist of full citations for the articles selected (author/'s' last name/s, first name/s, year of publication, title of article, journal where it was published, volume, number, page numbers). Samples of complete references are available in the Research Paper Instructions file. You must also attach the PDF files for the articles to your message. Note that the course messaging system only allows you to submit one attachment at-a-time, so you will have to send three separate messages with the required information: citation of the articles you are using formatted following the samples included in the Research Paper Instructions file, and the PDF file of each article you have chosen. If you fail to submit an appropriate article selection by the due date, you will lose points towards the final grade of this task (10 points or 10%), and I will assign an article to you – I can't promise it will be interesting or easy to read. A list with the assigned articles will be posted at the end of Week # 6 of the semester.
- **Students that submit a rough draft of their paper, which must include all required sections and formatted according to the Term-Paper Instructions, no later than Saturday, March 31, will receive detailed feedback on how to improve their work within one week.** It is required that you send the instructor of the course a message alerting him that you have uploaded your draft work to Turnitin.com. This activity is not required but highly recommended.
- Once you complete your paper, you must submit your work to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com 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, February 3.**
2. **Rough Draft (Optional): Saturday, March 31.**
3. **Final Project: Saturday, April 14.**

REFLECTION ESSAYS

- There will be five reflection essays, which require you to apply concepts learned in our course. Note that each discussion topic will be worth 5% of the final grade in the course.

Students must post well thought-out comments based on the assigned topics – the corresponding textbook chapter/s of the week –, 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 next 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 day they are late.

Dates for the reflection essays are as follow:

- **Reflection Essay # 1;** due: Saturday, January 20.
- **Reflection Essay # 2;** due: Saturday, January 27.
- **Reflection Essay # 3;** due: Saturday, February 24.
- **Reflection Essay # 4;** due: Saturday, March 10.
- **Reflection Essay # 5;** due: Saturday, April 7.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, TURNITIN, AND PLAGIARISM

- All written assignment must conform to the following formatting - Technical Aspects: 12-point font (Arial, Times New Roman, Garamond, or Book Antiqua), one-inch margins all around, double-spaced, and number the pages. **Any written assignment that does not include all the required technical aspects 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 assignment will be available in the Assignment Dropbox section of the course website.
- **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. 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 on your own, but you will earn a failing grade in our class.**
- **NO WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER SATURDAY, APRIL 21.**

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
Reflection Essays (5 @ 5% each)	25%
Team Exercise	25%
Term-Paper	30%
Reading Comprehension Quizzes (3 @ 6.67% each)	20%
TOTAL	100%

LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE
A	Above 93	B-	80-82	F	< 60
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 79		
B+	87 - 89	C	70 - 76		
B	83 - 86	D	60 - 69		

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

DATE	TASKS
Week 1: January 8 - 13	Chapter 1 Human Geography: <i>A Cultural Approach</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 Blackboard.
Week 2: January 14 - 20	Chapter 2 Many Worlds: <i>Geographies of Cultural Difference</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 20.
Week 3:	Chapter 3

January 21 - 27	Population Geography: <i>Shaping the Human Mosaic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 27.
Week 4: January 28 - February 3	Chapter 4 The Geography of Language: Building the Spoken Word <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper article selection; due: Saturday, February 3.
Week 5: February 4 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: chapters 1 to 4 (From Sunday, February 4 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, February 8 at 10:00 PM).
Week 6: February 11 - 17	Chapter 5 Geographies of Race and Ethnicity: <i>Melting Pot or Mosaic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Exercise – Selection of Team Leader; due: Monday, February 12. • Team Exercise – Submission of selections of indigenous cultures' websites; due: Saturday, February 17.
Week 7: February 18 - 24	Chapter 6 Political Geography: <i>A Divided World</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 24.
Week 8: February 25 - March 3	Chapter 7 The Geography of Religion: <i>Spaces and Places of Sacredness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Exercise rough draft; due: Saturday, March 3.
Week 9: March 4 - 10	Chapter 8 Agricultural Geography: <i>The Global Food System</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, March 10.
Week 10: March 11 - 17	SPRING BREAK
Week 11: March 18 - 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: chapters 5 to 8 (From Sunday, March 18 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, March 22 at 10:00 PM). • Team Exercise Final Project; due: Saturday, March 24. • Team Exercise - Assessment of individual and team members' contributions; due: Saturday, March 24.
Week 12: March 25 - 31	Chapter 9 Geography of Economies: <i>Industries, Services, and Development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper rough draft (optional); due on Saturday, March 31.
Week 13: April 1 - 7	Chapter 10 Urbanization: The City in Time and Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, April 7.
Week 14: April 8 - 14	Chapter 11 Inside the City: <i>A Cultural Mosaic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper; due: Saturday, April 14.
Week 15: April 15 – 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: chapters 9 to 11 (From Sunday, April 15 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, April 19 at 10:00 PM).