LATIN AMERICA: CULTURES, ENVIRONMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT Syllabus - Subject to Change

GRG 395D / LAS 388 Fall 2012 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 TBA

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 and political ecology, cultural identity and territory, gender, the smallholder/ householder focus of production, adaptive tactics and strategies, food and farming, environmental impacts of traditional land use, conservation strategies, 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. THIS COURSE IS RESTRICTED; YOU MUST OBTAIN INSTRUCTOR'S PERMISSION TO REGISTER.

Course Characteristics:

Each class will consist of (1) short lecture(s) by the instructor; (2) proctored discussions of the week's readings, cochaired 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

There is no textbook. Course readings and other materials are posted on Blackboard.

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 or videos (unless you made the video).

Paper 1, due OCTOBER 22 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. You will present your paper topic in class with a brief powerpoint (5-10 minutes)

Paper 2, due NOVEMBER 26 25%. Six pages (1800 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

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 of Topics and Questions

This schedule, topics, and questions are subject to revision. Reading assignments will be provided beginning the first day of class.

September 10 Introduction; Political and Philosophical Lenses

September 17 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?

Sept 24 Cultural and Political Ecology, Methods and Theories.

Questions: what methods and theories and stances are appropriate to understand complex human-environment interactions in the real world? What can specialists or activists offer to help solve real world problems?

Oct 1 Smallholders, Householders, Livelihoods, Gender.

Questions: What is "smallholder" farming and what are the organizational advantages of smallholder/householder units over other forms of agricultural organization? How do the concepts of livelihood, gender, and "tactics" provide both organizational principles and a challenge for understanding rural activities and empowering local people at the local scale?

Oct 8 Local Groups and Participatory Development.

Questions: To what extent are local actors individualists? What is enthusiasm and participation and how and where does it grow? What are some techniques of participatory development and rapid rural appraisal, and what relationship if any do these have with cultural politics or infrapolitics? Can small scale development be large scale policy?

Oct 15 Identity and Territory

What "traits" or markers, locations or behaviors have been important in defining ethnic groups in Latin America? What information exists about these markers and can they be mapped? What uses or abuses might such maps be subject to? What role might ethnic and/or gender identity play in economic development? In maintaining group access to resources?

Oct 22 Issues of Agency and Participation (no readings, papers due) No proctors

Students present papers; provide Greg with one or two pictures for projection during each six minute talk.

Oct 29 Livelihoods, Gender, and Environment under Neoliberalism.

Questions to consider: How do neoliberalism and global consumptive patterns affect local livelihoods? How, and to what extent are these links hidden? In what ways are gender roles and responsibilities challenged by neoliberalism? How have families come to adapt to these challenges?

Nov 5 Agricultural Trajectories

Question to consider: To what extent are smallholding strategies still relevant in the context of the changing scale of global agriculture?

Nov 12 New Exports and Mining,

Questions: Can extractive industries overcome the "resource curse" and be harnessed for wider social good? What challenges do the readings explore to this end? To what extent are post-neoliberal policies or offshore development of resources helpful for local populations and environments?

Nov 19 Food, Identity, Politics, and Scale

Questions: If we are what we eat, who are we and how/why is this changing at various scales? How does the relationship

between consumption and identity inform politics (dominant politics and/or politics of resistance) of food production and consumption at these scales? What is the role of development in the discussion of food, identity and politics?

Nov 26: Conservation and development in Latin America: New paradigms and directions. Final Paper Due

Questions: Who benefits and how from the new paradigms of conservation and the commodification of nature? What aspects discussed during this semester in class do you think are being left behind or are underrepresented, and could be important in conservation strategies?

Dec 3 Conclusions