

ANTHROPOLOGY 325.01
People and Cultures of Latin America-
South American Focus
Spring 2026
TR 1:40-2:55 p.m., RSS 106

Dr. Hector Qirko
Office Hours: MW 10:00-12:00 p.m.,
TR 3:15-4:00 p.m., and by appointment.

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Course description

This course is designed to present an introductory overview of the culture history and diversity of Latin America, with a focus on South American indigenous cultural groups. More specifically, it will emphasize two main culture areas in South America, the Andes and the Amazon.

Instructional objectives- To:

- present an introductory overview of the culture history and diversity of South America;
- explore anthropological concepts and perspectives relevant to its historical and contemporary conditions;
- discuss some of the important social, religious, artistic, economic, and political developments in the region;
- provide students with opportunities to conduct research on particular areas of interest pertaining to South American cultures and anthropology; and
- provide opportunities for the further development of critical (objective) thinking skills.

Student learning outcomes- Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a basic understanding of South American culture history and diversity, as well as some of the important social, religious, artistic, economic, and political developments in the region;
- apply anthropological concepts and perspectives to better understand and explain historical and contemporary conditions in South America;
- identify a scholarly research topic, conduct a thorough literature review pertaining to it, and effectively present findings in written and oral forms; and
- more objectively understand and evaluate anthropological (and other) data and arguments.

Course structure

Class periods will consist of lectures, discussion of topics and readings, and occasional films.

Grade scale

A 92-100%; A- 90-91; B+ 88-89; B 82-87; B- 80-81; C+ 78-79; C 72-77; C- 70-71; D+ 68-69; D 62-67; D- 60-61; F 59 or below.

Grading

Map quiz	5%
Exam I	25%
Exam II	30%

Research project

Proposal	5%
Draft	5%
Paper	20%

Class participation

Class discussion	5%
Research presentation	5%

Readings

All required readings and other materials will be available either electronically at the course Oaks site or via internet links listed below the course outline. You are expected to read assigned textbook sections and read/view additional materials **prior** to class periods for which they are assigned. Please let me know of any broken links or other access issues as soon as you encounter them.

Map quiz (1/27) This is an in-class test of basic geography in South American (major features and regions, nations and capitals, etc.). Relevant materials and links will be provided for prior study (5% of course grade).

Exams (2/26, 4/27) There will be two in-class, long ID/short essay exams designed to ensure general course engagement and understanding of materials covered in readings, lectures, films, and class discussion. In addition to fundamental terms, concepts, and illustrations, students will be expected to identify specific researchers and relate them to their work as read, viewed, or discussed (25% and 30%).

Research project Each student will conduct research on a particular area and/or culture of interest for a roughly 12 page research paper (due 4/21, 20%). Citation and reference style must follow AAA guidelines (see http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf). A brief research proposal (3/10) must be submitted for approval, and should report on chosen topic and the availability and quality of relevant sources (5%). Research notes must also be submitted (3/31) for general evaluation and comment (5%). Detailed guidelines, including sample topics, will be posted on OAKS and discussed in class.

Class participation Class engagement and participation are essential for success in this course, as much of the material on exams will stem directly from lectures, films, and class discussion. While attendance will not be taken, you are responsible for all information disseminated in the course. If you must miss a class, obtain notes from classmates and feel free to email or meet with me to discuss them prior to the relevant exam. I will not provide lecture notes, although I will post study guides and other relevant course material. Students will be evaluated on participation based on class discussion (5%). In addition, students will provide oral summaries of their research projects to the class (4/16-21, 5%).

For absences that require documentation (exam and assignment due dates, as well as extended absences related to health, personal or emergency situations), please note that you are responsible for documenting and reporting reasons for absences by email or in person. Also remember that the [Student Health Office](#) is always available as needed.

Special needs

If you have (or think you might have) a documented disability that may impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, contact an administrator at the [Center of Disability Services](#) (email: snap@cofc.edu; phone: 843-953-1431; location: Lightsey Center 104). Accommodations will require a Professor Notification letter (PNL) from you and will be approved early in the semester and not during or after exam periods or assignment due dates. Please feel free to discuss related issues with me at any time during office hours or by appointment. Additionally, whether or not you have a documented disability, let me know about anything that can make navigating and learning course materials easier for you.

Student support resources

There is a new site that provides resources to help with many issues that can come up as related to technology, career planning, health and wellness, and much more. It's accessible by clicking the "More" tab at our OAKS course home page. Also always feel free to discuss any issues with me if you want additional input.

Honor code

Violations of the honor code will be taken seriously. If you need reminding, you can find the complete code and all related processes in the [Student Handbook](#). Obviously, lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Any acts of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students and addressed through the conduct process.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be used for brainstorming, outlining, and generating ideas about a topic. However, they may not be used as a cited source or as a substitute for your own writing in your submitted work. Because plagiarism is sometimes an unintentional infraction, I recommend that you refer to this Elsevier [fact sheet](#) to make sure you know what errors to avoid. And because the use of AI tools is further complicating this issue, use the content of this [video](#) by Brian Doak as a guide for what I expect from you regarding these tools in this course. Don't hesitate to contact me with any doubts or questions you may have.

