

Landscapes of Mexico and Caribbean America

Syllabus, Fall 2018

Course numbers: GRG 341K / LAS 330.2

Unique numbers: 37145 / 39785

Meeting time: MWF 1100 – 1150

Meeting room: RLP 0.128

Prerequisite: Upper division standing

Instructor: William E. Doolittle

Office: RLP 3.704

Hours: By appointment made via email

Email: dolitl@austin.utexas.edu

Website: www.la.utexas.edu/users/wd/

Teaching assistant: Blaise Murphy

Office hours: TBD

Email: blaisemurphy@utexas.edu

Course Overview:

This course focuses on the geographical differences that exist within the lands between the continental United States and South America. Although “Middle America” as it is sometimes called, is our immediate neighbor to the south, “Americans” or perhaps more appropriately “*estadunideses*,” often have an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of this land. The region is in some respects like a tapestry or mosaic. For example, in reference to one very large portion of it—México—Lesley Byrd Simpson titled his book *Many Mexicos*. In this course, the region is studied systematically by unraveling or dividing it into 12 sub-regions. Each is discussed in the context of its: (1) biophysical environments, (2) the ways in which people have adapted to and transformed it historically, and (3) the current economic, political, and cultural landscape.



The course is intended for all advanced students, presumably with a modicum of critical-thinking skills, regardless of their specific interests. It is designed to introduce the region to those students with little or no knowledge of it, and to help students familiar with the region to understand better its geographical attributes.

This course is approved as carrying a **Global Cultures** flag.

Grading Policy:

The final course grade will be based on three criteria as follows.

Three exams comprised of 33 multiple choice questions each (value: 30% each for 90% of the course grade).

One exercise-based test involving 20 fill in the blank questions, and two short answer questions (value: 10% of the course grade).

Class participation based largely but not exclusively on attendance. The course grade based on the three examinations and the exercise test will be dropped one letter for 4 unexcused absences, two letters for 7 unexcused absences, three letters for 10 unexcused absences, and four letters for 13 unexcused absences. Students who participate enthusiastically in class by asking questions, offering constructive comments, providing new information, and proffering intelligent opinions will be rewarded with extra points. If you anticipate missing a class, or you do miss one due to unforeseen circumstances, inform the professor or TA by email as soon as possible.

Extra credit? Forget it!

Plus and minus grades will be used for the final course grade.

Laptops and Tablets:

The use of personal computers in class is highly encouraged. Copies of all PowerPoint slides presented in class will be available in grayshade PDFs in the **Modules** section of **Canvas**. Students should convert them using OCR or some other program and use them in class to assist in taking notes.

Textbooks:

There is NO textbook for this course. Instead, one to three readings will be available in the **Modules** section of **Canvas** for each class meeting.

Review Materials:

Audio and video material presented in class will be available for students to review through the Lectures Online section of *Canvas*. These materials should not be used in lieu of attending class.

Final Exam:

There is NO “final exam,” meaning a comprehensive examination, for this course.

Students with Disabilities:

Such students may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/ 512.471.6259.

Help a Classmate Overcome a Disability:

A few students with disabilities need assistance taking class notes. If you would like to be a peer Volunteer Note Taker and share your notes with such students in this class, through a secure Web Portal maintained by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), apply at https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b2D7aEL5dB8B8k5.

Academic Dishonesty:

Students are expected to be knowledgeable of, and conform to, UT's Honor Code.

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

Religious Holidays:

According to UT policy, students must notify professors of their pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. Students missing a class or examination because of a religious holy day will have an opportunity to make-up missed work.

Security and Emergency Evacuation:

Students are expected to be knowledgeable of UT's recommendations about campus safety and security www.utexas.edu/safety/ and emergency evacuation routes and procedures

www.utexas.edu/emergency

The most direct route out of escape is through either of two doors at the rear of the lecture hall, and then proceeding to the exit directly across hallway, or by turning left to the exit at the end of the hallway.

Updated 25 August 2018