**Geography 371 Mexico and Central America**

*Fall 2020 ONLINE*

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Office Hours, via chat in the Moodle system, Zoom upon request, and perhaps other modalities.

Tuesday 6-8 p.m.; Monday, Wednesday 9-10 a.m.; Sunday 8-9 p.m.; and by appointment.

Course Overview:

Environmental, cultural, and social aspects of Mexico and Central America are examined. Special attention will be given to physical and environmental geography, the political economy of the US in the region, human migration, and civil conflicts.

Required readings:

-Geo-Mexico: the Geography and Dynamics of Modern Mexico. Richard Rhoda and Tony Burton, Sombrero Books, Ladysmith, Canada (2010).

-Gonzalez, Juan (2011). *Harvest of Empire: a History of Latinos in America*. London, Penguin Books.

Other readings will be available on the Moodle online course delivery system.

Students should also plan to budget up to $16 for viewing films; details to be announced.

Course goals:

1. Describe the political ecology of land use and civil conflict
2. Analyze the dynamics between the biophysical environment and socio-cultural development

Both of above align with the Geography Program Outcomes below, in addition to Diversity

1. Interpret the interrelationships between people, space and place. (IL)
2. Analyze human-environment relations. (IA)

Activities:

You are required to consult Moodle for assigned activities Monday and Wednesday. In general, there will be readings and discussion questions every week, and a quiz every other week.

We may view a few documentaries and/or movies as part of the material for the course, for a student cost not anticipated to exceed $16. All students are recommended to have access to a full screen computer and printer for viewing of all class materials. Being able to print out reading questions so that you can later take notes on them for quiz preparation is a very important part of adequate preparation for this class. I have found that most students who do not have paper copies of all materials available when they take quizzes are disadvantaged.

Quiz questions will be based mostly on the study questions that I post. Quizzes must be taken online as per the schedule listed below. Because I will drop your lowest quiz score, no make-up quizzes will be given. Please don't intentionally miss a quiz knowing that you can drop it and then later have to miss another one for unforeseen reasons out of your control. One major reason for allowing a dropped quiz is so that the messy question of make ups will not need to come up.

Quizzes will be taken online using Moodle and you may use your notes and readings. Taking good notes from the reading and reading questions, together with reviewing and studying before the quiz, are recommended for achieving good scores. Quiz days and times are not negotiable, so please plan accordingly. The main reason for this requirement is that if some students are allowed to take the quiz at a later day or time, they can gain access to what was on the quiz from other students. As many students taking classes online are also working, and mostly so during the day, I have scheduled the quizzes for Sunday evenings, 8:30-10. I realize that there is no perfect time for all people. I personally would prefer a weeknight but this is more likely to create scheduling problems for student employment or night class reasons. The window in which you take quizzes will be ~90 minutes. Once you login the software will limit you to the actual amount of time I have programmed. Typically I will program time limits of 25-60 minutes, but they will vary. Accordingly, be sure to login at least one hour prior to the quiz closing.

Please use e-mail to communicate with me rather than through Moodle. Always type in something like *GEOG 371* or *Mexico Central America class* in the title of your message so that it gets my attention and so that I can later search for all class correspondence. ***I request that all students use WOU e-mail only for this course.***

Participation scores are based primarily on the degree to which student consistently do forum postings and show knowledge and engagement of the course materials. In some cases your response to that which other students have previously posted may be requested.

There will be a term paper due for this course of approximately 2500 words recommended minimum length. Details and guidelines will follow in the Moodle system.

The final essay exam will be open Sunday morning, December 6, and will be due by 10 p.m. Guidelines and some study questions will be posted the prior week in Moodle.

Grading

Approximate weighting of requirements: quizzes 45%, discussion/participation 15%, term paper 20%, final exam 20%. Your raw quiz scores will be available for you to see in Moodle. However, any curve adjustments will not be visible in Moodle grades. Adjustments will be reported in Moodle postings.

Approximate grading scale: A 90-100, B 80-90, C 70-80, D 60-70, F <60

Weekly Posting of Activities

There will be course activities posted on Moodle, updated weekly. This class will be, throughout the term, a work in progress. Only the material that is posted for the current week that we are in should be considered stable; all subsequent materials are subject to changes. This means that if you were to work on materials posted for a future week, you may find that changes will happen to what is expected after you do the work. So keep up, but don't try to get very far ahead. Generally speaking I will post all weekly reading and video viewing materials by Monday noon; if there is an exception I will indicate such.

Sunday Quiz Schedule(all quizzes 8:30-10 p.m.)

October 4

October 18

November 1

November 15

November 29

Any student needing an accommodation for any type of disability should talk me during office hours or after class the first week of the course and should contact the Office of Disability Services (838-8250v/tty).

By continuing in this class, all students agree to be bound by the Academic Dishonesty Policy of the Social Science Division as posted in the folder for this class at [www.wou.edu/~mcgladm](http://www.wou.edu/~mcgladm).