

Winter 2006

Geography 155

Latin American Geography

El pueblo, a vila, li tenamit: However you call where you live, geography matters. Why are human and physical patterns inscribed where they are on the Latin American landscape? And what are the economic, political, social, and environmental causes and consequences of human-environment interactions across the diverse regions of Latin America?

Questions?
carr@geog.ucsb.edu

With
Instructor
Dr. David Carr
and
T.A. Laurel Suter

TR 12:30 - 1:45pm

This course aims to combine lectures with field research in the Santa Barbara area to examine the human and physical dimensions of Latin American society and environment and the region's increasing mutual synergisms with the US (especially California!)

Designed by Laura Harrison

Class: T TH 12:30PM-1:45PM; Ellison Hall, Rm 3621
Labs/Discussion (only when announced in class!):
Th 2-2:50 or Wed 2-2:50; Ellison Hall, Rm 3621

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor

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Office hours: T 11-12PM; Th 2:00-3:00PM

Teaching Assistant (TA)

Laurel Suter
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Ellison 5722
M 2-3PM; Th 11:30-12:30

COURSE OBJECTIVES

(IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE YOU WILL...)

The objectives of the course are: (1) to apprehend the variety of physical environments covering Latin America, (2) to understand the cultural, social, and historic factors that influenced the creation of Latin American cultural diversity, (3) to understand economic, social, and environmental consequences of Latin American economic liberalization and globalization, (4) to understand how these three forces coalesce to shape different geographies of (un)sustainable development throughout the diverse regions of Latin America, and (5) to gain valuable experience designing and conducting geographical/sociological research.

Master the language and methods of Geography as applied to the study of Latin America:

At a basic level: Knowledge and Comprehension

- You are conversant in the basic language and methods of human and physical geography. You correctly describe terms and concepts related to Latin American Geography. You apply the appropriate methods to questions of human and physical dynamics in Latin America. You relate key historical and spatial patterns for human and physical processes in the region.

-Can you do this? Good. You will pass the course!

Analyze and interpret interactions among human-environment/resource dynamics with a critical historical and spatial lens:

At a competent level: Application and Analysis

- You convincingly describe how human processes interact with each other and with physical geographical dynamics. You are familiar with examples of human and physical processes historically (e.g. the 1500s versus today) and geographically (e.g. Central versus South America; Chile versus Ecuador) and you apply sufficiently advanced critical thinking to formulate reasonable hypotheses regarding when and where key human-environment interactions are likely to occur and how changes in one process may affect changes in another. You provide key examples of the significance of each to society.

-Feasible? Congratulations. You have earned a B.

Critically evaluate interactions among human and physical geographical processes across time and space:

At an outstanding level: Synthesis and Evaluation

- You persuasively argue with choice examples how human dynamics can cause and be caused by

political, economic, and environmental processes. You compellingly predict how demographic and human and physical geographical processes operate differently over time and across space and how changes in one process may affect changes in another. Armed with knowledge and critical thinking skills developed during the course you cogently argue how other socio-economic, political, and ecological processes (possibly not covered in class) may relate to the human and physical geographical dynamics. You propose novel methodological and policy solutions to academic and empirical problems.

-Still with me? If you are successful with the above and you write with strong, clear, logically-structured prose with virtually flawless grammar on your written assignments, you will obtain an A. While only a handful of students may earn an A, my experience suggests that most students are capable of earning an A if they dedicate themselves. I do not grade on a curve and, given the above criteria are met, I would be thrilled to award an A to every student in the class.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

You will not sit passively while I lecture to you during each class period. Rather, several methods will be used during class time to maximize your mastery of the material. These may include:

- Lectures
- Discussions
- Debates
- Presentations
- Quizzes
- Activities
- Written and oral lecture summaries
- Laboratory assignments
- Field Work
- Writing assignments
- Analysis of videos

TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE YOU SHOULD:

Consistently attend classes and labs

Prepare for class by carefully completing assigned readings on time

Actively participate in class discussions and activities

Review your notes following each class

Understand course requirements; if unsure, ask.

EVALUATION

- Class participation and attendance are expected — studies indicate they are strongly positively

correlated with course grade.

Formal evaluation consists of:

- **Mid-term Exam** 20%
- **Final Exam** 30%
- **Research Assignment** 15%
- **Papers/presentations**
 - Undergrads: a 3-5pg. double-space max. paper (25%)
 - Grads: 7-10 page double-space max. paper (25%) and 15 minute presentation (5%)
- **Attendance/effort/in-class assignments or quizzes**
 - Undergrads (10%)
 - Grads (5%)

Exams

- Exam material will come from all course sources including material covered in class, readings, labs, and/or videos. Exams will comprise a mix of question types including multiple choice, short answers, and brief essays.
- You will be evaluated on the exams based on the course objectives stated above in the syllabus. The exam questions will test you on the objectives and allow you to successfully demonstrate your mastery of them.

