This course provides an introduction to the geography of Latin America. The course studies the countries, subregions, and peoples, including the Caribbean area, and their regional organizations. The class will offer you with the basic knowledge of the physical environment, political geography, population distribution, economic development, and ways of life. Emphasis will be placed upon the changing societies of the region and the changing relationships between people and their environment. However, much of geographical information cannot be contained in any textbook, or covered by any length of lectures. In this class, you will be introduced to some tools for geographical exploration that range from searching for information to critically processing it. You will not be required to memorize trivial facts. Instead, I expect you to understand important concepts and explain processes and ideas that shape this region.

Goals:
At the end of the semester, I hope that you will:

- Have a basic grasp of the concepts and facts of Latin America geography;
- Understand how human populations interact with their environments to make cultural landscapes;
- Be motivated to keep up with and analyze current events reported in the news media;
- Know where to find information and how to conduct basic research on topic related to Latin America.

Requirements

- **Read the assigned chapters/articles before coming to class.** Assignments from the text are listed below for each class session. The lectures will often presume knowledge that the textbook provides. They will NOT be a repeat of the textbook, but an elaboration of certain concepts.
- **Attend class meetings.** You are expected to attend class and participate. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet; there will be no roll call. Please, **don’t be late for class.**
• Map quizzes. There will be 4 map quizzes during regular class time. These will be given unannounced starting on the 3rd week of classes.
• Research Paper. You will be writing a 12-15 page double-spaced typed pages, font 12, (not including illustrations and references) paper this semester due on or before October 31st; LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. The paper should be written in a formal, expository style. It should have a well-defined focus, address a specific research question stated in a lucid introduction, evaluate designs or make generalizations, and draw conclusions related to the stated research question. A 15 minute power point presentation should also be included with your paper (on a CD, jump drive or zip drive – which will be returned to you ASAP). A brief proposal and literature review of your paper that includes at least 5 references and one map is required to help you get started, and is due on or before September 12th. The writing process will not only enable you to learn more about the course subject material, but also give you a chance to do some library research and to write in an academic style. A guideline will be provided to help you organize, write, and appropriately reference your papers.
• We will have two mid-term exams and one final exam (non-cumulative). The mid-term exams will be conducted in a regular class period, while the final exam will be two hours.

Textbook

Grading
• Attendance and participation 50 points
• Map Quiz (3) 150 points
• Research paper 250 points
• Mid-term exams (2@150 points) 300 points
• Final exam 250 points
TOTAL 1000 points

Class participation:
It is expected that interactive learning and teaching will enrich the learning experience of all students, and that each student will work in partnership with the professor to create a positive learning experience for all. Student engagement is a necessary condition for an effective learning experience, and includes contributions to debate and discussion (if any), positive interactive learning with others, and an enthusiastic attitude towards inquiry. Everyone is expected to be a positive contributor to the class learning community, and students are expected to share the responsibility of teaching each other.

Class conduct:
Students and instructor in this class are bound by Florida International University policies on conduct and academic rights and freedoms. Please make sure that you are familiar with the rules and regulations of our campus community.
In order to ensure a positive learning environment, the following behaviors are unacceptable:
• talking out of turn
• carrying out side conversations in class
• chronic tardiness/early departures
• sleeping, reading non-class material
• internet cruising/email/text messaging

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. **Any assignments that have been plagiarized will earn an automatic failure grade in the course.**
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.

**Lectures:**
Class notes or other materials will be posted on Moodle (https://ecampus.fiu.edu/).

**Due dates:**
The research paper must be received on the due date. Should you miss a class on the due date, you must contact me within 24 hours to receive authorization to turn in an assignment. No research paper will be accepted on or after the next meeting of the class.

**Make-ups:**
**No make-ups will be given without a verified excuse.** Should a mid-term exam be missed you must contact me within 24 hours of the missed class. You will not be able to make-up the exam on or after the next meeting of the class without making proper arrangements and without verified documentation. Absolutely NO make up exams without either 1) a note from a doctor that a student was incapable of attending for medical reasons, or 2) documentation of a death in the immediate family. Flat tires, conflicts with work or travel, etc. are not valid reasons for missing an exam and do not qualify for make-ups. **No make-ups will be given for the map quizzes or final exam.**

**Class communication:**
This is a large lecture class and it is important to establish a protocol for student-instructor interaction in order for you to receive timely advice. Please make sure that you check the course website for class news/information. You are welcome to communicate through email or to visit me by previously setting an appointment. To make sure that your e-mail does not get buried in the pile of other e-mails I usually receive, on your subject line, please write: “GEA 3400:” to precede your e-mail purpose. I will respond to inquiries within 24-48 hours.

**Cell phones must be off during class. No talking on the phone or texting. Laptop use is permitted for note-taking ONLY; violating the laptop policy means that you will not be allowed to use your laptop in class.** Please let the instructor know if you have any special needs.

If you have a disability and need assistance, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Upon contact, the DRC will review your request and contact your professors or other personnel to make arrangements for appropriate modification and/or assistance.
Weekly outline (subject to change)

Week # 1 (Aug. 22, 24, 26): Introduction
Reading: Chapter 1

Week # 2 (Aug. 29, 31, Sep. 2): Latin America as a Culture Region
Reading: Chapter 2
The Environment
Reading: Chapter 3

Week # 3 (Sep. 7, 9): Library Research Training Session

Week # 4 (Sep. 12, 14, 16): Peopling Latin America
Reading: Chapter 5
European Conquest and Colonization
Reading: Chapter 7
*SEPTEMBER 12: PROPOSAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

Week # 5 (Sep. 19, 21, 23): European Conquest and Colonization
Reading: Chapter 7

Week # 6 (Sep. 26, 28, 30): Early Cities and Urban Development
Reading: Chapter 7
Contemporary Cities and Urban Patterns
Reading: Chapter 14

*OCTOBER 3: MID-TERM EXAM # 1

Week # 7 (Oct. 5, 7): Land and People since the Conquest
Reading: Chapter 12

Week # 8 (Oct. 10, 12, 14): Migration, Population Change, and Race
Reading: Chapter 9

Week # 9 (Oct. 17, 19, 21): The Hispanic Caribbean
Reading: Chapter 4

Week # 10 (Oct. 24, 26, 28): The Mesa Central of Mexico
Reading: Chapter 6

*OCTOBER 31: MID-TERM EXAM # 2
Week # 11 (Nov. 2, 4): The Central American Highlands  
*Reading*: Chapter 11

Week # 12 (Nov. 7, 9): The Andes  
*Reading*: Chapter 8

Week # 13 (Nov. 14, 16, 18): The Andes  
*Reading*: Chapter 8  
The Central Valley of Chile  
*Reading*: Chapter 10

*NOVEMBER 14: TERM-PAPER DUE

Week # 14 (Nov. 21): The Pampa  
*Reading*: Chapter 17

Week # 15 (Nov. 28, 30, Dec. 2): Brazil  
*Reading*: Chapters 13 & 15  
The Amazon Basin  
*Reading*: Chapter 19

*Week # 16: FINAL EXAMINATION (TBA)*