



GEOGRAPHY OF FLORIDA - GEA 2270

[3 Credits – 6000-word requirement - WR]

Department of Geography, University of Florida

Course Syllabus - Summer A 2025

Lead instructor - Zainab Ali: zainabali@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 9:00am – 11:00am EST or by appointment

On Zoom (link on Canvas)

Co-instructor - Anusha Chaudhary: anusha.chaudhary@ufl.edu

Course Objectives and Goals: This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the Geography of Florida, emphasizing the state's physical and cultural landscapes, demographics, natural resources, and regional characteristics. We will also explore how Florida's economic and political affairs connect to a globalizing world through course material such as readings, media, and interactive exercises.

Challenging stereotypes of Florida as merely a land of beaches and Disneyworld, the course highlights the state's diverse environments and resilient communities. Students will critically examine media portrayals and contemporary issues, confronting their own assumptions to better understand modern Florida.

This course emphasizes thinking and writing like a geographer, rather than memorizing facts. Assignments are designed to build skills in writing, research, analysis, and applying geographic knowledge creatively to real-world problems.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will examine how geography influences the state's past, present, and future, with an emphasis on critical thinking, research, and communication. Students will practice effective writing strategies, including topic development, organization, and adapting style for various audiences and purposes. They will compare and critique texts, build persuasive arguments using evidence, and apply standard written English conventions to produce clear and purposeful writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Content

- Demonstrate understanding of geographic concepts, terminology, and methods as they apply to Florida.
- Analyze the state's natural and human systems across multiple scales and time periods.
- Apply geographic frameworks to interpret current events and regional challenges.

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate geographic issues using evidence from multiple perspectives.
- Construct logical, well-supported arguments in writing.
- Analyze and critique texts and media for rhetorical effectiveness and clarity.

Communication

- Write clearly and effectively for academic and professional audiences.
- Adapt writing style and format for different contexts and purposes.
- Communicate geographic ideas using structured writing, supported by evidence and visual data.

Course Prerequisites: None.

Required textbook: None. Assigned readings will be provided by the instructor in Canvas.

Course Communications: You can contact the instructor at the email given above or via the inbox in Canvas. Canvas keeps a full record of correspondence – so this is preferred.

Canvas E-learning: This class will be conducted using the [Canvas e-Learning platform](#). The syllabus, course calendar, reading materials, and resources will be available through Canvas. I will communicate with the class regularly through Canvas announcements, so be sure to check regularly for updates. All assignments must be posted through Canvas unless otherwise instructed. Grades will be posted on Canvas. The best method of contact for the instructor is through Canvas email.

Please note that private discussions about grades are ONLY allowed through canvas or during offices hours, as this is the University standard for security and privacy reasons, we cannot discuss your grades through UFL email.

If you experience problems with the e-Learning system, such as log-in issues, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk at the Hub. You can also call the help desk at 352-392-4357 or send them an email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

Attendance policy: In this online, asynchronous course, attendance is not formally taken. However, active participation and engagement are encouraged to maximize learning. If you need to make up an exam or assignment due to unforeseen circumstances, please reach out to the instructor to coordinate alternative arrangements. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See [UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies](#).

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Writing Requirement (WR) - 6,000 words:

- Over the semester, students will complete a minimum of 6,000 words of graded writing assignments that meet the criteria for the Writing Requirement (WR). These assignments are designed to promote critical thinking, synthesis of course content, and clear communication.
- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Instructor Feedback and Assessment Criteria:

- All written assignments will be evaluated and graded for content as well as grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive written feedback on each assignment to support revision and improvement.
- Assignments will be submitted through Canvas, with individual word counts totaling 6,000 words across the semester. Deadlines for each assignment are listed on the course schedule.
- A detailed rubric for evaluating written assignments is provided in the course materials on Canvas.

Citation Guides: In all assignments, you are expected to properly cite any sources you reference using a standard citation format such as APA, Harvard, or Chicago. Proper citation is essential to academic integrity and helps you give credit to the original authors and sources of your information. For guidance on proper citation formats, visit the UF Libraries citation guide: <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/libraryresearch/citingsources#s-lg-box-18406855>

AI policy: Because this is a writing-intensive course that fulfills the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement, **all written work must be your own**. You may not use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot etc.) to write, rewrite, or edit your essays or assignments.

