

Cultural Geography (Spring 2023)
GEO 3421
Instructor: Dr. Ricardo M. González

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE:

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?

Cultural Geography (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

Neumann, R. and P. Price. 2019. *Contemporary human mosaic: Culture, globalization, landscape*. 2nd 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 reading comprehension quizzes.

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. Note that there are no make-up for the quizzes.

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 to make sure you know how the process works and to make sure that your computer is compatible with FIU’s CANVAS system (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 materials.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started Information located in the Course Content;
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week of the term by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum;
- Take the Syllabus Quiz on the first week of the term. Students will not be allowed to access the course material until they take this quiz and pass it with perfect score;
- 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 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 three times per week;
- Respond to messages, discussion questions and postings within 48-72 hours (except on weekends or holidays);
- Grade assignments within two weeks of the corresponding 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 and holidays)**. This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

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 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 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 to comply with these basic rules of courtesy, the instructor reserves the right to remove posts that are aggressive or offensive, and dock participation points from the offender.

READING COMPREHENSION QUIZZES

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

- All quizzes will be online.
- There will be three, non-cumulative reading comprehension quizzes based on the readings, outlines, videos and other materials reviewed, including map questions. All quizzes will be online, and each one is worth 6.67% of the final grade in our course. The total value of the exams is 20% of the course' final grade.
- In addition to these (3) quizzes, students will have the opportunity to take an Optional Quiz 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. IF YOUR SCHEDULE PROHIBITS YOU FROM BEING AVAILABLE DURING THESE TIMES, then unfortunately you probably should not take this class.**
- The quizzes will be available from Sunday's at 2:00 PM and until Wednesday's at 10:00 PM. **IF YOUR SCHEDULE PROHIBITS YOU FROM BEING AVAILABLE AT EITHER OF THESE OPTIONAL TIMES, then, unfortunately, you probably should not take this class.**
- Just like any other in-campus test taken in a classroom, students are not allowed to take the quizzes in teams or share any information with classmates or any other individual. If you are in doubt, please read the FIU Academic Honesty Policy [here](#).
- **No make-up quiz will be given. Students that miss to take a quiz will take the Optional Quiz as a make-up test.**
- Each quiz will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions, including map questions (location of countries only), and each question will be worth 5 points. The quizzes will be limited to 30 minutes (past experience with a number of online courses has shown that this is sufficient time for the student who knows the material).
- Students are provided with Study Guides for each chapter/topic covered in this course. The study guides contain all questions that will be included in the quizzes, except for the map questions. For this reason, we would strongly suggest you to use them while reviewing the course material to be better prepared for the quizzes, and to improve your learning experience and your performance in our course.
- Results will be available after the testing period has ended. You will be able to see the total score only.

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

- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1:** Chapters 1 to 3. From Sunday, February 5 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, February 8 at 10:00 PM.
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2:** Chapters 4 to 7. From Sunday, March 19 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, March 22 at 10:00 PM.
- **Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3:** Chapters 8 to 10. From Sunday, April 16 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 19 at 10:00 PM.
- **Optional Quiz:** Chapters 1 to 10. From Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 PM until Wednesday, April 26 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 five reflection essays and only the best four grades earned will be used to calculate your final grade in our course. Each essay/discussion topic is worth 7.5% each 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 through the plagiarism detector Turnitin. 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 (600), 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 through Turnitin.
- 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.
- **No late works will be accepted after Saturday, April 22 - no exceptions.**

Dates for the reflection essays are as follow:

- **Reflection Essay # 1;** due: Saturday, January 21.
- **Reflection Essay # 2;** due: Saturday, January 28.
- **Reflection Essay # 3;** due: Saturday, February 25.
- **Reflection Essay # 4;** due: Saturday, March 18.
- **Reflection Essay # 5;** due: Saturday, April 8.

***No late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 22.**

TEAM EXERCISE

- In this activity, students will be assembled in teams of 4-5 members each and develop a paper based on an assigned topic chosen by the instructor of the course.
- After the student of their assignment, each team will select a Team 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 format of the team project must include four major sections: Introduction (which must be composed by the entire team), Individual Case Studies (individual activity), Conclusions (team activity) and Bibliography (team activity). You will also produce a map including all case studies analyzed in your work, and included at the end of the paper.
- This exercise is worth 20% of your final grade.
- All work must be posted in the team's Google Docs individually by each team member. Note that this will be the most important source of information used by the professor of the course when assigning grades for this activity.
- Once the team completes their project, the Team Leader only will submit your paper on a word document file through the plagiarism detection tool, Turnitin, by the due date. The team is also required to submit a rough draft of the team exercise.
- After discussing the case studies that each team member will research to complete their individual case study, the Team Leader must send the professor of the course a message with the name of the case study each member will analyze.
- 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.
- Works that are submitted late will be accepted but will have a 10-point discount for each week they are late.
- Details for the completion of the exercise will be provided in the third week of the term.

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

- **Team Composition (by your professor):** Friday, February 10.
- **Selection of Team Leader; due:** Monday, February 13.
- **Submission of selections of indigenous cultures' websites; due:** Saturday, February 18.
- **Rough Draft; due:** Saturday, March 11.
- **Final Project; due:** Saturday, March 25.
- **Assessment of individual and team members' contributions; due:** Saturday, March 25.

