

# **NEW MEXICO AND THE AMERICAN WEST GEOGRAPHY 325V**

**Dr. John Wright Spring 2014**

**Lecture: Tu/Th 11:45-1:00, 111 Chemistry Building**

**Office Hours: Tu/Th 9-10, 1:30-2:30 or By Appointment - 145 Breland Hall**

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## **CLASS OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To explore the cultural, historical, economic, and physical geography of New Mexico
- 2) To analyze New Mexico's complex geography to understand the state's poverty
- 3) To learn about the aridity of the West and how different cultures adapt to it
- 4) To grasp the ideologies and processes that created the cultural landscapes of the West

**TEXT: Free On-line class PowerPoints, Lecture Notes, Readings**

**GO TO CANVAS – all materials are there as PDF files of the PowerPoints, Word files of lecture notes (not all lectures have Word file outlines).**

**SUGGESTED TEXT:** Any "Road Atlas" of the United States. Available in grocery stores and bookstores. Very helpful in locating the places discussed in class.

## **GRADING:**

- 1) Exam #1 - 20%
- 2) Second Exam - 40%
- 3) Final Exam - 30%
- 4) Research Paper - 10%

## **GRADING SCALE:**

A = 90-100% (A- 90%, A 91-97%, A+ 98-100%)  
B = 80-89% (B- 80%, B 81-87%, B+ 88-89%)  
C = 70-79% (C- 70%, C 71-77%, C+ 78-79%)  
D = 60-69% (D- 60%, D 61-67%, D+ 68-69%)  
F = Below 60%

IF YOU ARE A PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED STUDENT OR HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS PLEASE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME IMMEDIATELY.

**EXAMS: Study guides will be handed out one week prior to each exam.**

Make-up exams only for verified medical or family emergency reasons. Call or email me if you are going to miss an exam beforehand. Otherwise you may get a zero.

- 1) Definitions – brief and accurate
- 2) Short Answer/List - brief explanations/listing geographic traits, features, issues
- 3) Essays - organized writing aimed at exploring a subject at greater length

**RESEARCH PAPER: “Why is New Mexico poor and what should be done about it?”**

**Due Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup>. Letter grade lost for each day late.**

**A 10-page paper. Worth 10% of your grade**

**Format:**

- 1) Double-spaced, use a 12 font.
- 2) 1 ½” margins on left, 1” margins elsewhere.
- 3) At least 8 sources - half must be from sources other than the Internet.
- 4) Citation style - no footnotes, use the following: (Jones 1990) when using general background information, (Jones 1990, p. 8) when citing a specific fact or using a quote from a certain page. Then list your sources in any standard format in alphabetical order in a bibliography at the end of the paper.
- 5) **No Wikipedia sources allowed** – a letter grade deducted if you use this
- 6) Indent and single-space long quotes (avoid using too many).

## **Research Paper Topic: “Why is New Mexico poor and what should be done about it?”**

### **Part 1) How did this happen? (7 pages)**

Discuss how geography helps explain why New Mexico is a poor state.

### **Part 2) What should we do about it? (3 pages)**

Give your opinion on how we can improve economic conditions in New Mexico.

### **Discussion:**

**In Part 1** analyze New Mexico’s historical and cultural geography for reasons for why poverty is so common here. Use historical/cultural facts and demographic/income figures. New Mexico has been claimed by various Indian nations, Spain, Mexico, and the United States. As a result, New Mexicans often hold very different beliefs about whose place this is and how life should be lived. What are some of those core beliefs? Cultural diversity is a wonderful part of living here, but does this limit New Mexican’s ability to agree on how we can create a more prosperous future?

**In Part 2** provide and briefly explain a thoughtful set of recommendations for what can be done to reduce poverty in the state. A huge variety of topics might be considered including: reducing social/cultural conflicts, improving educational achievement, changing tax policies, altering economic development and energy development strategies, and reforming U.S.-Mexico Border laws

**Be creative and factual.**

**There are no wrong opinions if you provide evidence and use reason.**

**You will never be marked down for your political point of view**

**The best papers must show evidence that you thought about this topic and made a sincere effort.**

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## THE AMERICAN WEST

- 1/16 Defining the American West
- 1/21 Physical Geography of the West
- 1/23 Physical Geography of the West
- 1/28 Indians and Land Tenure
- 1/30 Explorers and the Four Great Geographical Surveys
- 2/4 Homesteading
- 2/6 Human Geography of the West
- 2/11 Exam #1 (20% of grade)

## NEW MEXICO

- 2/13 Physical Geography
- 2/18 Human Geography
- 2/20 Economic and Transportation Geography
- 2/25 Historical/Cultural Geography #1: Indian Era
- 2/27 Historical/Cultural #2: Spanish Era
- 3/4 Historical/Cultural #3: Mexican Era
- 3/6 Historical/Cultural #4: American Era – Territorial New Mexico
- 3/11 Historical/Cultural #4: American Era – State of New Mexico
- 3/13 Religious Geography: DVD - “The Shrine”
- 3/18 Exploring New Mexico Places (and Review for Exam)
- 3/20 Exam #2 (40% of grade)

**SPRING BREAK** - No class on 3/25 and 3/27

## ARIDITY AND ADAPTATION

- 4/1 A Great Aridness: Climate Change in the Southwest
- 4/3 Arizona: Geographic Eras, Phoenix, Central Arizona Project
- 4/8 Arizona: Anglos and Indians, Navajo and Hopi nations
- 4/10 “An American Nile” – Video on the Colorado River
- 4/15 Utah: A Changing Mormon Zion
- 4/17 Utah: The Mormon Landscape
- 4/22 The Great Plains: Landscape of “The Dust Bowl”
- 4/24 The Great Plains - “Dust Bowl” Film by Ken Burns  
\*\*\*(Term Papers Due (10% of grade)\*\*\*
- 4/29 Yellowstone National Park
- 5/1 Review for Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM - Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> (30% of grade)**  
**10:30-12:30 in our Classroom (111 Chemistry Building)**