You may use AI tools only for early-stage brainstorming (e.g., generating ideas or outlining), and any use must be disclosed in a brief note at the end of your assignment, including:

- The name of the tool used
- How and why you used it

It is a violation of university policy to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor by characterizing it as your own, such as submitting responses to assignments that do not acknowledge the use of generative AI tools. If you're unsure about acceptable use, please ask before submitting.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. 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 Conduct Code specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the [UF Conduct Code website](#) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “[Get Started With the DRC](#)” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Florida’s Physical Geography Defining Geography and Florida Florida’s Physical Geography	Essay 1: Favorite Place in Florida [1500 words] Discussion 1: Favorite Place - Tour guide [250 words]
2	Human-Environmental Interactions Florida’s Geological History Florida’s Weather and Climate	Documentaries: Hurricane Michael and Gator Country Discussion 2: Hurricane Discussion [250 words] Activity 1: Article Hunt
3	Historical, Cultural, and Human Geography Florida’s History and First Floridians	Essay 2: The Cultural Landscape of Florida [1500 words] Documentaries: Unconquered Florida Seminoles and Finding the First Floridians Discussion 3: Ethnocentricity and Accents [300 words]
4	Urban and Regional Development Florida’s Urban Geography Florida’s Energy Landscape	Documentary: The Sarasota Experience Discussion 4: The Sarasota Experience [250 words] Activity 2: Energy in Florida [Worksheet]
5	Economic and Political Geography Florida’s Natural Resources and Economy Florida’s Political Geography	Documentary: The Everglades Essay 3: Florida Issues Report [1500 words] Discussion 5: Politics in Florida [250 words] Activity 3: Florida Natural Resources Expo [Infographic]
6	Social Geography of Florida Florida’s Population Modern Florida and the Future of Florida	Documentary: The Florida Dream Essay 4: Famous Floridian [1000 words] Discussion 6: The Florida Dream [250 words]

Course Makeup and Grading Distribution:

Assignment Type	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Assigned Readings and Material	Complete/Incomplete	0%
Writing Assignments	20 points each (Essays) 10 points each (Discussion posts)	75%
Activities and Quizzes	10 points each	15%
Final Exam	50 points	10%

Reading Assignments and Essay Writing (75%): This course includes assigned readings and media (such as videos and articles) that are essential for understanding the themes and topics covered in the Geography of Florida. Essays will ask you to engage critically with these materials and apply course concepts to real-world examples. All essay topics will relate to major themes discussed in the class, encouraging thoughtful analysis and clear communication through writing

Discussions and Activities (15%): You will participate in discussions and activities designed to deepen your understanding of Florida's geography. Discussions offer a space for reflection, peer-to-peer exchange, and exploration of key issues. Activities may involve creative or real-world applications that connect course concepts to your experiences and perspectives.

Final Exam (10%): The final exam will be comprehensive and will assess your understanding of the fundamental concepts explored throughout the course. It evaluates how well you can synthesize material from readings, lectures, discussions, and activities to demonstrate your knowledge of Florida's physical, cultural, and environmental geography.

Grading Scheme: Weekly updated grades will be available for you to see on Canvas. Final grades will be rounded up. Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including a link to the appropriate undergraduate catalog web page: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	61-63	< 61
4	3.67	3.33	3	2.67	2.33	2	1.67	1.33	1	0.67	0

Netiquette & Communication Courtesy: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, zoom meetings, threaded discussions, and chats.

Course Drop: If you decide to drop the course for any reason, you must request to do so through the appropriate channels by the appropriate date. Failing to do so will result in a failing grade for the course. For planning purposes, it is helpful for you to communicate with me if you may need to drop the class.

Important Note on Assignments and Due Dates: Assignment deadlines and details are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. However, any changes will be communicated at least two weeks in advance of the original due date. Deadlines will not be moved to an earlier date.

Syllabus Disclaimer: This syllabus outlines the current structure and goals for the course. While I aim to follow this plan, adjustments may be made during the semester to improve the learning experience. Any updates will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner.

Academic Resources

- **E-learning technical support:** Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> , 352-392-4357 or via email at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- **Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services at <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- **Library Support:** <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- **Writing Studio:** Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- **Academic Complaints:** Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information: <https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/>
- **Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions):** View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information: <https://em.ufl.edu/complaint>

Health and Wellness

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** Visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- **Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit <https://shcc.ufl.edu/> .
- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; <https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>
- **GatorWell Health Promotion Services:** For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/> or call 352-273- 4450.