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
Phone: 646-4806  email: jowright@nmsu.edu

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 24th. 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 6th (30% of grade)
10:30-12:30 in our Classroom (111 Chemistry Building)