This syllabus is subject to revision throughout the course. Check our moodle page for the most up to date version.

GEO 2000: Fall 2011
Introduction to Human Geography

Instructor: Dr. Caroline Faria (cvfaria@fiu.edu)
Room: Chemistry & Physics 151
Class meets: T/Th 12:30-1:45
Office hours: T/Th 3:30-4:30pm (or by appointment) SIPA 308
See our Moodle site for the most up to date syllabus, links to the readings, sign-up pages, blog, assignments, message boards, announcements etc.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is Human Geography?
Why does place matter?
How can a geographic perspective enrich our understanding of the world?

Welcome to GEO 2000: Introduction to Geography! This course aims to provide you with an understanding of the key concepts and theoretical frameworks that form the foundation of the discipline. Since Human Geography is rooted in a concern for the relationships between society and the environment, we will draw on a range of ‘real world’ case studies in the class. In particular we will read, discuss, and write on the political, social, cultural and environmental issues and events affecting Haiti. Over the course of the semester, our class will focus on 7 key themes that are commonly studied within Human Geography and for which Haiti offers a rich and grounded case study. These are; Identity & Difference, Health & Disease, Globalization & Development, Cities & the Urban, Food & Agriculture, Travel & Tourism, and Migration & Diasporas. In 2-week blocks we will firstly cover foundational geographical concepts and key sub-fields of the discipline that commonly explore these topics. We will then turn in the second week of each block to a focus on these topics in the context of Haiti – critically discussing, debating, writing and presenting to the class our understanding of the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing this country through a Geographical lens.

Key learning goals of the class:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Develop a foundational understanding of the discipline of Human Geography including key concepts and areas of research
- Discuss and debate controversial issues affecting our world
- Connect theoretical concepts with grounded case studies
- Critically evaluate a variety of popular and academic texts covering real world issues from a geographic perspectives
- Participate in group learning through collaborative projects and in class debate
- Write in a variety of formats and for a range of audiences on the key issues covered in class
- Research a topic from a geographic perspective using a mix of popular and academic courses
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Required Texts
- A series of required articles linked to our moodle course page and/or through the library.

Using Moodle
- Our course will be on ecampus moodle at [https://ecampus.fiu.edu/](https://ecampus.fiu.edu/) Plan to use and check the website regularly. You will log in to the site with the same username and password that you use for your email. For tech support with ecampus Moodle, contact them at: 305-348-2284 or in the Green Library Room 249. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to the course website.

Expectations of you
The following are strategies for completing this class with a strong and stress-free grade. Take note!

- **Attend and participate in class sessions**
  Attendance and participation is a very important part of this class. All in-class and homework exercises will connect closely to the exams and assignments so completing all of these is a very important and helpful way to obtain a high standard in this class. I understand that family, illness, and unexpected events may require you to miss class and if so please let me know as soon as possible. Note that I may not regularly post my lectures on the web nor do I provide copies of my lecture notes. In the event of an absence, you will need to make arrangements with other students in the class to get notes. I have designed the class so that you can miss 2-3 classes and blogs and still receive full credit. For this reason I do not need to know if you have to miss class for a wedding, a lab, a sports game, a party, work or a job interview. However do note that missing more than 3 classes and/or blogs will begin to seriously affect your final grade. Bear this in mind as you plan your semester schedule and let me know in the first week if you are likely to miss a lot of class time for any reason.

- **Complete all assigned readings before class**
  All lectures and discussion will assume a familiarity with the assigned readings. You are expected to come to all classes having completed all reading assignments, to be prepared to discuss the reading material, and to be able to participate in the class activities by sharing your thoughts, views and questions. Read critically! Make sure that you understand not only the content of the assigned readings but the significance and validity of the argument and analysis presented. I will provide some insights into strategies for reading critically on day 1. If this is not clear to you raise questions in class or individually during my office hours – this all shows me that you are engaged and participating. **You can expect to be called upon during class to discuss your understanding of the reading material and to provide your thoughts, reflections and critiques.**

- **Laptops and cell phones**
  Laptops can be incredibly useful tools for your learning and I recognize that completing our readings online enables you to avoid costly printing fees. However, as we all know,
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they can be distracting when used in class. For this reason I do not permit laptop use in the classroom during lectures, in-class exercises and discussion unless you have an exemption from the disability resource center. If you choose to read material in electronic form please come with your handwritten or printed notes and use these to refer to during discussion. During lectures please take notes in handwritten form. This inconvenience will be more than compensated for by the improved attention and focus you and your classmates will feel during the course.

