

Geography 4325 Latin American Geography
1/3 online and 2/3's face to face
MW 11:15 AM to 12:10 PM face to face
Friday material will be online
CAS 104
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. E. Cory Sills, Associate Professor
 Office: CAS 142
 Office hours: MWF 10:05 to 11:05 am
 In Person, Or By Appointment
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Communications: I encourage you to visit office hours, see me after class or set up an appointment via zoom. This is a good opportunity for you to look over your exams, ask questions, or seek clarification. If you cannot attend my office hours you may set-up an alternative time. I will respond to your emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.

Required texts:

The library has purchased these books for you to use for free. Only three students can use this book at one time. However, you can download and save sections of the book. Here is the link to access the books [GEOG - Library-Provided eTextbooks - Research Guides at University of Texas Tyler \(uttyler.edu\)](https://uttyler.edu/library-provided-e-textbooks-research-guides). You may also purchase the books in the UT Tyler bookstore or from online sites such as Amazon and Chegg.

1. Placing Latin America, 4th edition. Edited by Edward L. Jackiewicz and Fernando J. Bosco. Rowman and Littlefield.
2. A Beauty That Hurts: Life and Death in Guatemala, 4th edition. Author: W. George Lovell. University of Texas Press.

Catalogue description: Studies in geography to include such topics as historical geography, economic geography, and cultural geography. May be repeated once for credit when topic varies.

Course learning objectives: The objectives of the course are:

- (1) Apply geographic terms to Latin America and Caribbean regions.
- (2) Differentiate the physical and cultural geography of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (3) Demonstrate how the regions are integrated.
- (4) Evaluate historical and contemporary issues.
- (5) Consider the variable urban, political, economic, physical, and cultural geographic issues.

Course format: This is a blended class where 1/3 of the class will be online. Even though we will not meet in class on Friday's you will still be held accountable for material assigned for Friday's class. Class lectures and discussions will be supplemented by the required text, assigned readings, current events, videos, demonstrations, and guest lectures. Lectures and readings will not necessarily cover the same ground. Indeed, they are intended to supplement each other rather than to completely overlap. Starting on September 9, all students must participate in the class discussions. You will be graded based on your participation. I strongly recommend that you attend every lecture and carefully study the assigned readings. I encourage relevant questions and comments during the lecture. A question you have other students might also have, and thoughtful remarks will make the course more interesting for everyone, including myself.

Class Etiquette: I expect everyone in the classroom to be **respectful** of each other and treat everyone with dignity – each of us brings different opinions and experiences some of these might be dissimilar to your own. I expect comments to be positive and objective and not judgmental and rude.

Content Notice: Some course materials and discussions may address challenging or sensitive topics. When possible, I will give advance notice so you can be prepared to engage thoughtfully. If you have concerns about course content, you are welcome to speak with me.

Grading: The course grade will be based on two exams (mid-term and final), group discussion participation, Friday online materials and assignments (that will be due on Monday), and a research paper that consists of three parts: proposal, paper, and presentation.

Exams: The exams will cover material from class including slides, discussions, presentations, guest lectures, readings, and videos. The midterm will cover material from the first part of the course; the final will cover material from the second part of the course including the presentations. Exams could include multiple choice, true/false, map questions, and short answer questions dealing with major issues raised in the course.

Discussion's: Each student will be required to participate in five discussions about the assigned readings. The lowest discussion score will be dropped. I will announce and post a sign-up sheet during the second week of class. To facilitate the discussion, each person will be required to turn in at least 3 questions over the readings. There should be enough questions to cover all the readings. Specific instructions will be posted on the class Canvas site. See the attached schedule for discussion dates.

Research Proposal, Paper, and Presentation: Each student will research, write, and present an 8–10-page paper over a current issue in Latin America. You can find topics by reading the newspaper, listening to NPR, using AI, visiting the CIA World Factbook site, class Canvas, or a list of topics given to you by your instructor. Detailed instructions will be posted on the class Canvas site. See the attached schedule for the due date.

Class Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be present for all scheduled class meetings and to actively engage in class activities and discussions. Participation is an important component of this course, and students should come prepared having completed all assigned readings. Active participation includes contributing thoughtfully to discussions, asking questions, and engaging respectfully with classmates. Students may be called upon to participate during class, and regular, meaningful participation is expected.

Students are allowed **up to three excused university approved absences** during the semester. Any additional absences may negatively impact your participation grade unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. **Attendance and participation will be graded.** Repeated absences, lack of preparation, or failure to engage in class activities will negatively affect your overall course grade.

Make-up Policy: Make-up tests will be given with a legitimate reason and in rare circumstances. Students should contact the instructor **prior** to the exam and not after if they will miss the exam. Make-up exams will not be given except when there are exceptional circumstances (be prepared to provide documentation of your circumstance, such as a doctor's note, police report, University-excused absence, *et cetera*).

