

**GEOG 4120 / 6120**  
**Environment and Development in Latin America**

**Fall 2016**

Instructor: Dr. Claudia Radel (NR 104A, enter through NR 108, 797-0516)

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Office Hours: By appointment

Meeting Time: Tues. and Thurs. 1:30-2:45 pm

Classroom: Merrill-Cazier Library 421

*Writing Fellow:*

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**Overview**

In this course we examine the changing environment and development geography of Latin America through the geographic organizing principles of space, place, region, and the human-environment relation. We pay primary attention to the following linked foci:

(1) globalization and development through history and its impact on lives and environments in Latin America, (2) varied and changing human-environment relationships throughout Latin America, and (3) processes of economic and social inequality in the region.

We adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, but with primary emphasis on insights from geography. Under the thematic umbrella of environment and development, we treat the topics of population and migration, urbanization, ethnicity and race, gender, economic development, globalization, tourism/ecotourism, and environmental change. Central to our studies are the concepts of linkages (between local places in Latin America and the rest of the world, for example) and of spatial scale (the “local” versus the “global;” the individual versus nation versus planet).

As GEOG 4120 is designated a Communications Intensive (CI) course, the course includes two fundamental forms of building students’ communication skills: speaking and writing. Students are required to complete (1) an oral presentation, and (2) three written essays. In addition, the course is officially designated as a service-learning course. In order to engage students directly with the course material on migration, each student carries out an independent service-learning project with the local Latino migrant community of Cache Valley and submits a written reflection on the project experience.

## **Learning Outcomes**

### **1. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories key to understanding environment and development issues in Latin America.**

This outcome will be achieved through lectures, film, readings, class discussions, and the service-learning project.

### **2. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.**

This outcome will be achieved through a critical understanding and discussion of material in articles, books, and films, directly related to the topic of environment and development in Latin America. Further, three critical reflection essays will allow students to articulate an analysis of and a reflection on the ideas of various authors, through their own original thinking.

### **3. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally and in writing.**

This outcome will be achieved through a group oral presentation, three written essay assignments, and a written service-learning project reflection. The written essays will entail a revision process to further this objective.

## **Texts, Readings, and Films**

This course carries a high reading expectation. Texts listed below are available for purchase at the USU Bookstore, but some of them might also be found online used or at a discount. Reading these texts is a required component of class, and all are available on reserve at the Merrill-Cazier Library. In addition, I assign other articles and book chapters, which are made available through Canvas.

1. Mann, Charles, C. 2006. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*. Vintage.
2. Nazario, Sonia. 2007. *Enrique's Journey*. NY: Random House.
3. Cupples, Julie. 2013. *Latin American Development*. NY: Routledge.

We also use some of our in-class time to view documentary films. These will likely be:

- *A Convenient Truth*
- *Between Midnight and the Rooster's Crow*
- *Big Spuds, Little Spuds*
- *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (episode 2)
- *Maquilapolis*
- *Paraiso for Sale*
- *Tambogrande*

## **Readings, Mini-Assignments, Quizzes, and Class Participation**

**I expect active and prepared participation in class discussions.** Students are expected to arrive to class meetings with readings completed. As this course is designed as a reading, writing and discussion-based course, preparation for and attendance of class is essential to the class's success and to students' class participation grade. I also require a few mini-assignments throughout the semester, and there are a few in-class quizzes (one map quiz and several reading quizzes).

## **Group Oral Presentation and Discussion Facilitation**

The class will divide into student presentation teams (approx. four students on each team). Each team is responsible for one class meeting. With my guidance, students will prepare and present a roughly thirty-minute oral synthesis of class readings or outside materials, highlighting themes and questions raised in the materials. This presentation will be followed by these same students' facilitation of a thirty-minute class discussion or activity on the questions raised in their presentation. In the week prior to their presentation, students meet with me to discuss their presentation and discussion/activity plan. Students will be assessed on both content and presentation.

## **Service-Learning Project**

Students in this class participate in brief service-learning projects. The aim of the projects is to connect students with the Cache Valley Hispanic/Latino migrant community, in order to (1) provide a small service to that community, and (2) deepen students' understanding of the migration experience. Students are graded on the basis of both active participation in the project (5 hours minimum of volunteer service over the course of the semester) and a short written reflection (4-5 pages) of the project experience. Guidelines for the written reflection are distributed and discussed later in the semester. The written reflection and a certification of service hours are due the last week of classes.

## **Short Critical Reflection Essays (3)**

Each student completes three short essays (4 pages each) over the course of the semester. In these papers students critically reflect on the relevant reading, identifying and assessing key arguments or questions raised by the author(s). For undergraduates, best drafts of these papers are submitted to one of our class's *writing fellow (WF)*. Students meet with the WF and then re-work their paper for final submission to the instructor. Graduate students have the option to use me as a WF.