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 textbook. You will then summarize the elements of that paper, and based on the format provided in the Term-Paper Instructions (file) now available.

- **The due date is Saturday, April 15.** Please note that, **no late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 22.**
- For the paper, you will need to follow STRICTLY the format provided in 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 4):** The first step in completing this assignment is finding an article. The article you will research 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, editorials, country reports, commentaries, or special issue entries), and it must be from one of the peer reviewed geography journals listed in the Term-Paper Instructions file. The articles selected must be published in the year 2001 or later.
- **Only one person will be allowed to review an article. To submit your article preferences you will have to send the Instructor of the course a message in CANVAS 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 following the samples included in the Instructions files (authors last name/s, first name/s, year of publication, title of article, journal where it was published (written in Italics), volume, number, page numbers – See instructions file). You must also attach the PDFs for the articles to your message.**
- **If you fail to submit an appropriate article selection by the due date, not only will you lose points** towards the final grade of this task (10 points), but I will assign an article to you – I can't promise it will be interesting or easy to read. **I will send individual messages to each student with their assigned articles no later than Monday, February 6.**
- Once you complete your paper, you must submit your work to the plagiarism detection website Turnitin.com by the due date.

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

- **Article Selection: Saturday, February 4.**
- **Article Assignments: Monday, February 6.**
- **Rough Draft: Saturday, April 1 [no late work will be accepted after Monday, April 3].**
- **Final Project: Saturday, April 15.**
- **No late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 22.**

IMPORTANT NOTE ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, WIKIPEDIA, TURNITIN, 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 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 weeks of the term).

No late work will be accepted after Saturday, April 22.

Each written assignment must include references from the course textbook, including but not limited to key definitions and other important aspects related to the topics covered in each project. Students must include in-text citations of the course textbook in their essays, as well as complete reference of this source in a Bibliography page. You can find a complete reference of our course textbook below. Use the following format for the in-text citation: (Neumann and Price 2019). You may also introduce this source at the beginning of a sentence following this example: According to Neumann and Price (2019), ... 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 ..." (Neumann and Price 2019: 35).

- Neumann, R. and P. Price. 2019. *Contemporary human mosaic: Culture, globalization, landscape*. 2nd edition. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

Students are not allowed to use WIKIPEDIA in this course and will result in a significant point deduction if this source is used 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 and submitted on a word document will receive a 10-point deduction in their grade.

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.

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
Reading Comprehension Quizzes (3 @ 6.67% each)	20%
Reflection Essays (4 @ 7.5% each)	30%
Team Exercise	20%
Term-Paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

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

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

DATE	TASKS
Week 1: January 9 - 14	Chapter 1: Human Geography: <i>A Cultural Approach</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Start Here folder located in the course content. • Review the Policies Page as is important to the quality of your education. • Take the Syllabus Quiz on the first week of the term. This must be passed with perfect score to gain access to the course materials. • 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 15 - 21	Chapter 1: Human Geography: <i>A Cultural Approach</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 1; due: Saturday, January 21.
Week 3: January 22 - 28	Chapter 2 Geographies of Cultural Difference: One World or Many? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 2; due: Saturday, January 28.
Week 4: January 29 - February 4	Chapter 3 Population Geography: Shaping the Human Mosaic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper article selection; due: Saturday, February 4.
Week 5: February 5 - 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 1: chapters 1 to 3 (From Sunday, February 5 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, February 8 at 10:00 PM).
Week 6: February 12 - 18	Chapter 4 The Geography of Language: Locating the Spoken Word <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Exercise – Selection of Team Leader; due: Monday, February 13. • Team Exercise – Submission of selections of indigenous cultures' websites; due: Saturday, February 18.
Week 7: February 19 - 25	Chapter 5 Geographies of Race and Ethnicity: Melting Pot or Salad Bowl? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 3; due: Saturday, February 25.
Week 8: February 26 - March 4	Spring Break: No classes
Week 9: March 5 - 11	Chapter 6 Political Geography: A Divided World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Exercise rough draft; due: Saturday, March 11.
Week 10: March 12 - 18	Chapter 7 The Geography of Religion: Spaces and Places of Sacredness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 4; due: Saturday, March 18.

Week 11: March 19 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 2: chapters 4 to 7 (From Sunday, March 19 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, March 22 at 10:00 PM). • Team Exercise Final Project; due: Saturday, March 25. • Team Exercise - Assessment of individual and team members' contributions; due: Saturday, March 25.
Week 12: March 26 – April 1	<p>Chapter 8 The Geography of Agriculture and Food: Shaping the Land, Feeding the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper rough draft; due on Saturday, April 1.
Week 13: April 2 - 8	<p>Chapter 9 Development Geography: Transforming Landscapes of Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Essay # 5; due: Saturday, April 8.
Week 14: April 9 – 15	<p>Chapter 10 Urban Geography: A World of Cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term-Paper – Final Project; due: Saturday, April 15.
Week 15: April 16 - 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension Quiz # 3: chapters 9 to 11 (From Sunday, April 16 at 2:00 PM, and until Wednesday, April 19 at 10:00 PM). • No late written assignments will be accepted after Saturday, April 22.
Week 16: April 23 - 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Quiz: chapters 1 to 10, including assign readings. From Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 PM, and Wednesday, April 26 at 10:00 PM.