

Geography 328v – Fall 2016

The Geography of Latin America

	Course Location:	Breland Hall, Room 185
	Meeting Time:	T/Th: 10:20-11:35 am
	Instructor:	Dr. Christopher Brown
	Teaching Assistant & Office Hours:	Mannie Lopez, Breland 142, Tuesday/Thursday, 12-1:30pm.
	Office:	149 Breland Hall
	Office phone:	575-646-1892
	EMAIL:	brownchr@nmsu.edu
	Professor's Office Hours:	T/Th, 12-2pm; Wednesday, 10am to noon; & by apt.

Required readings – Students will be accessing various materials on line and in the geographic literature to support in class discussions and short write-ups throughout the term. The following required textbooks are available through the NMSU Barnes and Noble Bookstore, as well as via on-line vendors like www.amazon.com and <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>

- Blouet and Blouet, 2010. *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Systematic and Regional Survey, 6th Edition*. John Wiley and Sons, NY, NY.¹
- Strunk and White, 2000. *The Elements of Style*. **ANY EDITION IS FINE!**

Course description and objectives - This course is an upper division lecture and discussion class that satisfies a geography major requirement for a regional class by providing an introduction to contemporary challenges in Latin America, as well as explorations of its sub-regions. We explore basic concepts of regional geography that form a foundation for a systematic and a regional survey of this region. Upon this foundation, we examine a series of contemporary geographic challenges, with a special emphasis on the roots and potential solutions to these challenges. The topical and controversial concepts of sustainable development and globalization will be explored in detail, especially as they relate to balancing development and efforts to preserve environmental quality. As a Viewing a Wider World class that focuses on developing writing skills, we will also have three short writing exercises that provide students an opportunity to further develop their writing and research skills.

¹ Wiley has published a 7th edition of the book, which you may find in searching for the book online. Although the newer edition has some nice additions, I don't think it is worth the higher price. Hence, I am going with the 6th edition and have asked NMSU B/N Bookstore staff to bring in this edition. A copy is also in reserve in Zuhl Library.

The class has several learning outcomes, as noted below. At the end of class, you will be able to:

- 1) Describe and understand the basic physical and cultural geography of specific countries and sub-regions of Latin America,
- 2) Define the concepts of development & globalization from a geographical perspective, understand how these important spatial processes occur in Latin America, and understand how they impact the region,
- 3) Explore and understand the root causes of contemporary development and environmental challenges facing the region, and also develop insights into how these may be solved, and
- 4) Demonstrate an improved ability to engage in critical thinking and effective writing about the physical and cultural geography of the region, and the challenges the region faces.

Course format - The class is designed in a combination of lecture and discussion format. Lecture material and readings in the text will cover basic geographic concepts such as development, regions, and globalization; lectures will also explore the specific sub-regions of Latin America and what makes them unique and interesting. Discussion exercises and short write-ups will then explore contemporary challenges facing the region in more detail, with an emphasis on understanding the geographic dimensions of the challenges involved and developing applied solutions to these challenges.

“Canvas” Learning Management System and World Wide Web Support - This class is a hybrid or "Web-supported" class, which means that we meet "live and in color" twice a week as a traditional class does, but all of your assignments and a good deal of other helpful material will be provided on the Web. Specifically, we will be using the Canvas Learning Management System (<http://learn.nmsu.edu>) that serves up all course materials. Aside from this syllabus and a detailed course outline (which of course, are also available on line), most other materials and assignments are provided to you via the Web and Canvas. **NOTE - Although I use the “Announcement” tool in Canvas to REGULARLY “shout out” news to the class, I take my email at brownchr@nmsu.edu, NOT through CANVAS. Please note that NMSU policy states students should forward email received at their NMSU email address to any off campus email addresses they routinely use.**

Team Based Learning - Educational research indicates that more active classroom experiences tend to be both more effective at facilitating learning.... and more enjoyable. An excellent tool by which active learning is advanced is a model known as Team Based Learning, in which students regularly work in teams on discussion exercises. Within teams, students also take an active role in determining how work is to be weighted towards a final grade. Working in teams is a very common model by which "worker bees in the real world work," and the experience you gain in a team-learning environment will benefit you in the workplace after you leave NMSU. We will employ this model on the problem solving exercises we examine in class; more detail will be provided in documents posted to CANVAS that cover specific exercises.