I include questions of different types because:

- 1) People learn, process, and communicate information differently. Different question types allow for people with different learning strengths to show their mastery of the material.
- 2) Posing varied types of questions better enables the TA and me to evaluate you based on the multi-leveled learning objectives stated in the syllabus. Recall that merely memorizing the material will earn you only a passing grade.

Examples of types of exam questions

- **Multiple Choice**
_____ 1. The Amazon forest region of Peru is roughly the size of:
a) Brazil b) Maine c) Germany d) UK e) none of the above
- **Short Answer**
_____ is the language spoken by most indigenous people throughout the Andes.
- **Short essay**
Explain key human and physical geographical factors involved in economic development differentials in Latin America. Use a relatively wealthy and a relatively poor country for your comparison. What are potential political, economic, and environmental causes and consequences of this difference?

Class activities (e.g. discussions and debates)

- Be prepared for class activities.
- Share and explain your opinions.
- Don't dominate; be fair about the amount of time you take to speak.
- Back up your arguments with evidence.
- Disagree politely.
- Listen carefully to other opinions.
- Change your mind when another argument is more cogent than yours.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification.
- Make your points succinctly, avoiding repetition, and providing a choice example of your point.

Lab and Writing Assignments. I encourage you to seek help at Campus Learning Assistance Services. Writing tutors are available at the CLAS Bldg **Building 477 and Building 300** near Girvetz Hall and the Old Gym. Phone: 3269 Web: www.clas.ucsb.edu.

To earn an A on writing and lab assignments do the following:

Fulfill task requirements.

- Basic instructions are followed and all tasks and questions are addressed (*It is amazing to me how many people fail to do this!*)

You state an argument or arguments upfront and you provide appropriate examples and concepts to support your points.

- You choose a research question or argument that is of significance to the human and physical geography of Latin America. Your examples convincingly support your argument. You provide novel insights and raise further questions through you analysis.

Use concepts appropriately and creatively.

- Geography is central to your assignment, and historical and geographical examples are used to reach new insight on the subject.

Synthesize, interpret, and evaluate.

- You use geographical concepts to explore unusual interrelations or links that may not be obvious. Description is used only as a necessary base for synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.

Organize with logic and clarity.

- Your work follows a clear-cut and logical trajectory. The introduction and conclusion are well developed and correspond to the body of the assignment. Topic sentences form the backbone of the work and introduce the body of each corresponding paragraph. Your pose is free of superfluous points and *non-sequiturs*.

Display accuracy and conceptual discipline.

- No conceptual, logical, or organizational errors are apparent. All factual information or opinions not produced independently by you is cited using MLA style.

Present your work flawlessly (or nearly so).

- Your work is polished, an evident product of several drafts. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct; word choice is judicious.

POLICIES REGARDING LATE ASSIGNMENTS, MAKE-UP EXAMS, AND GRADING

- **Make-ups** may be allowed for excused work not completed— other means may also be devised to evaluate a student’s overall course performance in those cases.
- **Late assignments:** Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced by 5 percentage points each day beyond the assigned deadline except under extraordinary circumstances authorized by the instructor.
- **Final Grade:** I reserve the right to alter exam and assignment grades. I pledge not to do so unless necessary and in consideration of the student's best interests.

READINGS

No single reading adequately covers the multiplicity of topics covered in the course. For that reason, readings will come from various sources, including books, newspaper articles, reports, magazines, and professional journals.

Required

Clawson, David (2006) *Latin America and the Caribbean: Lands and Peoples*, 4th Edition; Available at the College Bookstores

Other Readings TBA

Geography 155/255: Geography of Latin America			
Date	Topics	Clawson Readings	Other Reading & Assignments
10-Jan	Introduction	Chapter 1	
12-Jan	Physical environment	Chapters 2, 3, 4	
17-Jan	Physical environment	pp. 139-151	
19-Jan	Pre-Columbian roots	pp. 139-152, 197, 228-229	
24-Jan	Columbian Exchange	pp. 151-4, 197-9, 229-231, 260, 297-8	
26-Jan	Colonial & Neo-Colonial Development	pp. 87-105, 154-7, 198-206	
31-Jan	Colonial & Neo-Colonial Development	pp. 231-237, 260-8, 298-313, 344-347	
2-Feb	Agriculture & Rural Development	pp. 238-243	
7-Feb	Review & Catch up		Field work assignment due
9-Feb	Exam 1		
14-Feb	Environment & Development	pp. 372-4	
16-Feb	Environment & Development		
21-Feb	Population and Urban Issues	pp. 207-223, 314-339, 360-374	
23-Feb	Latin American-US Migration		
28-Feb	Industrial Development	pp. 268-290, 348-360	
2-Mar	Social and Cultural	pp. 158-167, 170-194	
7-Mar	NO CLASS AAG (or movie/cover class)		
9-Mar	AAG - presentations		
14-Mar	Political and Change	pp. 105-8	
16-Mar	Review & Catch up		Writing Assignment due
TBA	Exam 2		

