



GEO 2000

Introduction to Geography

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2026

Course Time Zone | Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates are according to this time zone.

UCC Category Description

This course satisfies the University Core Curriculum **Social Sciences, Group 2** requirement.

Social science courses afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues.

Professor Information

Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: rmgonzal@fiu.edu

Response Time: 48-72 hours, except on weekends and holidays

Phone: (305) 348-2247

Office Hours: Monday from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Office Location: SIPA # 304

Department or Academic Unit: Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- 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, it's 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.
- Understand what makes the geographic perspective different from that of other disciplines. While geography is very open to borrowing ideas from many other disciplines (such as anthropology, sociology, economics, environmental studies, history, geology, physics and psychology), it is not equivalent to any of those disciplines, nor is it just the sum of every other disciplines' ideas. In this course, we will emphasize how thinking spatially makes the geographic approach unique from other possible ways of knowing the world, and by the end of this course, you will be able to articulate the difference thinking spatially makes.
- Apply these concepts to better understanding, and possibly changing, the geographies of your world. The point of learning all of these concepts is because geography provides a tool kit to gaining a better integrated, contextual

understanding of the world we live in: from the spaces of our family, friends and neighborhood; through those of the cities and environments of South Florida; to the connections that make our country, hemisphere and world the way it is. Furthermore, by understanding these spaces better, it allows you as a student and citizen to learn more in the future about what changes you consider to be most urgent and most 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 outmost importance, especially with regard 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 on 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 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.**

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.

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 other words, you may submit your work 6 days after the deadline (Friday's) without incurring in any point deduction. However, late works will not be eligible for the extra-credit points available (extra-credit points details will be disclosed during the first week of the term).

No late assignments will be accepted after Saturday, April 18.

Each written assignment must include references from the course textbook. 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.

Use the following format for the in-text citation in your essays when you are including information from the textbook using your own words, and **at the end of a sentence**:

- **(Getis *et al.* 2017).**
- [Note: The words "*et al.*" must be written in Italics and is used when a source was composed by more than two authors.]

You may also introduce this source at the beginning of a sentence following this example:

- **According to Getis *et al.* (2017), ...**

In case you are including a quote from this source, you must use quotations marks and include the page number/s where we can find this information following this example:

- **"The spatial distribution of ..." (Getis *et al.* 2017: 35).**

Below is the reference you must include on your Bibliography page - make sure to write the title in Italics -:

Getis, A, Bjelland, M. and V. Getis. 2017. *Introduction to geography*. 15th 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 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 by the student only to the plagiarism detection system [Turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com) using the links embedded in our course website - you do not have to create a Turnitin account. Your professor will not submit any assignment on behalf of a student. 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. Note that, after this day, you will not be allowed to resubmit your work. 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 submit your work 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

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
Reading Comprehension Quizzes (3 @ 6.67% each)	20%
Reflection Essays (5 @ 12% each)	60%
Portfolio	20%
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE

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

Textbook and Course Materials

Introduction to Geography

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Getis, A., Bjelland, M. and V. Getis.

Publisher: McGraw Hill

Publication Date: 2017

Copyright Date: 2017

ISBN 10: 1259570002

ISBN 13: 9781259570001

Notes: You may use any edition of this textbook starting with the 12th edition published in 2009.

Chapters/Pages: Chapters # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Introduction to Geography

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Authors: Getis, A., Bjelland, M. and V. Getis.

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Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$20.50 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox **only**. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. **I will respond to all correspondences 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.

Schedule of Topics

Weekly Schedule

SCHEDULE

DATE	TASKS

Week 1: January 5-10	Chapter 1: <i>Introduction</i> • Take the Syllabus Quiz. This is a course requirement and you must pass it with perfect score (20/20). This task must be completed on the first week 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.
Week 2: January 11 – 17	Chapter 2: <i>Techniques of Geographic Analysis</i>
Week 3: January 18 - 24	Chapter 3: <i>Physical Geography: Landforms</i> • Reflection Essay # 1; due on Saturday, January 24.
Week 4: January 25 – 31	Chapter 4: <i>Physical Geography: Weather and Climate</i> • Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 31.
Week 5: February 1 – 7	• Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: chapters 1 to 4 (From Sunday February 1 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, February 4 at 10:00 PM.
Week 6: February 8 – 14	Chapter 12: <i>The Geography of Natural Resources</i> • Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 14.
Week 7: February 15 – 21	Chapter 5: <i>Population Geography</i> • Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 21.