Grading and evaluation ~ People both learn and are able to demonstrate their mastery of material in different ways. I offer a range of class activities by which I share information and evaluate student performance; I make a special effort to spread evaluations out among in-class and out-of-class activities and formal versus informal ones. Exams will not be comprehensively cumulative, but I do expect you to have a general grasp of overarching concepts, while focusing on more recent material, for each exam. Final grades are based on a “90/80/70/60” classification of the percentage of the total possible points that are earned by the student, and no extra credit is offered in this class. Getting the grade you wish to earn in the class requires attendance, participation in class, and turning in required work on time.

NOTE - NMSU recently moved to a differential grading system, whereby +/- grades earn more or fewer GPA points than a straight grade of A/B/C/D earned in the past. The following link provides detail on how this grading system generates the GPA points students will receive for the grade they earn in class:

- <http://nmsu.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2014-2015/Undergraduate-Catalog/General-Information/Regulations/University-Grading-System>

Weights and credit on assignments and exams	
Two midterm exams	20% of final grade
Final Exam (exam is Thursday, 8 December 2016 from 10:30am-12:30pm)	15% of final grade
Written “Hot Topic” Papers (n=3)	20% of final grade
Individual Readiness Assessment Tests (RATS); n=7	20% of final grade
Group Exercises (students weight how different elements count!)	25% of final grade

All work for the class is to be turned in on time, and “Hot Topic Papers” are to be computer-generated, typewritten, or word-processed. If you have a legitimate excuse for a University-sanctioned or work-related event that causes work to be turned in late, please advise me in advance of these activities, turn in the work **prior** to the due date, and attach written documentation. Work coming in late due to illness also needs written documentation attached. Work turned in late for other reasons will be **grudgingly** accepted; however, 10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. If you have a scheduling conflict that will cause you to either arrive late or leave early on a regular basis, please advise me of this ahead of time; otherwise, please show me and other students the courtesy of being on time and "enjoying the whole show."

Make-up policy on Readiness Assessment Tests - Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs) are short quizzes that start out every module to gauge how prepared students are for the upcoming module. Because of the dynamic nature of RATs and the quick turnaround by which I return graded work,

STUDENTS WHO MISS RATs FOR ACCEPTABLE, DOCUMENTED REASONS MUST ALSO TAKE THE RAT BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS PERIOD!!! This means it is your responsibility to contact me promptly to schedule a time to take the RAT prior to these quizzes being turned back in class, which will be the next class session.

NOTE ON WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETES - Withdrawals from this course are solely students' responsibility; I will not withdraw or drop students from this class UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. If you "want out of here like the place is on fire," you must drop the class; students still on the course roll at the end of the semester will be issued grades based on credit earned on work completed. Incomplete grades will not be given except in the case of extraordinary situations related to serious illness, bereavement, or personal crises; documentation will be required in these limited cases, and incompletes will be granted solely at the instructor's discretion.

Exams - Three hourly exams will be given over the course of the term, and these will focus on major concepts covered in class, readings, and article discussions. These exams will include T/F and M/C questions; they will also have some short answer/essay questions that ask that you define and discuss various concepts, and specifically demonstrate an understanding of the regional geography of Latin America, the geographic challenges discussed in class, and how they may be met. Concepts explored through in-class discussions are fair game for exams and make excellent short answer/essay questions!

“Hot Topic” Papers - As a means of exploring specific geographic concepts that exist in Latin America, students will conduct some research on current issues or “hot topics” to learn more about specific issues facing Latin America, then provide a 3-4 page write-up. These short write-ups involve discussion of the related geographic issue or challenge and reference to source documents students read to do the assignment. Each write-up should be computer generated or word-processed, double spaced, written clearly and concisely, and free of grammatical errors. More detail will be provided in separate documents describing these exercises that are posted to CANVAS.

Academic Integrity - As stated in the NMSU Undergraduate Catalog, "Students at NMSU are expected to observe and maintain the highest academic, ethical, and professional standards of conduct." I expect all work submitted in this class to represent each student's own individual efforts, and any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be subject to the strictest disciplinary action, including issuance of a failing grade for the class. As stated by the NMSU Student Code of Conduct, plagiarism is defined as follows:

“Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other intellectual content taken from another course must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. This is irrespective of the origin of the material, including the Internet, other students' work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the student submitting the work in question

to know, understand, and comply with this policy” (NMSU Student Code of Conduct 2010).²

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the honesty or integrity of work being done by you or a classmate, please feel free to talk to me. Further information on plagiarism can be found at the following NMSU Library website:

- <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

Students with disabilities and discrimination issues - I subscribe to and fully support university policy on students with disabilities that have special needs in meeting class requirements. Students with physical, psychological, or learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS) concerning issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me to discuss at the earliest opportunity. For more information about the programs and services available, including academic accommodations for students with disabilities, contact the office of SAS at <http://sas.nmsu.edu/> or 646-5222. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, please discuss this with me at the earliest opportunity. All information shared with me in this area will be treated confidentially.

