GGR341H1: The Changing Geography of Latin America
University of Toronto
Department of Geography
Winter 2014

Time: Mondays 11AM – 1 PM
Location: SS1074

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1. Course Description
Popular perceptions about Latin America take it for granted as a region bounded together by cultural traits (i.e. Spanish language and Catholicism) and homogenous natural environments (i.e. “the Tropics”). Despite the shared legacies of Iberian colonialism and its location in the Global South, Latin America’s social, cultural and physical landscapes are amazingly diverse. Its physical attributes entail a great variety of climatic regions and ecosystems, which shape and have been shaped by distinctive migratory, economic, and political histories. Overall, the region’s great diversity and its recent socio-economic and political transitions challenge views of Latin America as a cohesive and coherent socio-cultural unit.

This course is organized in two parts: the first part provides a general survey of the region with an emphasis on human-environment interactions. It addresses the physical environment and major historical, political, economic and social processes determining development patterns from colonial to present times. The second part connects the first section to relevant contemporary themes in human geography, including urbanization, environmental challenges, social movements and participatory governance, violence, and transnationalism. Through a mix of lectures, case study group projects, guided discussions and readings students in this course will be introduced to the main themes, debates and events that are re-shaping the links between society and space in Latin America’s diverse environments.

2. Course Goals
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Recall geographical concepts and interdisciplinary perspectives defining Latin America as a world region;
• Identify the key phases in the evolution of Latin America’s economic, political and social development over the past century and into the new Millennium;
• Locate, synthesize and analyze both, interdisciplinary scholarly literature and information from trustworthy media sources about contemporary Latin American issues;
• Apply critical thinking skills to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a specific contemporary issue evolving in the Latin American setting, and based on that, present a competing argument;
• Communicate ideas effectively to the class and make informed judgments concerning current Latin American events;
• Work cooperatively in a small group environment.
3. **Course structure and assessment**

The class meets Mondays from 11:10 AM to 1:00 PM. Class time is structured in lectures, guided discussions, student presentations and, occasionally, guest lectures and films. Students will prepare the readings for each session and come to class ready to ask questions and contribute with informed comments.

- **Class participation (5% – ongoing assessment)**
  
  Students’ participation will be assessed based on four expectations:

  a) Participation: the student plays an active role and participates constructively in class discussions. On selected weeks, the instructor will post a question on the Discussion Board of the course’s site on Blackboard. Students’ online submissions will also be considered as participation marks.

  b) Relation to peers: the student actively supports, engages and listens to peers.

  c) Intellectual contribution: the student arrives fully prepared and the student’s comments are informed, relevant and on topic.

  d) Contribution to the learning community: the group dynamic is enriched by the student’s presence.

- **Case Study Group Project (35%) (Detailed instructions provided in a separate handout)**

  In this assignment students will work collaboratively throughout the term in small groups to conduct a case study of a relevant contemporary issue in the Latin American context. Students should form groups in the third week of class. The instructor will provide a diverse list of themes out of which each group may select a case study of their choice. The Case Study Group Project will be presented in written form to the instructor and in oral form to the class (see detailed instructions and presentation schedule in separate handout). The Case Study Group Project is scaffolded in three parts:

  - Proposal 10% (8 pages, due on **February 3rd**)
  - Oral presentation 10% (dates TBC)
  - Final report 15% (16 pages, due on **March 31st**)

**NOTE:** Assessment is composed by a group mark and an individual mark. Students will be required to sign a ‘contract’ comprising a statement of work with their respective groups. Contracts detailing individual responsibilities will be submitted along with the proposal and re-submitted to reflect actual responsibilities in the final report. Failing to comply with the contract will result in penalties, e.g. students whose individual work is inadequate or not visible will not be benefited by the same marks assigned to the group.

- **Mid-term Test (25%) February 10, 2014**

  This test will cover the themes and readings discussed over the first five weeks of the course. Students will have two hours to respond this mixed format (multiple choice, short answer and long answer) test.

- **Final Exam (35%) (Date and location TBA)**

  This exam will cover most of the themes and readings of the course. Students will have two hours to answer this mixed format (multiple choice, short answer and long answer) examination.

