

**Geography of Middle America: Geography 3060**  
**Spring Semester, 2012**  
**DSC 285 T, TH 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm**

**Caleb Richter-Tate, Instructor**  
**Office: DSC 245A**  
**Office Hours: T, TH 4:30pm – 6:00pm**

**Textbook:**

Latin America and the Caribbean: A Systematic and Regional Survey, 6th Edition\_Brian W. Blouet (College of William and Mary), Olwyn M. Blouet (Virginia State Univ.) September 2009, ©2010

An atlas is highly recommended. Suggested—Goode’s World Atlas

**Readings:**

All readings will come from the assigned text book or from journal articles that are available online. Specific pages and articles to read for class will be assigned one class prior. Students are encouraged to read all assigned material and be ready and able to discuss in class.

**Place Names:**

There will be two lists of place-names provided for studying throughout the semester, one list for Mexico and the other list for Central America and the Caribbean. There will be a short section of place-name identification on each exam.

**Exams:**

There will be three (3) exams throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 100 points and consists of name-place identification, multiple choice, short answer, and essay. There will be three main section exams and the final will not be comprehensive.

**Book Review:**

All students must chose one book from the class reading list or find a book and have it approved by the instructor. They must read it and provide a three to five (3-5) page review of the book by the end of the semester. Paper must be between 3 and 5 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman text, and 12 point font. The book review is worth 100 points, and is due three (3) weeks before the final class.

## **Grading:**

There will be 300 points from exams, 100 points for the book review, and 100 points for attendance, participation, and in-class discussion, for a total of 500 points throughout the semester. The UNO standard grading guidelines will be observed.

## **Class Focus and Outline:**

This course will focus on the evolution, contrast, and development of human landscapes throughout Middle America and the Caribbean. These landscapes have been influenced by indigenous histories, European contact and culture, western development, regional conflicts, and peace resolutions.

- I. Intro: Historical Background and Contextual Setting (Ch. 1-6)
  - a. Human diversity, background, and terms
  - b. Physical diversity, historical places
  - c. General outlook, trends, and tendencies of Middle America
- II. Caribbean Landscape: Past, Present, and Direction (Ch. 8)
  - a. Historical, political, and economic geography
  - b. Specific islands and their character
  - c. Current development trends and direction
- III. Central America: Past, Present, and Future (Ch. 10)
  - a. Main features, past, direct and indirect political and military involvement by U.S.
  - b. Northern Part
  - c. Southern Part

**Exam # 1: around mid-term week**

- IV. Mexico and the Evolution of Cultural Landscape (Ch. 3)
  - a. Pre-Hispanic Mexico
  - b. Conquest
  - c. Colonial influence on landscape, economy, and politics

**Exam # 2: Before Spring Break**

- V. Modern Mexico (Ch. 9 and selected Journal Articles)
  - a. Landscape, politics, economy, and development trends
  - b. NAFTA, the border, and Zapatistas
  - c. Immigration issues and the Drug Trade

**Exam # 3: Finals week at assigned time**

## **Tentative Reading Schedule:**

### **January**

**10:** Discuss course syllabus and class requirements

**12:** Ch. 1-3

**17:** Ch. 4

**19:** Ch 5

**24:** Ch. 6

**26:** Ch. 8

**31:** Ch. 10

### **February**

**2:**

**7: Review**

**9: Exam #1**

**14:**

**16:** Selected article readings

**21:** Selected article readings

**23: No Class—CRT out of Town---Find Articles in Library**

**28: No Class—CRT out of Town---Find Articles in Library**

### **March**

**1:** Selected article readings

**6:** Selected article readings

**8:** Selected article readings

**13: Review**

**15: Exam #2**

**20: Spring Break—No Class**

**22: Spring Break—No Class**

**27:**

**29: Ch. 9**

**April**

**3: Selected article readings**

**5: Book Review Due**

**10: Selected article readings**

**12: Selected article readings**

**17: Selected article readings**

**19: Selected article readings**

**24: Review**

**26: Exam #3**

**May**

**April 30-May 4: Finals Week---No Test During Finals Week**

**Some suggested books for out of class reading assignment:**

Colonialism and Landscape---Andrew Sluyter

Many Mexicos---Lesley Byrd Simpson

Incidents of Travel in Yucatan---John L. Stephens

Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?---George W. Grayson

The Motorcycle Diaries---Ernesto Che Guevara

Something in Vallarta or Something Like a Dream---Robert Richter

Search for the Camino Real---Robert Richter

Food for the Few---Gerardo Otero

Globalization and the Power of Peasants: La Via Campesina---Annette Aurelie Desmarais

El Gran Pueblo: A History of Greater Mexico--- William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan

Mexican Politics: The Dynamics of Change--- Howard Handelman

The Course of Mexican History--- Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman

The Spanish Empire in America--- C.H. Haring

A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain--- Peter Gerhard

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents or In the Time of Butterflies---Julia Alvarez

**Name-Place List:**

Bahamas  
Havana  
Cuba  
Jamaica  
Haiti  
Dominican Republic  
Puerto Rico  
Lesser Antilles  
Aruba  
Caribbean Sea  
Gulf of Mexico  
Panama  
Panama Canal  
Costa Rica  
Nicaragua  
Lake Managua  
Lake Nicaragua  
Honduras  
El Salvador  
Guatemala  
Belize  
Mexico  
Merida  
Mexico City  
Guadalajara  
Monterrey  
Lake Chapala  
Ciudad Juarez  
Nogales  
Tijuana  
Cabo San Lucas  
Gulf of California  
Pacific Ocean

All Mexican States and Capital Cities