I expect your full attention during our 75 minutes of class time. Cell phones must be turned off and in your bags throughout our sessions. Students with phones on their desks or who use their phones in any way will not receive participation for that day’s class. My TA and I may not let you know, but we will definitely take away your participation credit. If you repeatedly use your phone in class you will not receive any participation for the semester. Please take note.

- **Respectful engagement**
  Through an atmosphere of respect and consideration, the varied backgrounds and experiences brought to the classroom are our best resources for exploring the many issues raised by the readings and in our discussions. I expect you to listen actively and attentively to the opinions and thoughts of your peers, to respect the ideas of others even when they contradict or challenge your own, and to keep confidential the any conversations we have in class that relate to particular individuals. If you recognize yourself as someone who often contributes, work on listening to others and encouraging them to speak. If you know you are quieter, push yourself to share at least one reflection with the class or in small group discussions during each session.

**What you can expect from me**

- **Intellectual engagement**
  My role in the course is to provide you with a foundation in Geographic theories and the connections between these theoretical ideas and ‘real world’ examples. To ensure this is as rich, compelling and engaging process as possible I will regularly use a mix of medias in class, combining short lectures with group discussion and individual work. In our in-class discussions, sometimes (often) I will take on a position that feels uncomfortable for you, sometimes this will reflect my opinions and sometimes not. The point is that we stretch ourselves and think critically about the ways we think about the world. I will encourage you to engage as actively as possible in this process and to push yourselves and your peers, respectfully, as we move through the class together.

- **Advising**
  You can expect me to be available online from 9am-5pm on weekdays and to respond to your respectful and reasonable emails within 2 days (usually far sooner). I will also be available weekly during my office hours though you should feel free to arrange to meet with me by appointment outside these times/days also.

- **Grading**
  You can expect your assignments to be carefully reviewed and fairly graded according to transparent grading policies I will share with you. I try as hard as possible to return your assignments and exams within two weeks of receiving them.
Other Important policies

- **Disability Accommodation**
  To request academic accommodations due to disability please contact the disability resource center through their website http://drc.fiu.edu/. Please inform me as soon as possible about special accommodations.

- **Academic Integrity**
  Plagiarism, cheating and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. You are expected to know and follow the University’s policies. Plagiarism includes: using another writer’s words or ideas without proper citation, citing your source but reproducing exact words without quotation, borrowing the structure of another author’s phrases or sentences without crediting them, and buying or borrowing the work of other students. Since our written work is completed in small steps it is very easy to spot plagiarized papers. Any student who plagiarizes in any way will receive no credit for the assignment and I will instigate the required procedures with the University administration. Please see the following website for more details: http://coeweb.fiu.edu/plagiarism/FIU_Procedures_in_Plagiarism.htm

- **Assignments**
  Handing in written documents constitutes an agreement that you have an electronic back-up copy. Except in the case of a verifiable medical or family emergency precluding timely submission, **late work and e-mailed work (with the exception of your final Op-Ed) will not be accepted.** Please note (extenuating circumstances aside) there are no make up provisions for participation credit completed in class, course assignments, midterm or final exams.

- **Syllabus changes**
  I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. The most up to date version will always be posted at our Moodle page.

- **Grade contestations and incompletes**
  Contestations (in writing please) will receive a response within a week. No incompletes will be offered unless extenuating circumstances have been discussed prior to the end of week 4. Please come to me before this time if you have personal, family or other issues that you feel make you unable to complete the class satisfactorily.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **In-class participation (20%)**
   
   *Due during class session*
   
   You will be expected to come to all classes and to be prepared to discuss the reading material for that day. All students can expect to be called upon for participation. Examples of ‘participation’ include the following and will be a useful way to prepare for in-class quizzes and writing exercises.
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- Noting down the key words that arose for you from the readings
- Commenting on the readings and connecting readings to lecture/ other student’s comments
- Raising questions about the content of the reading or lecture material
- Responding to the preparatory questions that may be posed
- Providing insights into your understanding of the key concepts
- Connecting different students’ comments and ideas together

In addition, during class we may complete a variety of short exercises intended to help you make connections between the class material (perhaps a lecture, radio or film clip, photograph, newspaper article etc) and the course readings for that day. These exercises may take the form of a peer review on your written work, pop quiz on the readings, a worksheet connected to a film or another class material, a short written reflective piece, or a group activity. A portion of these exercises will be collected at the end of session for grading.

Please note that you have a short homework assignment due before day 2 of class that will form part of your participation grade. Please come to Thursday’s class having completed this assignment and ready to discuss it.

2. Weekly reading blogs (20%)

Due by 6pm on Mondays OR Wednesdays depending on your assigned blog day.