**Required Material**


The textbook is available from the Bookstore. Articles from online journals are available through University of Toronto Libraries online services. Other course materials will be available from the course’s Blackboard site: http://portal.utoronto.ca.
PART I: THE BIG PICTURE (weeks 1-6)

**Week 1 (January 6): Introduction to the course**

**Week 2 (January 13): The human-environment nexus**
   The Social Studies 95(3): 93-105.

**Week 3 (January 20): Latin America as a world region: space, history, borders and scales**
Jackiewicz, E. and Bosco, F. (2012) The making of a region: five hundred years of change from within and without (Chapter 2 in textbook)
http://simpelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/331425

**Week 4 (January 27): (Neo) Colonial legacies: continuities and change in Latin America’s development paths**
Jackiewicz, E. and L. Quiquivix (2012) Cycles of economic change: political economy from neocolonialism to the Bolivarian revolution (Chapter 3 in textbook)
http://simpelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/331424

**Week 5 (February 3): Urbanization, informality and the Latin American city**
Bosco, F. and Z. Salim (2012) Urbanization: socio-spatial dimensions, challenges and prospects (Chapter 4 in textbook)
Recommended:
* Proposal due at beginning of class

**Week 6 (February 10): Mid-term test Location: TBA     Good luck!**

**February 17: Reading week (no class)**

PART II: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND DEBATES (weeks 7-12)

**Week 7 (February 24): Democratization and social movements**
http://simpelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/407391

Week 8 (March 3rd): The built environment: Urban challenges and innovations

Week 9 (March 10): Socio-environmental conflicts
Jackiewicz, E and T. Klak (2012) Mass and alternative tourisms in Latin America and the Caribbean (textbook Chapter 6)

Week 10 (March 17): Urban environmental politics, vulnerability and resilience to climate change

Guest speaker: Dr. Gabriela Sauter

Week 11 (March 24): Geographies of violence and (in)security: insurgency, the war on drugs and criminal networks

Week 12 (March 31): Moving populations, borders and transnationalism
Masterson-Algar, A. (2012) Transnational Latin America: movements, places, and displacements (Chapter 14 in textbook)

*Final Case Study report due at beginning of class.

Final exam during examination period (April 9-30) **Good luck!**

**NOTE: Modifications may apply as the term progresses; students will be notified in advance**
My expectation of you is that you will show respect to the Course Instructor, TAs, other faculty, staff, and fellow students. This includes arriving on time and staying for the entire class (so you don’t disturb others by your late entry or early departure); listening quietly (so you don’t disturb others by your chatting or online activities); approaching your coursework with an open, honest spirit and enthusiasm; and otherwise adhering to the University’s Code of Behavior on Academic Matters. In turn, you can expect from me and the TA to show respect to you and your fellow students; to deliver the best course that we possibly can; to communicate our enthusiasm for the material; to maintain fairness in all aspects of course delivery and assessment; and otherwise to adhere to the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

6. Lectures and classroom policies

- **Class will start on time** (i.e., 11:10 AM). If you have to come into class late, please do so in the least disruptive manner possible. **As a sign of respect to the instructor and the rest of the class, arrivals after 11:30 AM are discouraged, as are early departures.**

- **Class preparation and student participation:** Although attendance is not formally part of the evaluation for the course, students are expected to do the assigned readings in advance and be prepared to participate in class discussions and in-class activities. I want this class to foster an environment that encourages student participation and questions.

- **Course manners:** You are expected to handle yourselves with respect toward the instructor, teaching assistant, and your peers in all matters related to the course, including participation in class, in-class activities, communications regarding course content or evaluation, etc.

- **Etiquette regarding the use of computers and other electronic devices:** The use of computers and other electronic devices in class should be limited to activities related to the course. Please turn cell phones off during class—ringers, earphones and texting are disruptive and unacceptable.

- **Course notes:** As a courtesy, I will be posting my powerpoint slides on BLACKBOARD after class.

- **Taping/Recording/Photographing lectures etc.** Lectures and course materials are considered intellectual property and are covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask explicitly for my permission. Such permission is only for such student’s own study purposes and does not include permission to “publish” them online or in any other way. Please refer to the “Rules and Regulations” section of the printed version of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Calendar for further details on UofT Copyright issues.