AI Statement for This Course: The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all drafts and final products. You may use another software program for editing of your document and you may use AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Copilot) to help brainstorm, generate ideas for your research paper, and find references. However, the written text of the paper, discussion questions, and any other assignments must be your own and not generated by AI. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT). You will receive a zero on the assignment for violating this policy.

Course weights:

Mid-term: 22%

Final: 22%

Group Discussions (4): 20%

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade *only when all of the following conditions are met*: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it

difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.

What we cover in the lecture on a day-to-day basis may differ from the attached schedule. I will inform the class via email if topics change. Days shaded in gray we will not meet in person.

Course Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Tentative Lectures and Activities	Tentative Readings
1	M	24-Aug	Mapping the Course/Introductions	Syllabus
1	W	26-Aug	Defining the Region	Placing Latin America Chapter 1
1	F	28-Aug	Watch film "Film Baja to Patagonia" National Geographic Link to video posted on Canvas	
2	M	31-Aug	Discuss Friday's (28 Aug) Online Material Lecture: Physical Environments	Placing Latin America Chapter 7
2	W	2-Sept	Lecture: Ancient Landscapes	Placing Latin America Chapter 2 pgs. 17-18.
2	F	4-Sept	Read Articles for Discussion 1. See Canvas for articles	
3	M	7-Sept	NO CLASS. Labor Day! Census Day Tuesday 8 Sept.	
3	W	9-Sept	Discussion 1: Ancient Landscapes	Articles posted to Canvas.
3	F	11-Sept	Read Historical Accounts of the Conquest and be prepared to discuss it on Monday. Readings posted on Canvas.	
4	M	14-Sept	Class Activity Lecture: Historical Landscapes	Placing Latin America Chapter 2 pgs. 18-29.
4	W	16-Sept	Historical Landscapes Cont.	Placing Latin America Chapter 2 pgs. 18-29.
4	F	18-Sept	Watch Film "Ancient Builders of the Amazon". Link posted to Canvas.	
5	M	21-Sept	Lecture: Economics of Latin America	Placing Latin America Chapter 3
5	W	23-Sept	Lecture: Geopolitics	Placing Latin America Chapter 4
5	F	25-Sept	Work on Paper Proposals and read for Discussion 2	

6	M	28-Sept	Paper Proposal Due Discuss Proposals Lecture: Geopolitics Continued	Placing Latin America Chapter 8
6	W	30-Sept	Discussion 2: Economic Systems, Geopolitics, and Globalization	Articles posted to Canvas.
6	F	2-Oct	Review Unequal Scenes Website (see Canvas for instructions)	
7	M	5-Oct	Lecture: Rural to Urban	Placing Latin America Chapter 5
7	W	7-Oct	Wrap-Up Materials Review for Midterm	
7	F	9-Oct	Watch Video posted to Canvas	
8	M	12-Oct	Midterm Exam	
8	W	14-Oct	Lecture: Latin American Cities	Placing Latin America Chapter 6
8	F	16-Oct	Read for Discussion 3.	
9	M	19-Oct	Discuss Papers and Presentations Lecture: Guatemala Case Study	A Beauty That Hurts: Prologue
9	W	21-Oct	Discussion 3: A Beauty That Hurts	A Beauty That Hurts Parts 1 & 2
9	F	23-Oct	Watch Film on "When Banana Ruled" Video posted to Canvas.	
10	M	26-Oct	Discussion 4: A Beauty That Hurts	A Beauty That Hurts Parts 3 & 4
10	W	28-Oct	Review of A Beauty That Hurts Wrap-up	A Beauty That Hurts Epilogue, Sources, and Commentary
10	F	30-Oct	Watch Video "The Garifuna Journey" Video posted to Canvas.	
11	M	2-Nov	Lecture: Tourism	Placing Latin America Chapter 10
11	W	4-Nov	Lecture: Social Movements	Placing Latin American Chapter's 13 and 15
11	F	6-Nov	Read for Discussion 5	

12	M	9-Nov	Lecture: Indigeneity	Placing Latin America Chapter 12
12	W	11-Nov	Discussion 5: Borders and Migration	Articles posted to Canvas. Placing Latin America Chapter 14
12	F	13-Nov	Work on Research Paper	
13	M	16-Nov	Wrap up Lectures Research Paper Due on Canvas by midnight Begin Research Paper Presentations	
13	W	18-Nov	Research Paper Presentations	
13	F	20-Nov	TBA	
Thanksgiving Break November 23-27				
14	M	30-Nov	Research Paper Presentations	
14	W	2-Dec	Research Paper Presentations Review for Final Exam	
14	F	4-Dec	Zoom Study Session	
15	M	7-Dec	Final Exam: 10:15 AM -12:15 PM	
15	W	9-Dec	No Class	