- **Paper 1** on Mann's *1491*
- **Paper 2** on Nazario's *Enrique's Journey*
- **Paper 3** on a selected topic from unit 3 (development) or 4 (identity/movements)

*The Writing Fellows (WFs) Program.* We have been assigned a WF for our class. This WF assists undergraduate students in doing their very best in completing the three essays. Participation in the WF program is a required component of this class and entails three half-hour

meetings with one of the WFs over the course of the semester. The participation of this course in this program allows students to further improve their communication skills and should also improve student grades.

### **Graduate Students Registered for GEOG 6120**

Graduate students are responsible for completing additionally assigned readings and for writing a research paper of approximately 15 pages. For the research paper students may pick either a topic discussed in class (expanding upon it) or a different topic tied to the student's thesis or graduate project work, as approved by the instructor. The research paper topic is due by the fourth week of classes. The research paper itself is due on the last day of classes, and graduate students will be asked to present on their research prior to that date, in lieu of the group oral presentation assignment.

### **Honors Contracts**

Honors contracts in Geog 4120 are welcomed, and interested students should see the instructor as soon as possible at the start of the semester.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of 0 for the relevant assignment. Using work copied or paraphrased from a publication or website is plagiarism unless the work is clearly cited (and in quotations, if copied word for word). Citations should acknowledge the source of an idea or fact, but in almost all cases the writing should be your own. Students are also expected to produce their own work in this course, although working cooperatively to produce independent submissions is acceptable (and even encouraged). If you need more information about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity under the university Honor Code, or you'd like to read the University's policy on this issue, go to <http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140>.

### **Student Assessment for Final Grade**

Students are assessed for final grade in the course as follows:

Three essays (3-4 pages each)	45 %
Class participation, including mini-assignments and quizzes	15 %
Service learning project	20 %
Group oral presentation and discussion facilitation	20 %

*Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, 797-2444. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Various services are available.*

## **2015 Class Schedule**

8/30 FIRST CLASS: Introduction

### **Unit One: The Creation of Latin America as a Region: Environment**

- 1.1 9/1 Latin America as a Region
- 1.2 9/6 The Biophysical Environment (*Map QUIZ in class*)
- 1.3 9/8 Environment/Geography as Destiny? Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (film)
- 1.4 9/13 Pre-Columbian and Conquest Environments, 1491 (parts 1 and 2)
- 1.5 9/15 Pre-Columbian and Conquest Environments, 1491 (part 3)

### **Unit Two: Population, Urbanization, and Migration**

- 2.1 9/20 Colonial Period  
*Paper 1 draft DUE*
- 2.2 9/22 Contemporary Cities and Urban Environmental Issues: *A Convenient Truth* (film)
- 2.3 9/27 Population Growth, Urbanization and an Intro to Migration
- 2.4 9/29 Migration & Development (*S-L project plans DUE*)
- 2.5 10/4 Migration & Environment
- 2.6 10/6 *Enrique's Journey* book discussion  
*Paper 1 final DUE*

### **Unit Three: Economic and Agricultural Development**

- 3.1 10/11 Land Tenure & Agricultural Development
- 3.2 10/13 Peasant Agriculture: Potato Case Study, *Big Spuds, Little Spuds* (film)
- 3.3 10/18 Rural Livelihoods: The Livelihoods Framework  
*Paper 2 draft DUE*  
10/20 NO CLASS (classes follow Friday schedule)
- 3.4 10/25 Export Production and Globalization: *Maquilapolis* (film)
- 3.5 10/27 Latin American Development Theory and History
- 3.6 11/1 Maquiladoras and the U.S.-Mexico Border (*Group Presentation 1*)

### **Unit Four: Social Identities and Social Movements**

- 4.1 11/3 Social Identities, Social Movements (*Dr. Radel may have to travel*)  
*Paper 2 final DUE*
- 4.2 11/8 Gender, Race, Class and Ethnicity in Latin America (*Group Presentation 2*)
- 4.3 11/10 Social Movement Case Study 1: *Tambogrande* (film)
- 4.4 11/15 Social Movement Case Study 2: Chiapas & the Zapatistas (*Group Presentation 3*)  
*Paper 3 draft DUE*

### **Unit Five: Contemporary Environmental Issues and Wrap Up**

- 5.1 11/17 Land Use Change and Deforestation (*Group Presentation 4*)
- 5.2 11/22 Mineral Extraction: Case of Oil (*Between Midnight and the Rooster's Crow* film)  
11/24 NO CLASS –THANKSGIVING
- 5.3 11/29 Tourism, Ecotourism, and Amenity Migration
- 5.4 12/1 Climate Change  
*Paper 3 final DUE*
- 5.5 12/6 Graduate Student Presentations
- 5.6 12/8 LAST CLASS: Service-Learning Projects Class Reflection  
*Written S-L Reflection and Hours DUE*