7. Written assignments

- **Formatting:** Coursework must be word processed double spaced, 12 point font size, unless otherwise noted. Assignments should be proofread prior to submission to ensure that they are free of grammatical and spelling errors and must include a list of all references cited in the text, using the APA citation style (see UofT research link in the resources section below, page 7). All coursework should be stapled and include the student’s name and ID number, the course’s code and name, and that of the instructor, in order to avoid loss or improper identification. Note, however, that there is no need to use a cover page to do so. To further conserve paper, please print retroverso (i.e., on both sides of the paper) (learn how at: http://utbeat.biology.utoronto.ca/doublesiding.html, or http://www.printdoublesided.sa.utoronto.ca/Instructions%20-%201st%20page.htm).
• Submission guidelines: All assignments must be handed in hard copy at the beginning of class (11:10 AM). I will only accept them before I start talking. If this requirement cannot be met, please arrange with me an early submission. It is recommended that you keep copies of your assignments and early drafts until you receive your graded assignment.

8. Late submissions and missed tests
Work submitted late will be accepted with a 5% daily penalty (including weekend days), up to seven days after the due date. Late papers must be submitted as hard copy to the drop box outside the Main Office of the Department of Geography (SSH5047). The office is open Monday-Friday, and closes at 5pm sharp. For students who are finishing a late assignment on a weekend, you can submit via email to the instructor to minimize the penalty. These must be received electronically by 5pm on either the Saturday or Sunday. An exact hard copy version will still be required and must be submitted via the department drop box on the Monday (before 5 PM).

Extensions on assignments will be granted sparingly in the case of illness or other non-medical emergencies. If you do become ill (or otherwise incapacitated) you must provide me with appropriate documentation. For a missed examination, contact me as soon as possible – and no later than one-week after the original examination date. For medical exemptions, only an official U of T form will be accepted (available online here http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/).

Please consult your college registrar if you are having difficulties during the term that prevent you from completing your course work. For non-medical emergencies, they may be able to provide a letter documenting your situation. Be aware that submitting a note which has been altered or obtained under false pretences is considered a very serious offence by the University.

9. Communication with the instructor
The first person that you should contact (in person or by email) for any course-related queries is the Course Instructor. I will be available every Monday from 2:00 to 4:00 PM for office hours, in room 5005. If this time is not convenient, please contact me by email to set up an alternative meeting time. Unfortunately, I cannot be available to you without an appointment.

To ensure that your e-mail reaches my inbox, always use your University of Toronto e-mail address for all course-related communications. (@mail.utoronto.ca). Other e-mail addresses may be filtered as spam and I do not promise to respond to them. Please include the course code GGR341 as part of your subject line, and include your full name and student number in the body of the e-mail. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours (not including weekends) to all email from students in this course but only if they allow me to give a brief “yes” or “no” answer in response to a specific question. I will not respond to any question that has been already answered in written materials provided to you including this course outline and course assignments or on materials posted to the blackboard site. I do not normally check my email over the weekend or when I am out of town, so please plan accordingly.

10. BLACKBOARD
A BLACKBOARD site has been set for this course. PowerPoint slides, additional readings, assignments and other useful materials will be posted on it. BLACKBOARD will also be used by the instructor to communicate with the class. Please make sure to check it regularly.

11. Term-Work remark requests
If you believe an individual item of work has been incorrectly or unfairly marked you should first ask the TA for a re-evaluation. Please note that such request should be made as soon as reasonably possible after receiving the work back, but no later than two weeks after it was returned. Your request to re-mark should be sent to the TA in written form detailing the specific issue and outlining the reasons why you consider the work was incorrectly or unfairly marked. Along with the request, the student must present the original marked work.

12. Accessibility needs
The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility

13. Grading
Please refer to the University Grading Practices Policy available at:
http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm

14. Academic integrity
Plagiarism is a serious academic offence at the University of Toronto. Please note that according to the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, it is an offence for a student to:
1. "represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism." Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing) the work of an author (including the work of fellow students) without proper use of citation. Quotation marks are required when using an author’s words.
2. "submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."
3. "submit for credit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted."

It is the responsibility of all students to become acquainted with the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters on the U. of T. Governing Council’s website (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) and to inform themselves on how to avoid plagiarism (see Margaret Proctor’s (2009) How Not to Plagiarize handout at: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize). Cases of suspected plagiarism will be addressed in accordance with the procedure established by the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

15. Useful Library and Writing Resources
• UofT Libraries Catalogue: http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/search.jsp
• UofT Libraries Research: http://discover.library.utoronto.ca/students/research
• UofT Writing: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice