Geog 270 Regional Geography of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean

Fall 2006

Course Synopsis

This course will be an overview of the economic and political landscape of the cultural-political region known as “Middle America.” We will look at the historical construction of the region, and how this construction is similar and dissimilar throughout the region. Our focus of study is the process and patterns of geographic differentiation—how people interact with and within the environment. We will also look at the connections between “Middle America” and other world regions, especially Anglo-America, but also Western Asia (i.e., “Europe). The required text will provide much of the basis for lectures, but there will also be some additional readings that you will be responsible for.

Much of the subject matter in this course is simply “fact.” However, there are some matters that are open to multiple interpretations. You will be expected to understand what the debates and controversies are and be able to discuss them.

Most importantly, I ask that you

1. pay attention to how the countries of the region known as “Middle America” are popularly understood, that is, the “geographical imaginaries” of “Middle America” (how ordinary people understand these countries)
2. understand the significance of the region throughout history and in the present
3. how Middle America is connected to and intricately constitutive of other regions
4. and how people create and contest the world they live in

Class Hours: Monday, Thursday 9:45-11:00
Location: HN 1022
Instructor: Ramiro Campos
Office: HN 1032 (knock on the door!)
Department Office: HN 1006
email: ramiro.campos@yahoo.com (yes, that’s a period)
Office Hours: Monday 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Text:


*There will be a few additional brief readings posted on the Blackboard site in due time.

Grading:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Exam 3 (Finals Period)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Credit Book Review:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper (8-10 pages long):</td>
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Extra Credit Book Review: 10% Due 11/27
Research Paper (8-10 pages long): 20% Due 12/11

The Extra Credit Book Review is due via Blackboard **NOVEMBER 27, 11:59 p.m.**

*The assignment will be posted on Blackboard in due time.

The Research Paper is due via Blackboard **DECEMBER 11, 11:59 p.m.**

**Students must OK their research topic with me. Papers submitted to me without prior consultation will not be accepted.

Late papers not accepted unless in case of medical emergency, with appropriate documentation.

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.

**It is your own responsibility** to understand the college’s rules concerning appropriate behavior and what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty.
COURSE OUTLINE

Part I  MIDDLE AMERICA AS A NATURAL REGION (Chapters 1-5; 10-11)

August 31 – September 14:  “Physical Geography of Middle America”

NO CLASSES MONDAY, 9/4; CLASS MEETS WEDNESDAY 9/6

September 18 – September 25:  “Political Economy of Middle America”

*There will be additional readings posted on the Blackboard site for this section.*

September 28:  First Exam

NO CLASSES MONDAY, 10/2; CLASS MEETS TUESDAY 10/3  **No office hours 10/2**

Part II  MIDDLE AMERICA AS AN ECONOMIC REGION (Chapters 6; 12-13)

October 3 – October 19:  “Political Change in Middle America”

NO CLASSES 10/9

October 23 – November 2:  “Urbanization /Demography of Middle America”

*There will be additional readings posted on the Blackboard site for this section.*

November 6 – November 16:  “Underdevelopment of Middle America”

*There will be additional readings posted on the Blackboard site for this section.*

November 20:  Second Exam

Part III  MIDDLE AMERICA AS A CULTURAL REGION (Chapters 7-9)

November 27:  Optional Extra Credit Assignment Due

November 27 – November 30:  “The Whitewashing of Middle America”

December 4 – December 11:  “Religion and Society of Middle America”

December 11:  Term Paper Due

December 21:  Final Exam 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.