Week 8: February 22 – 28	Spring Break – No classes
Week 9: March 1 - 7	Chapter 6: <i>Cultural Geography</i>
Week 10: March 8 – 14	Chapter 7: <i>Human Interaction</i> • Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, March 15.
Week 11: March 15 – 21	• Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: chapters 5 to 8 (From Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, March 18 at 10:00 PM).
Week 12: March 22 – 28	Chapters 9 and 10: <i>Economic Geography</i> • Reflection Essay # 6; due Saturday, March 28.
Week 13: March 29 - April 4	Chapter 8: <i>Political Geography</i> • Portfolio rough draft; due: Saturday, April 4 [no late work accepted after Monday, April 6].
Week 14: April 5 – 11	Chapter 11: <i>An Urban World</i> and Chapter 12: <i>Human Impact on the Environment</i>
Week 15: April 12 – 18	• Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: chapters 9 to 12 (From Sunday, April 12 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 15 at 10:00 PM). • Portfolio Final Project; due Saturday, April 18. • No late assignments accepted after Saturday, April 18.
Week 16: April 19 - 25	• Optional Quiz: chapters 1 to 13 (From Sunday, April 19 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 22 at 10:00 PM).

Policies & Resources

Please review the [FIU's Policies webpage](#). The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit [FIU's Policy and Procedure Library](#).

As a member of the FIU community, you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Assignments & Assessments

Assignments

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 Turnitin.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, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND PLAGIARISM) and **upload their posts using the Turnitin.com link embedded in our course website.**
Your professor will not submit any written assignment on the behalf of a student.

It is also required to include a picture in each reflection essay and portfolio that includes a pertinent example of what is being discussed. The picture must include a title on top (center) and a reference (included at the bottom of the picture). You must also include a

complete reference for the source where we can find this picture in your bibliography page.

Late works 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 7th day after the deadlines mentioned below.

No late works will be accepted after Saturday, April 18.

Any works that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade in the class.

Dates for the Reflection Essays are as follows:

Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 24.

Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 31.

Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 14.

Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, February 21.

Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, March 15.

Reflection Essay # 6; due: Saturday, March 28.

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, which requires you to apply concepts learned in this course.

Because 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 an Introduction.

After the topic is introduced, the next step is to include your six reflection essays. These must be updated with the corrections made by your professor during the term.

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 600 words): Introduction (~250-300 words), Conclusions (~300-350 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!

You must also include a picture in your cover page. This must include a title and a reference in the bottom of the picture with the information where we can find this source. You must also include this reference in your bibliography page.

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).

No late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 18.

Any work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade in the class.

Dates for the completion of the Portfolio are as follows:

Portfolio Rough Draft; due: Saturday, April 4. No late work will be accepted after this Monday, April 6).

Portfolio Final Project; due: Saturday, April 18. No late work will be accepted after this day (Saturday, April 18).

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 Canvas Help Team.

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.

No make-up quiz will be given. Students that miss a quiz will take the Optional Quiz as a make-up test.

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 tests is 20% of the course final grade.

In addition to these (3) quizzes, students will have the opportunity to take an Optional Quiz on the last week 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. **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 DURING THESE 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](#).

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 included in the quizzes, except for 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 on 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 follows:

Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: Chapters 1 to 4. From Sunday, February 1 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, February 4 at 10:00 PM.

Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: Chapters 12, and 5 to 9. From Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, March 18 at 10:00 PM.

Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: Chapters 8, 11, 13. From Sunday, April 12 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 15 at 10:00 PM.

Optional Quiz: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. From Sunday, April 19 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 22 at 10:00 PM.

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

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility (CRCA)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT, INCLUDING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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- One-inch margins all around and with no indentations
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- Number the pages
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