

Time: Mondays 11 AM-1 PM
Location: SS 1070

Exclusion: GGR 249H

Instructor: Christian Abizaid
Office: Sidney Smith Hall, 5055
Office hours: Thursdays 1:00-3:00 PM,
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Course description

Not long ago, Latin America seemed very distant to Canada and in the mind of Canadians. Today, our ties with Latin America are stronger than ever before – through investment, trade and consumption, foreign aid, tourism, migration, environmental and human rights issues, as well as culture and the media – yet Canadians still have a limited understanding of this fascinating region. Bound together by a common cultural heritage and colonial history, Latin America is, nevertheless, characterized by an incredible diversity of physical and cultural landscapes. The beauty of its lands and the warmth of Latin Americans have won the hearts of outsiders for some time. Countries and people in this region continue to face many important challenges, including poverty and persisting socioeconomic disparities, environmental destruction, migration, and violence. At the same time, Latin America has been the cradle of a number of social movements against the neoliberal project in the region and beyond.

This course seeks to develop a general understanding of present-day Latin America using a thematic overview and case studies to examine the diversity of Latin American landscapes (physical and cultural), and how they are changing within the context of globalization. The course is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides a general survey of the region with an emphasis on human-environment interactions, past and present. It addresses the physical environment and major historical, political, economic and social processes determining development patterns from colonial to present times. Part 2 connects the first section to relevant contemporary themes in human geography, including: urbanization, race, migration and transnationalism, environment and development issues, violence and security, and social movements. The course consists primarily of lectures, complemented by slides, some videos, and in-class activities. Guest speakers may also be invited.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Identify Latin America as a cultural region and describe the main traits that bind people and countries in the region, while also recognizing existing variations.
- Recognize the biophysical diversity of the region and to explain the main factors that explain it.
- Identify and explain how social, economic and political processes and its physical geography have shaped the region over time.
- Identify and summarize a series of current events in Latin America, as reported by the press, and to connect them to geographical aspects of the region.
- Identify an interesting current topic related to the geography of Latin America and to produce a research paper on the topic, using secondary sources to inform and support an argument.

Evaluation

- **Journal of newspaper coverage on Latin America (15%; due Feb 5).** A 2-week review and analysis of current events related to the geography of Latin America through the press. More detailed guidelines will be discussed in class. We will continue to follow current events in Latin America throughout the term and will be devoting a few minutes to discuss them in class each week.
- **Research project.** Students are expected to conduct a research project related to the geography of Latin America. Students have the option to work individually or with **one** other student. Students working in pairs must inform the instructor via email **by 11:59 PM on Feb 1**. Detailed guidelines will be discussed in class on Feb. 1. The assignment is divided into two parts:
 - **Paper proposal (10%; due Feb. 23)** This is a 1-2 page submission that outlines the proposed topic/issue for the research paper, why it is important and how you are going to address it. This brief assignment will serve as a way to introduce your idea to me, as well as to get early feedback before you start doing the work.
 - **Research paper (30%; due April 2) (~2500 words if working individually; ~4000 if working in pairs)** A short research paper that explores a specific question/issue related to a relevant theme in recent/current Latin American geography. A list of themes will be distributed with the guidelines for the assignment.
- **Participation and in-class activities (10%, assigned as follows).**
 - In-class activity on January 18 (3%)
 - Random quizzes and in-class discussions on current events, course materials and case-studies (7%)
- **Final cumulative exam (35%; during official final exam period)**

Required textbook:

- **Kent, R. B. 2006.** *Latin America - Regions and People*. New York: The Guilford Press.

The required textbook will be available for purchase as an e-book directly from the publisher at: <http://www.guilford.com/books/Latin-America/Robert-Kent/9781572309098>, or as paperback through the UofT Bookstore. In order to reduce paper use and to minimize your costs, readings not included in the textbook will be made available through the course's BLACKBOARD, typically through links to the U of T Libraries. Alternative arrangements will be made for readings that are not available in e-format.

Other useful academic resources on Latin America:

- **Blouet B.W. and O. M. Blouet (eds.).** 2015. *Latin America and the Caribbean, A systematic and Regional Survey 7th Ed.*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons. (older editions are also available)
- **Caviedes, C. and G. Knapp.** 1995. *South America*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall
- **Gwynne, R. and C. Kay (eds.).** 2004. *Latin America Transformed: Globalization and Modernity*. London, UK: Arnold, New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
- **The Journal of Latin American Geography (JLAG):** <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7725525> (for more comprehensive coverage access via Project Muse) https://muse-jhu-edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/journals/journal_of_latin_american_geography/
- **Latin American Research Review (LARR):** <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7730401>

- **The New York Times, Miami Herald, Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian (UK), BBC, CBC, Aljazeera.**
- **CIA The World Factbook:** <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- **Latin American Network Information Center (Lanic):** <http://lanic.utexas.edu/>
- **United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC-CEPAL):** <http://www.eclac.cl/default.asp?idioma=IN>

Optional Latin American movie showings

Films provide an excellent opportunity for learning more about a region. Optional movie showings will be organized to complement some themes discussed in class. A brief discussion will follow each movie. Students who attend and participate in these discussions will have the opportunity to earn extra marks. Dates and times will be discussed in class.