Each week, prior to ONE of the week’s sessions you will be expected to write a short (400 word) post to the moodle blog. These blogs should provide a thoughtful commentary and critical engagement with the readings. A strong blog entry will:
1. A brief review of the material and 1-3 key words/ concepts.
2. Include a brief discussion of the most interesting/ frustrating/ exciting/ engaging etc aspect of the piece for you.
3. For readings on Haiti comment briefly on the ways in which a geographical approach (one centering ideas such as place, space, scale, migration, borders, inequality etc) is insightful in understanding the real world case studies you read about.
4. Close with 1-2 thoughtful questions raised by the readings to prompt in-class discussion.

You will be able to sign up for your chosen blog day (Mondays or Wednesdays) in the first week of class so review your schedule to figure out which date will work best for you. Note that I will call on bloggers in particular to comment, raise questions and facilitate discussion in class.

3. Mid term and final exams (20% and 25%)

You will complete one mid-term and one final in-class written exam. Each one will review the key concepts, case studies and ideas presented in the class in the previous weeks. Note that the final exam is cumulative but will focus on the case study material covered in the second portion of the semester. The exam will include a series of short and mid-length written responses and one longer essay question. You will be given a range of possible essay questions for review prior to the exams and a selection of these will then be included on the final exam.

4. Final Paper OR Group Research Presentation (15%)

Op-Ed research paper due on the last day of class

OR
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Group Presentation due Tuesdays in class from week 4-6 on.

Op-Ed research paper
If you choose this option you will be required to individually author an Op-Ed piece on one of the key themes we have covered in class (food, health, migration etc). This brief should be 2 pages, single-spaced, 12 font with 1.5 inch margins. Your Op-Ed will require a library research component ie it should include at least 4 academic peer-reviewed articles in addition to any popular pieces from news sites, non-governmental organizations, personal interviews etc. You will produce two drafts of your Op-Ed over the course of the quarter and you will conduct one peer-review of a fellow student as part of the writing process. More information to follow.

In-class group presentation
If you choose this option you will work in groups of 3-4 to present to the class on an issue that connects the Geographical concepts we have been learning about with a case study from Haiti. Groups will present once, with presentations running on Tuesdays every two weeks from week 4-6 on. Your presentation should aim to review the material covered in the two weeks prior and to teach the class 1-2 of the key concepts we have covered through your chosen case study. Your presentation should be no longer than 10-15 mins. In general your presentations should take the form of a short film but I am open to other creative formats (theater/ performance, zine form…feel free to be creative!) Just like the Op-Ed this assignment will include a research component and should include at least 4 academic peer-reviewed articles in addition to material from popular news, non-governmental organizations, your own research etc. We will discuss this project together in class and work in stages to develop your ideas. You will be expected to meet with a TA twice prior to the presentation to discuss your progress (you will have some time set aside during class when the rest of the class are reviewing their Op-Ed drafts). Space for this option is limited to 5-10 groups and a maximum of 40 students. Sign up sis possible online and once full no additional students can take this option. More information to follow.

COURSE CONTENT

Week 1: Introducing Human Geography: Foundations
Due for Tuesday (day 1): Purchase textbook, read syllabus and assigned chapter.
Due for Thursday (day 2): Read assigned chapter, sign up for chosen blog dates, complete mini-homework assignment.

This week we will begin by reviewing the key goals of the course. You will use this week to familiarize yourself with the syllabus, each other and myself and you will have an opportunity to purchase/ access the required reading material. There is one mini-assignment due for Thursday. Please complete this and post your response to our Moodle site where indicated.

Readings:
- Week 1, Tuesday 08/23: (Course Text) Chapter 1 – Human Geography: A Cultural Approach
- Week 1, Thursday 08/25: (Course Text) Chapter 2 – Many Worlds: Geographies of Cultural Difference

Key concepts:
Week 2-3: Identity & Difference

Due: Weekly readings and blog post on your assigned day

Readings:

- Week 2, Tuesday 08/30: (Course Text) Chapter 5 – Geographies of Race and Ethnicity: Melting Pot or Mosaic
- Week 2, Thursday 09/01: (Course Text) Chapter 6 – Political Geography: A Divided World

Key concepts:
Difference, Identity, Race & Ethnicity, Political Geography, Postcolonial geography

Homework assignment:

The notion of ‘place’ is a key geographical concept and one we will be thinking a lot about during the semester.

Review the different images or ‘texts’ posted at our Moodle site.

