

LATIN AMERICA:
CULTURES, ENVIRONMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

GRG 395D / LAS 388
Unique numbers 37500, 40410
Fall 2011
Meets GRG 408, Monday 7-10 pm

Professor Gregory Knapp
Office: GRG 326
gwk@mail.utexas.edu
Office phone 232-1588 (forwards to email)
Office hours Wednesday 10-10:45 am or by appointment

This seminar is designed to help Latin Americanist students perform academic research on human-environment relationships, as well as to work for and to critique development agencies, businesses and non-governmental organizations. The class explores the ideas and methods of a number of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields including cultural and political ecology, ecological anthropology, environmental history, development studies, and cultural geography. The course will address issues of sustainable development, cultural identity and territory, gender, the smallholder/ householder focus of production, adaptive tactics and strategies, food and farming, environmental impacts of traditional land use, traditional conservation strategies, cultural survival, population growth, environmental change, and the changing impacts of markets and the state on local economies and land use. These topics will be developed using examples from Latin America.

Prerequisites:

Graduate standing and some knowledge of rural Latin America or the Caribbean. Knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese is desirable but not necessary.

Course Characteristics:

Each class will consist of (1) short lecture(s) by the instructor; (2) proctored discussions of the week's readings, co-chaired by two students who have, in consultation with the instructor, prepared a strategy for addressing the readings and student essays (which may include splitting into smaller groups); and (3) a food break providing for more informal discussion of the topics.

Reading Assignments

Every week (except the first week) there will be assigned readings on a particular topic, oriented toward a set of questions for discussion in class. Reading assignments for the first two weeks are included in this syllabus; reading assignments for future weeks will be posted online as the course proceeds. Students are invited to suggest readings for later in the semester.

There is no textbook. Course readings and other materials will be posted on Blackboard as the semester proceeds.

Additional articles may be assigned in professional journals; these are usually available for free download as pdf files

on the UT Library web site. To download journals go to: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/resources/> and click on "Find a Journal." You will be provided choices for accessing various years of the journals, and you will be allowed to download free pdf files of the desired article.

Summary of Grading:

Grades will be assigned on the plus and minus scale (A-, B+, and so forth). Normally students do receive B's in this class, which is considered an adequate grade in Graduate School.

Attendance and participation 10%. Attendance and constructive participation is expected and required. Contact Greg well in advance if health or other compelling reasons may require absence from a class.

Weekly written commentaries 30%. Each week, a topic will be assigned for a written commentary. Keep within the assigned word count lengths (200 to 300 words). These must be saved as ".doc" ".docx" ".rtf" or ".txt" files and emailed to Greg by noon Sunday prior to the class. Do not include a cover page, but do include your name at the top of the page, and in the file name (e.g. Smith.rtf). Use 12 point Times or Times New Roman, and double space the page. These may be shared with the weekly proctor (s) and other students.

Proctoring 15%. Each student must co-proctor one or two classes. The two proctors should join in a brief presentation at the start of each class giving an overview of the readings as a whole in relation to the topic and the in relation to previous readings and discussions. Plan for 10 minutes (5 minutes each); the instructor will cut you off if you go over time. Write out notes for your presentation unless you have outstanding presentation skills. Do not use PowerPoint.

Paper 1, due OCTOBER 10 20%. Three pages (900 words). In this paper you will be discussing issues of agency, identity, and participation in a particular development context in Latin America. This may be your project site, or you may choose a case example from the readings. The paper should be framed in terms of one or two guiding questions. You may use the questions provided for our class to guide your paper, or come up with your own questions.

Paper 2, due NOVEMBER 28 20%. Three pages (900 words). In this paper you will be exploring a particular trajectory of development or conservation in a local setting in Latin America. Again, you may use your own project or take a case example from the readings. The paper should again be framed in terms of one or two guiding questions.

Citation Style

Please use the APA parenthetical citation style and bibliography format – there is a program available through UT Libraries that will guide you step by step on this and format your bibliography for you:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/noodlebib>

Classroom Policies

Laptops or tablets are NOT allowed except with prior permission. Online materials may not be copied or distributed without prior permission. Students are expected to arrive on time to class exactly at 7 pm as a courtesy to others. No matter how interesting the discussion, classes will terminate by 10 pm in courtesy to those who need to catch a bus.

Accommodations for Special Needs

The University makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Academic Integrity

Everyone is expected to show respect toward others. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Using other person's work without appropriate citation is plagiarism.

Tentative Schedule

August 29 Introduction; Political and Philosophical Lenses

Readings (read after class):

Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles*, selections (pp 9-35, 69-81, 114-118, 172-181, 260-263). (Basic Books, 2007).

September 8: Talk by Diana Liverman (optional)

Governing Climate Change: Perspective on and from Latin America. 3 pm in Hackett Room, SRH 1.313. Arrive early; talk will be moved to Benson Library if room is too crowded.

Sep 12 Development

Questions for essay: What are some alternative ideologies or definitions of development and who determines the prevailing definition? How has development or its absence been explained?

Readings for this class (some will be assigned to sub groups of the seminar):

Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions...* (see above)

Immanuel Wallerstein: "Medieval Prelude" and "Theoretical Reprise" from *The Modern World-System* (Academic Press, 1974), pp 15-18, 346-357

Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp 19-23

Hernando De Soto, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, 1989 (Translated from the Spanish), selections from the introduction by Mario Vargas Llosa (xiv-xv, xvii-xx) and the main text (243-244).

Ray Bromley, "Development, Underdevelopment, and National Spatial Organization." *Yearbook of the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers* 17/18:249-259 (1992).

Escobar, Arturo, "Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World," pages 192-226 (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1995)

Anthony Bebbington, "Geographies of Development in Latin America?" pp. 105-148 in Knapp, ed., *Latin America in the 21st Century: Challenges and Solutions* (CLAG and University of Texas Press 2002).

David Keeling, "Transportation Challenges" pp. 77-104 in Knapp, ed., *Latin America in the 21st Century: Challenges and Solutions* (CLAG and University of Texas Press 2002).

Thomas M. Parris and Robert W. Kates, "Characterizing and Measuring sustainable development," *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.* 2003. 28:559–86

Arturo Escobar, "Latin America at a Crossroads," *Cultural Studies* Vol. 24, No. 1 January 2010, pp. 1-65

A selection of recent articles on Latin America from *The Economist*

Sept 19 Cultural and Political Ecology

Sep 26 Smallholders, Householders, Gender

Oct 3 Local Groups and Participatory Development

Oct 10 Identity and Territory (First Paper Due)

Oct 17 Ecologies of order and chaos

Oct 24 Strategies for Subsistence and Consumption

Oct 31 Food and other Commodity Chains

Nov 7 Population and Environmental Impacts

Nov 14 Conservation, Adaptation, Resilience

Nov 21 Trajectories and Futures

Nov 28 Conclusions, Final Paper Due

Last updated 8/27/2011