Proposed lecture schedule*

	Topic	Notes
Part 1: A General Survey of Latin America		
Week 1 (Jan. 11):	Course introduction and housekeeping	Discussion of Journal of Newspaper coverage assignment
Week 2 (Jan. 18):	What is Latin America? & Basic Latin American geography	Small-group activity in class
Week 3 (Jan. 25):	Physical Geography	
Week 4 (Feb. 1):	Latin America before Columbus	News Journal due Feb. 5 Discussion of Research Paper *Group list due on Feb. 1 (if working in pairs)
Week 5 (Feb. 8): (Feb. 15)	The Conquest and the colonial period <i>Reading week</i>	
Week 6 (Feb. 22):	Latin America in the world economy	Proposal due Feb. 23
Part 2: Contemporary Issues in Latin American Geography		
Week 7 (Feb. 29):	Environment and development	
Week 8 (Mar. 7):	Race, migration & transnationalism	
Week 9 (Mar. 14):	Urbanization & Urban issues	
Week 10 (Mar. 21):	Violence and insecurity	
Week 11 (Mar. 28):	Social movements	Research paper due April 2
Week 12 (Apr. 4):	Latin America into the future & course wrap-up	

* NOTES: Modifications may apply as the term progresses; students will be notified in advance, should any changes be made.

COURSE POLICIES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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. Please note that participation does count towards your grade.
- 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. Please note that I am under no obligation to do so and that such notes are intended to assist you and not replace your personal notes.
- Copyright issues: 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. If granted, 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.

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 insure 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). All coursework should include the student's name and the last 5 digits of their 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.
- Green course: This course has been recognized as a green course by the Sustainability Office. Green courses are intended to reduce paper use. As such, assignments must be submitted electronically (see submission guidelines below). Students are also encouraged to conserve paper by limiting their printing of course materials whenever possible. To learn how to print double-sided see: <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 submitted electronically through BLACKBOARD **by 11:59 PM** on the date specified by the instructor. It is recommended that you keep copies of your assignments and early drafts until you receive your graded assignment.
- Late submissions: Work submitted late will be accepted with a **5% daily penalty (including weekend days), up to seven days** after the due date. If needed, you may submit your assignment during the weekend as a way to minimize late penalties. In such cases, the date/time of submission will be considered, using 11:59 PM as time of reference. In case of an outstanding **valid** situation you must contact me, preferably in advance. I cannot consider a particular situation unless I know about it, so do not wait until the end of the term to communicate with me if something did come up. For medical

reasons, a completed University of Toronto Verification of Student Illness or Injury form must be submitted (<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/>); other proof may be required by the instructor for non-medical reasons (see general guidelines and form put together by FAS available at: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/petitions/process#documentation>). The required form must be submitted within a week of the missed deadline. No extensions will be granted unless you have communicated with the instructor and your reasons have been deemed valid.

Communication with the instructor

My preference is to meet with you in person. My designated office hours constitute a block set aside to discuss with you course-related matters (for specific hours, see the first page of the syllabus)-- take advantage of it! Appointments may also be set for students who cannot come during scheduled office hours. For urgent matters or simple questions, you may also contact me via email, but **the rule of thumb is that email should not be a substitute for office hours**. Depending on the situation/issue, I may ask you to come to office hours or set up a meeting in person. Please note that I am not online 24/7 and thus may not be able to respond to your messages right away. I will make an effort to respond to you within 48 hours, but it will take longer during weekends as I remain offline to spend time with my family. Please make sure to use your University of Toronto email account (i.e. @mail.utoronto.ca) and to include the course code "GGR 341" and your name in the title box of your email for easier handling. Other e-mail addresses may be filtered as spam and thus I may be unable to respond to them.

BLACKBOARD

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

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>. You may also want to contact Accessibility Services Office if you have problems arising from chronic issues or injuries sustained during the term that affect your ability to write tests or complete course work.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Including references to sources that you did not use
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:

- working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work
- having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
- Looking at someone else’s answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers
- Misrepresenting your identity
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor’s notes
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades

Please note that potential offences will be addressed in accordance with institutional procedures.

Useful UofT Resources

UofT Libraries

- Library Catalogue (search for books, journal articles and documents):
<http://search1.library.utoronto.ca/UTL/search.jsp>
- Research services for students (e.g., research guides, citation resources, refworks, etc.):
<https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/research>

UofT Writing (for advice on: planning and organizing, reading and researching, using sources, types of writing, style and editing and English as a second language): <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>