

Introduction to Geography (Spring 2019)

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?

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 –almost on a daily basis. 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.

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.

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 have computer problems while 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 occurs 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 should 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 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.**

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 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 three days (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 send the class course announcements, alerting students of important course 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](#).

- There will be three, non-cumulative reading comprehension quizzes in this course based on the readings, outlines, and other materials included. All quizzes will be online, and each one is worth 6.67% of the final grade in our course. The total value of the quizzes is 20% of the course final grade.
- **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 course.**

- 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 3 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, February 7 at 10:00 PM
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2:** Chapters 5 to 8. From Sunday, March 17 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, March 21 at 10:00 PM
- **Quiz # 3:** Chapters 9 to 12. From Sunday, April 14 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, April 18 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 and each discussion topic is worth 6% 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 to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com before the deadline.**
- **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 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. **The weekly point-deduction will be applied starting on the next day after the deadline (Sunday's at 12:00 AM). NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER TWO WEEKS OF THE DUE DATE.**

Dates for the Reflection Essays are as follow:

- **Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 19.**
- **Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 26.**
- **Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 2.**
- **Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 16.**
- **Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, February 23.**
- **Reflection Essay # 6; due: Saturday, March 9.**
- **No late assignment accepted after Saturday, March 23.**

Exercises

- There will be 2 exercises related to the topics discussed during a specific week, which require you to apply concepts learned in class.
- Each exercise is worth 25% of the final grade in our class.
- Each exercise will consists of three sections, including a table, a map, an analysis of the information provided, and a Bibliography/References/Works Cited section.
- Your exercises 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 TWO WEEKS OF THE DUE DATES. In the case of Exercise # 2, no late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 13).**
- **Any exercise that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade in the class.**

Dates for the completion of the Exercises are as follow:

- **Exercise # 1: Population Geography**
 - **Rough Draft; due: Saturday, March 2.**
 - **Final Project; dues: Saturday, March 23.**
 - **No late assignment accepted after Saturday, April 6.**
- **Exercise # 2: Garments**
 - **Rough Draft; due: Saturday, March 30.**
 - **Final Project; dues: Saturday, April 6.**
 - **No late assignment accepted after Saturday, April 13.**

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

- **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 in the course syllabus.
- **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: 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.** 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: <http://library.fiu.edu/assistance/plagiarism>.

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
Reading Comprehension Quizzes (3 @ 6.67% each)	20%
Reflection Essays (5 @ 6% each)	30%
Exercises (2 @ 25% each)	50%
TOTAL	100%

LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RA
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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: January 7 - 12	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 13 - 19	Chapter 2: <i>Maps</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 19.
Week 3: January 20 - 26	Chapter 3: <i>Physical Geography: Landforms</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 26.
Week 4: January 27 - February 2	Chapter 4: <i>Physical Geography: Weather and Climate</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 2.
Week 5: February 3 - 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: chapters 1 to 4 (From Sunday, February 3 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, February 7 at 10:00 PM).
Week 6: February 10 – 16	Chapter 5: The Geography of Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 16.
Week 7: February 17 - 23	Chapter 6: Population Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, February 23.
Week 8: February 24 – March 2	Chapter 7: Cultural Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise # 1 rough draft; due: Saturday, March 2.

Week 9: March 3 - 9	Chapter 8: Spatial Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 6; due: Saturday, March 9.
Week 10: March 10 - 16	Spring Break: No Classes
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 Thursday, March 21 at 10:00 PM). • Exercise # 1 final project; due: Saturday, March 23.
Week 12: March 24 - 30	Chapter 10: Economic Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise # 2 rough draft; due: Saturday, March 30.
Week 13: March 31 - April 6	Chapter 9: Political Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise # 2 final project; due: Saturday, April 6.
Week 14: April 7 - 13	Chapter 12: Human Impact on the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>NO LATE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT ACCEPTED AFTER SATURDAY, APRIL 13.</u>
Week 15: April 14 - 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: chapters 9 to 11 (From Sunday, April 14 at 2:00 PM, until Thursday, April 18 at 10:00 PM).