GEA 4465 – Geography of the Amazon
Syllabus

Course Number: GEA 4465
Credits: 3
Instructor: Aline Carrara
Class Location: Room 3012 Turlington Hall
Lectures: Mondays, Period 7 – 9 (1:55pm – 4:55pm)
Office Hours: Mondays, 9am to 12pm
E-mail: acarrara@ufl.edu

COURSE CONTENT
The course is designed to give the student a fuller understanding of both the biophysical setting and the social processes of the Amazon basin, particularly focusing on critical issues of conservation and development. The course will start by setting the ground for understanding dynamics of natural and biophysical processes and emphasize natural resources management and governance by looking at the natural history of different cultural groups and their economic activities. The course will facilitate the exploration of how the management of regional natural resources has varied over time and about the importance of the Amazon basin to biogeochemical cycles, ecological diversity and cultural heritage. The course will be a Seminar

REQUIRED READINGS
There is no required “text” for this course. Instead, most of the readings will be posted on Canvas in digital form. Other readings will require a search via the internet.

COURSE FORMAT
The course will be based on an interactive learning approach (seminar style), and may incorporate at times lectures, videos, guest speakers, group activities and peer review of student writing.

SEMINAR STATEMENT - A seminar is a shared intellectual experience in which the instructor and students inform one another. Ideally, the instructor operates as a tutor, charting the course and serving as a navigational aid. The students are the drivers, and the degree to which they are driven determines the success of experience. Preparation is essential. All assigned readings must be read and digested before class. Teams are assigned to lead each class discussion, more on that below.

One of the most important lessons of graduate education and essential art of scholarship is that of "respectful critique," learning to appreciate the strengths and identify the weakness of other works. Every Monday, prior to class, students are required to post a brief comment (3-4 paragraphs) and 3 type-written discussion questions derived from that week's readings. These comments should not be summaries of the readings, but instead should reflect your thoughts, criticisms, praise of the ideas discussed in the readings. These should be posted on the canvas discussion board.

In addition, each student will be responsible to lead discussions on a specific set of readings on a rotating basis during the semester. The discussion leaders must provide a typed overview of the
main points in the readings for the class, summarize the main arguments orally, and stimulate discussion. More directions below.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

Total course grade: 100%

Grades will be based on the following items:

- **Seminar Paper: 40%**
  The paper should be based on student’s own interest, but it must be linked thematically to the course material. Paper topics must be discussed with the instructor in advance. The following paper components need to be completed by the date below, and uploaded into the CANVAS under Assignments.
  1. A one to two page typed description of the paper topic due on February 3 by 5PM.
  2. A typed description with title and outline due on February 24 by 5PM.
  3. The term paper is due on April 24 by 5PM.

Papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point (times new roman font), 1 inch margins top/bottom/right/left. The required length of the paper is text only, and does not include figures, tables, maps, pictures, references, etc. Paper length: minimum of 10 pages

- **Weekly Assignments: 40%** (to be divided according to the following assignments):
  1. **Weekly Comments and discussion questions – 20%**
     Every Monday, before class, each student must upload to Canvas Discussions, a summary and one typed discussion question on this week’s readings. The summary (2-3 paragraphs) and question must reflect your thoughts, concerns, and/or views derived from the readings. Students must complete this for 10 weeks.

  2. **Team Presentations: 10%**
     Each group is responsible to participate in leading class discussions on a rotating basis, as organized by the designated sub-group of students. These groups will be pre-selected by the professor together with students. The leadership group will need to interact over the weeks prior to the scheduled seminar in order to ensure equitable distribution of work.

     How the materials are written up and orally presented to the class is the responsibility of the group. However, each group must prepare a typed summary of the readings with at least five discussion points, to be distributed to the class.

     Following each presentation, the group is responsible for uploading their summary, which will be accessible to all class participants via Canvas. Give an Oral Summary of the readings and identify key topics/debates in order to stimulate class discussion that week.

  3. **Discussion Participation and Class Debates: 10%**

- **Student Final Presentation: 20%**
### GRADING SCALE (& GPA EQUIVALENT):

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**Note:** A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#hgrades](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#hgrades) (Link to an external site)  [http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html](http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html) (Links to an external site.)

### CLASS SCHEDULE

#### Jan 8 - Week 1 – Fetishism of the Amazon

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended:**

#### Jan 15 – Holyday

#### Jan 22 - Week 2 – Physical Geography of the Amazon

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended:**
Jan 29 - Week 3 – Amazonian Pre-Columbian Societies

Required Readings:

Recommended:

Feb 5 - Week 4 – Development and Urbanization Processes

Required Readings:

Recommended:

Feb 12 - Week 5 – Environmental Threats and Global Economy

Required Readings:

Recommended:
- Walker - PE of Amazonian Deforestation Chapter Ghost of von Thunen

Feb 19 – Week 6 – Teleconnections

Required Readings:

Recommended:

Feb 26 - Week 7 - Land Use and Forest Conversion
Required Readings:

Recommended:

Mar 5 – Spring Break

Mar 12 - Week 8 – Draft Discussion
No Readings

Mar 26 - Week 9 – Political Backgrounds and Governance
Required Readings:

Recommended:
- Morales, Waltraud Q. n.d. “‘THE TIPNIS CRISIS AND THE MEANING OF BOLIVIAN DEMOCRACY UNDER EVO MORALES’

**Apr 2 - Week 10- Who is the Amazon?**

Required Readings:

Recommended:

**Apr 9 - Week 11 – Climate Change and the role of the Amazon**

Required Readings:

Recommended:

**Apr 16 - Week 12 – Imagined Future and Pathways**

Required Readings:
Recommended:

Apr 23 – Week 13 – Student Presentations

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Attendance & makeup policy: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx (Links to an external site.).

Grade Disputes: Should a student wish to dispute any grade received in this class (other than simple addition errors), the dispute must be in writing and be submitted to the instructor within a week of receiving the grade. The dispute should set our very clearly, the grade that the student believes the assignment should have received as well as why he or she believes that he or she should have received such a grade.

Classroom Civility and Respect: It is essential that all students respect the rights of their fellow classmates to learn. Therefore, I request that you:

Not carry on conversations outside the class discussion, not read the paper or other materials not directly related to class, not play music, and not talk on your cell phone during class. Also, if you come to class late, please quickly find the nearest seat at the side of the room so that you do not disturb your classmates.

UF POLICIES:

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/ (Links to an external site.) Specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when
requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)(Links to an external site.) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

**Counseling and Mental Health Resources:** Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/ (Links to an external site.))

**Online Course Evaluation Process:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu (Links to an external site.) Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results (Links to an external site.)