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, gender, spousal affiliation, and protected veterans status. Furthermore, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. I strongly support and work hard to abide by these policies to support a work and study environment free of harassment and discrimination. Please feel free to contact me to discuss any issues or concerns you have in this area. Lauri Millot, NMSU’s Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, can also be contacted at 575-646-3635 with any questions you may have about NMSU’s Non-Discrimination Policy or concerns you have related to discrimination or harassment.

Expectations and responsibilities ~ I see university teaching as a contract between me and students, who I believe are at university because they wish to learn and gain mastery of course materials. Think of me as a kind of tour guide; I provide opportunities for you to learn, and the rest is up to you. I see you all as adults, will treat you with respect, and ask you to show the same respect to me and other students. I am particularly keen that we enhance our acceptance of diversity, especially concerning, but not limited to, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. I agree to prepare clear and well-structured lecture and discussion activities; to work hard at presenting material and providing an opportunity for students to master the material; to be

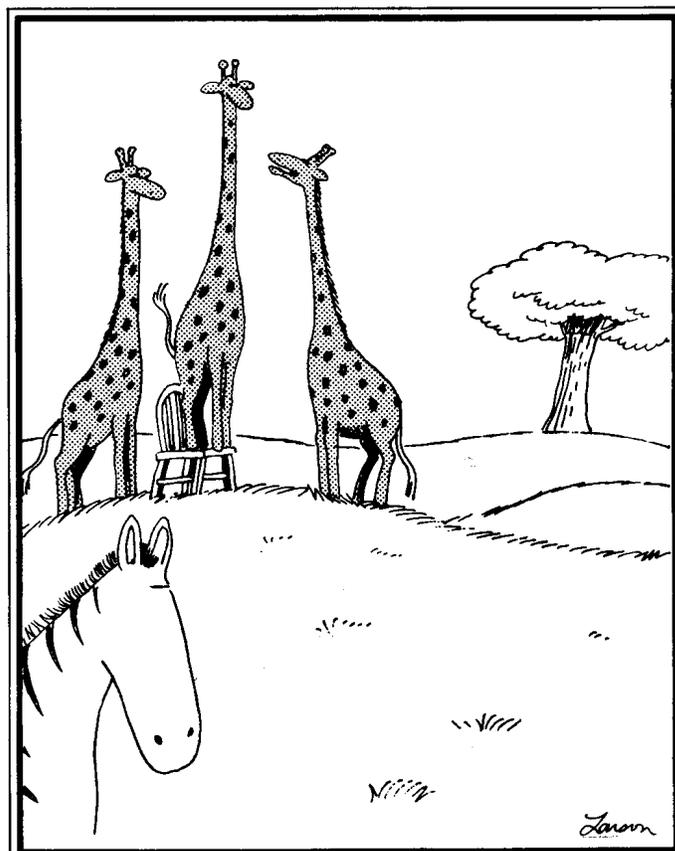
² See <http://deanofstudents.nmsu.edu/student-handbook/1-student-code-of-conduct/3-academic-misconduct.html> for additional details.

accessible for students to get assistance and provide feedback; and to evaluate students' work fairly and rigorously. In exchange, I ask you to attend class, do the required work, and be engaged and participate in class activities.

Workload and study habits ~ Success in university classes requires attendance, participation in class activities, and regular work outside of class. I suggest regularly reviewing lecture notes, reading, and assignments to avoid "falling behind," which will cause problems in meeting class requirements. Setting aside 15 minutes after each class period to look over notes, the text reading, and the slides posted on the Web is a good way to stay on top of things.

Seeking help and access to faculty ~ If you are having difficulty keeping up with class assignments, understanding material we are covering, or both, **please see me as soon as possible!** I want students to succeed and do well in class, and I am willing to work with students to meet this goal. Please note the office hours posted at the beginning of the syllabus. If you cannot make these office hours, please contact me via EMAIL or phone to make an appointment. I hope you all enjoy this class and find the things we will learn to be of interest and of use to you in your work at NMSU, heck, in your life overall! Good luck!

The final word....cell phones - With the widespread use of cell phones, etiquette issues arise in class & professional situations; put simply, we all need to "watch our ringer!" If you own a cell phone, please turn it off or set it to vibrate prior to entering class. Outside of **real emergencies or legitimate work-related obligations**, people should not be taking calls or pages in class. Also, please refrain from texting, checking your EMAIL, or surfing the Web while in class; "you paid your money; enjoy the show!"



"No lions anywhere? ... Let me have the chair."