



FUNDACION CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS INTERAMERICANOS, CEDEI

GEO 302 Geography of Latin America

Latin America is a rich and diverse region, with a wide range of physical environments, climates, biological and mineral resources and a unique blend of peoples and cultures. This course is a general introduction to the geography, history and culture of Latin America. We will examine the physical environment, cultural traditions, lifestyles, economies, development and urban environment throughout the Latin American region.

Students will carry out an original investigation on a topic of their choice in their own time, this will be written up and handed in at the end of the course and each student will prepare a presentation of their project for the final class. During the course there will also be several assignments that consist of preparing presentations for a following class.

Course Objectives

- Identify the major regions of Latin America and distinguish between them.
- Become familiar with the physical features, climates and ecosystems of Latin America and identify these on maps.
- Identify the countries of Middle and South America.
- Understand the historical and social factors that contribute to the cultural diversity of Latin America.
- Discuss contemporary environmental, social, health, economic and development issues and challenges in Latin America on a regional basis.

Selected readings from:

Clawson, D. 2006. *Latin America & the Caribbean: Lands and Peoples, 4th edition*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-976624-6

Harm J de Blij, Peter Muller, Jan Nijman. *Geography - Realms regions and Concepts*. 16th edition 2014. Wiley.

Additional reading will be available.

Exams and grading

1.	Mid-term exam	30%
4.	Assignments / class work	10%
5.	Final exam	30%
6.	Term Project	25%
7.	Oral presentation of project	5%

Class 1.

Introduction to Latin America.

Themes in Geography and ideas for student research projects.

Reading: Clawson, Chapter 1. *The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*

Class 2.

Physical Geography - South America

Reading: Clawson pp. 15-36

Class 3.

Physical Geography - Middle America

Reading: Clawson pp. 36-47

Class 4.

Climates and ecosystems of Latin America

Reading: Clawson, Chapters 3 and 4

Class 5.

Pre-Columbian cultures – 1

Reading: Clawson, chapter 7 - sections on middle American civilizations

Class 6.

Pre-Columbian cultures – 2

Reading: Clawson Chapter 7 - sections on South American civilizations

Class 7.

The Spanish Conquests

Reading: Clawson pp 96-115

Class 8.

The Iberian Heritage

Reading: Clawson pp 96-115

Class 9.

Latin American Identities – Culture and religion

Reading: Clawson 217-245

Class 10.

Mid term exam

Class 11.

Middle America - overview.

Mexico

Reading: Harm et al 192- 218

Class 12.

Central America

Reading: Harm et al 218-224

Class 13.

Caribbean basin

Reading: Harm et al: 224-231

Class 14.

South America overview

Reading: Harm et al. 234-249

Class 15.

South American regions - The Caribbean North

Reading: Harm et al: 252- 258

Class 16.

South American Regions - The Andean West

Reading: Harm et al 258-265

Class 17

South American regions - The Southern Cone

Reading: Harm et al 265-270

Class 18

South American regions - Brazil

Reading: Harm et al 271-279

Class 19

Final Exam

Class 20

Student project presentation