

# Geography 328v – Spring 2020.

## The Geography of Latin America

	<b>Course</b>	Domenici Hall, Room 223
	<b>Location:</b>	
	<b>Meeting Time:</b>	M/W: 10:30-11:45 am
	<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Christopher Brown
	<b>Teaching Assistant &amp; Office Hours:</b>	Coury Dorn, BD 142. Office hours, Wednesday, 1-2pm, and Tuesday and Thursday, noon-1pm.
	<b>Professor's Office Hours:</b>	Monday, 1:30-3:00 pm, Tuesday, 3-4pm, Wednesday, 2-3pm & by appt.
	<b>Office:</b>	149 Breland Hall
	<b>Office phone:</b>	575-646-1892
	<b>EMAIL:</b>	brownchr@nmsu.edu

**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, the Off Campus Bookstore, and through on-line vendors like [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>.

- Blouet and Blouet, 2015. [\*Latin America and the Caribbean: A Systematic and Regional Survey, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition\*](#). John Wiley and Sons, NY, NY. <sup>1</sup>
- Strunk and White, 2000. [\*The Elements of Style\*](#). **ANY EDITION IS FINE!**

**Course description and learning objectives** - This upper division Viewing a Wider World (VWW) class satisfies a geography major requirement for a regional class by providing an introduction to contemporary challenges in Latin America & exploring its sub-regions. Non-majors with an interest in Latin America get a valuable regional perspective. We explore basic concepts of regional geography as 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, we focus on developing writing skills via two short writing exercises in which students further develop and enhance their writing & research skills. We will also visit the Library to meet with Susan Beck, one of our VERY capable and helpful subject specialists, who will guide us in the use of Library tools to do focused research.

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that Wiley is making this book available as an E-text which can be purchased from Wiley, Amazon, or the Barnes and Noble Campus Bookstore. Students can also rent hard copy books from some of these vendors.

- 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 explore how they impact the region,
- 3) Understand and explore the root causes of contemporary development and environmental challenges facing the region,
- 4) Demonstrate how the geographic concepts we cover in class can be applied to these challenges to develop insights into how they may be solved, and
- 5) Demonstrate an improved ability to engage in critical thinking and 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 content delivery and discussion format. Content delivery material and readings in the text will cover basic geographic concepts such as development, regions, and globalization; we 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 ideas on 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 much helpful material will be provided on the Web through the “Canvas” learning management system program (<http://learn.nmsu.edu>). 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 “shout out” news to the class, I take all email at [brownchr@nmsu.edu](mailto: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 are more effective at facilitating learning .... and more rewarding. An excellent tool by which active learning is advanced is a model known as Team Based Learning, in which students regularly work in teams. 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. (NOTE - Remind me to tell you a story about this!) We will employ this model on the problem-solving exercises we examine in class; more detail will be provided in specific exercises.

**Grading and evaluation** ~ People both learn and are able to demonstrate mastery of material in

different ways. I offer a range of activities by which I share information and evaluate student performance, including both 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. Getting the grade you wish to earn in the class requires attendance, participation, and turning in required work on time.

**NOTE** - NMSU deploys a differential grading system, whereby +/- grades earn more or less GPA points than a straight grade of A/B/C/D. Please note I use this “+/-” grading scheme in my classes. The following link provides detail on how this grading system generates the GPA points students will receive for the grade they earn in class, subject to the weighting scheme detailed below:

- <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#newitemtext>

Weights and credit on assignments and exams	
Two hourly exams	20% of final grade
Final Exam (Monday, 11 May 2020 from 10:30am -12:30PM)	15% of final grade
Written “Hot Topic” Papers (n=2)	20% of final grade
Individual Readiness Assessment Tests (RATS); n=7	15% of final grade
Group Exercises (students weight how different elements count!)	30% 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 missed in-class work** - Students who miss in-class work for acceptable, documented reasons must provide written documentation to receive credit for these exercises. 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 MUST TAKE RAT's THAT THEY MISS BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS -PERIOD!!!** This means students must contact me promptly to schedule a time to take the RAT **PRIOR** to these quizzes being turned back in the

next class session; this can even be **RIGHT** before the next class session. If students miss Group Discussion Exercises for legitimate reasons, they will need to provide documentation on why class was missed, and write and turn in a 2-page write-up of the exercise in question to get credit.

**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 my discretion.

**Exams** - Two hourly exams and a final 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 & discuss various concepts, then apply these concepts to address geographic challenges discussed in class. Concepts explored through in-class discussions, "120 second workouts" and "out the door questions" are fair game 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 involved, then provide a 3-4 page write-up. These short write-ups involve discussion of the related geographic issue or challenge, referencing source documents students read to do the assignment. Each write-up must 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. The prohibition of plagiarism applies 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" (NMSU Student Academic Code of Conduct, 2020).<sup>2</sup>

---

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

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. **NMSU has recently purchased “Turn-It-In,” a Web-based tool that allows instructors to detect and document plagiarism. I will be using the tool to review your papers, and additional detail is provided in the Hot Topic Paper assignments.** 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 SAS office, at <http://sas.nmsu.edu/> or 646-6840. 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 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. [Laura Castille](#), NMSU’s Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, can also be contacted at 575-646-3893 with any questions you may have about NMSU’s Non-Discrimination Policy or concerns you have related to discrimination or harassment.

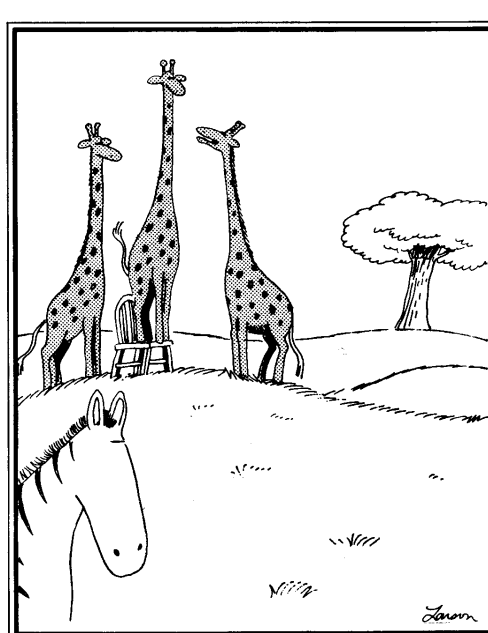
**Expectations and responsibilities** ~ I see university teaching as a contract between me and you all, who I believe are at university because they wish to learn and gain mastery of course materials. Think of me as a kind of tour guide; I provide opportunities for you to learn, and the rest is up to 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, ethnicity, and gender 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 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. As a rule, expect to put in approximately two

hours of outside work (reading, review, completion of regular assignments, and preparing for exams) for every hour of formal class time. 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 or in understanding material we are covering, **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 it to my office during these 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 use a cell phone, please turn it off or mute it prior to entering class. Outside of **real emergencies or legitimate work-related obligations**, people should not be taking calls in class. Also, please refrain from texting, checking your EMAIL, Tweeting, Facebooking, or surfing the Web while in class; This is especially required during exams and quizzes. As was noted earlier, "you paid your money; enjoy the show!"



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