What and where are pieces are about? In a blog response (no more than 400 words) comment on one or more of the following:

- How did these pieces make you feel (intrigued, bored, frustrated, angry…)? Describe your emotions explicitly. At what particular points did you experience particular emotions and why do you think this was the case?
- What different meanings about the place are conveyed in these pieces?
- How do they complement or contradict one another?
- How does your understanding of this place differ or coincide with the creators of these stories?
- How do you think that the experience of this ‘place’ differs for different kinds of people? Which kinds of people and why?
- What else do you need/want to know about this place in order to better understand or challenge the messages portrayed in one or more of these texts.
- Discuss at least ONE connection between an idea, example or comment in the course textbook chapters you have read and these texts.

Close by articulating at least 1 question raised by your reflection of these pieces.

Post your blog to our Moodle site under the blog post in week 1.
Week 4-5: Health & Disease

Due: Weekly readings and blog post on assigned day
Due Tuesday of week 4: In-class presentation

Readings:
- Week 4, Tuesday 09/13: (Course Text) Chapter 3 – *Population Geography: Shaping the Human Mosaic*

Key concepts:
Political Ecology of Disease, Medical Geography, Health Geography

Week 6-7: Globalization & Development

Due: Weekly readings and blog post on your assigned day
Due Tuesday of Week 6: In-class group presentation

Readings:
- Week 6, Tuesday 09/27 and Thursday 09/29: (Course Text) Chapter 9 – *Geographies of Economies: Industries, Services and development*
- Week 7, Tuesday 10/04
- Thursday 10/06: Review Naomi Klein's blogs on Haiti and select 2 to discuss in your blog [http://www.naomiklein.org/search/node/haiti?page=1](http://www.naomiklein.org/search/node/haiti?page=1) AND

Key concepts:
Globalization, Aid, Development, Neoliberalism, Structural Adjustment, Economic Geography

Week 8: Research paper draft 1, mid-term review & exam

No blog posts due
Due Tuesday of week 8: In-class presentation
Tuesday in-class: draft of your Op-Ed pieces (hard copies), mid-term review open session
No readings assigned. Catch up on any incomplete readings, review for mid-term and prepare research paper draft for class workshop.

**Week 9: Cities & the Urban**

**Due:** Weekly readings and blog post on your assigned day

**No in-class presentations due.**

- Week 9, Tuesday 10/18: (Course Text) Chapter 10 *Urbanization: The City in Time and Space* and half of Chapter 11 *Inside the City: A Cultural Mosaic*

**Key concepts:**
Urbanization, Modeling cities, Urban Geography

**Week 10-11: Food & Agriculture**

**Due:** Weekly readings and blog post on assigned day

**Due Tuesday of week 10:** In-class group presentation

**Readings:**

- Week 10, Tuesday 10/25: (Course Text) Chapter 8 – *Agricultural Geography: The Geography of the Global Food System*
- Week 11, Tuesday 11/01:
  - Read also this blog article on the use of GM seeds in Haiti:
  - Week 11, Thursday 11/03
    - Read also this article on recent Haitian protests around Monsanto shipments of GM seeds. http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/article.php?news_id=23465
    - And Monsanto’s response:

**Key concepts:**
Industrialization of Agriculture, Green & Gene Revolutions, Food Aid, Political Ecology.
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**Week 12-13: Travel & Tourism**

Due: Weekly readings and blog post on assigned day  
Due Tuesday of week 12: In-class group presentation


**Key concepts:**  
Postcolonial Geography, Feminist Geography

**Week 14: Migration & Diasporas**

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – week 14. Monday and Wednesday bloggers should post on Tuesday’s reading.  
Due: Weekly readings and blog post on assigned day  
Due Tuesday of Week 14: In-class group presentation

**Readings:**
- Reading for Wednesday bloggers: Stepick chapter

**Key concepts:**  
Gender and Nationalism, Borderlands, Transnationalism, Geographies of Migration

**Week 15: Final paper review, final exam review, class reflections**

Due: Weekly readings and blog post on assigned day  
Due Tuesday of Week 15: In-class group presentation, final Op-Ed drafts  
Thursday of week 15: Final exam review, final Op-Ed paper due in hard copy form and through turnitin.com (with hard copy evidence of submission to a publication stapled to your paper.)

- Week 15, Tuesday 11/29 and Thursday 12/1 (Course Text) Chapter 12 – *One World or Many? The Cultural Geography of the Future*
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We will close the class by reflecting on the key concepts, themes and case studies we have covered and review these in preparation for the final exam. We’ll return to our discussions on day 1 and consider how a geographic perspective has enriched, challenged or changed our understandings of the issues we have discussed. We’ll close by considering our next steps as critical geographic scholars of the world around us.