Inclement Weather or other substantial interruptions

If in-person classes are suspended, I will let you know as soon as possible my plan to keep the class going. Whatever that entails, you will need a computer equipped with internet access.

Additional resources

Any problems with any aspect of the course, don't hesitate to meet with me. Also, there are many good online articles on critical skills that can help you navigate this course and others. For example:

[Critical/objective thinking](#)

[Active reading](#)

[Critical reading](#)

[Effective writing](#)

And don't forget the Writing Lab in the [Center for Student Learning](#) (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 843.953.5635.

As members of the College of Charleston community, we affirm, embrace and hold ourselves accountable to the core values of integrity, academic excellence, liberal arts education, respect for the individual student, diversity, equity and inclusion, student centeredness, innovation and public mission.

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to addition and revision. Assigned readings and other materials noted in brackets. Readings are on OAKS; assigned links can be found below outline)

1/8	introduction to course	
1/13	introduction to South America	[Assorted maps]
1/15	culture, culture area(s) and ethnography	[Wilson 99, Weiss 80]
1/20	first peoples	[Williams 20, Moreno Mayar et al. 18, Link 1]
1/22	Andes/Amazonia 1	[Haas et al 17, Lindo et al. 18, Meggers 01]
1/27	Kotosh and Chavin (and meanwhile in Amazonia	[Gregorio de Souza et al. 18, Conklin 97, map quiz]
1/29	chiefdoms and states	[Magra 19, Stanish 01, Kolata 91]
2/3	videos	[Link 2]
2/5	Inca 1 overview	[D'Altroy chpt 6, 7, Daley 19]
2/10	Inca 2 conquest	[D'Altroy chpt 14, Metraux 70]
2/12	Inca 3 mental life	[D'Altroy chpt 5, 8]
2/17	colonization and resistance 1	[Koch et al. 19, Padden 57, Faron 68]
2/19	colonization and resistance 2	[Miller 70, Ramirez & Pinzon 93]
2/24	slavery and peasantry 1	[Wade 97]

2/26	mid-term exam	
3/3-3/5	spring break	
3/10	slavery and peasantry 2	[Sharp 76 proposals due]
3/12	Amazon 1	[Viveiros de Castro 96, Cormier 03]
3/17	Amazon 2	[Seeger 81, Crocker 84, Link 3]
3/19	Amazon 3	[Picchi 06, Borofsky 05]
3/24	race and racism	[Harris 64, Adams 04]
3/26	expressive culture 1	[Olsen 80, Link 4]
3/31	expressive culture 2	[Link 5, Guedes 14, Agosin 86- research notes due]
4/2 79,	issues and cultural strategies 1	[Link 6, Brana-Shute Schepher-Hughes 93]
4/7	issues and cultural strategies 2	[Link 7, de la Cadena 10]
4/9	what's next?	[Link 8, Brown & Mitchell 00]
4/14	videos	[Link 9]
4/16-4/21	research paper oral summaries	[papers due 4/21]
4/27	final exam: 1:00-3:00 p.m.	

NOTE: Final examinations must be taken at the time scheduled. For permission to reschedule, you must complete and submit the [Request to Change Final Exam](#) form.

Links:

Link 1: Mystery group lived in central Argentina for millennia, ancient DNA reveals
<https://www.science.org/content/article/mystery-group-lived-central-argentina-millennia-ancient-dna->

[reveals?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_content=alert&utm_campaign=DailyLatestNews&et rid=328186379&et_cid=5783922&](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/antiquity/article/indigenous-accounting-and-exchange-at-monte-sierpe-band-of-holes-in-the-pisco-valley-peru/41D83389D230D99CFF18194CF274A9A3)

Link 2: Indigenous accounting and exchange at Monte Sierpe (‘Band of Holes’) in the Pisco Valley, Peru

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/antiquity/article/indigenous-accounting-and-exchange-at-monte-sierpe-band-of-holes-in-the-pisco-valley-peru/41D83389D230D99CFF18194CF274A9A3>

Link 3: A foundation of trust: archaeologists and the Kuikuro people

https://www.science.org/content/article/unearth-their-past-amazonian-people-turn-language-white-men-understand?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_content=alert&utm_campaign=DailyLatestNews&et rid=328186379&et_cid=5783922

Link 4: Ethnomusicology as advocacy: Music of the Warao

<https://dolsenmusic.com/ethnomusicology-as-advocacy-the-warao-of-venezuela/>

Link 5: Brazil and Argentina: a friendly rivalry - The Conversation

<https://theconversation.com/brazil-and-argentina-a-friendly-rivalry-29082>

Link 6: Años Viejos: Torching the Old Year to Toast the New One

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/30/world/americas/ano-viejo-tradition.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Link 7: What the people of the Amazon know that you don’t

https://www.ted.com/talks/mark_plotkin_what_the_people_of_the_amazon_know_that_you_dont?language=en#t-21852

Link 8: The Amazon’s climate tipping point

<http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/amazons-climate-tipping-point>

Link 9: Communities of slave descendants in Brazil demand recognition of territories

<https://apnews.com/article/climate-brazil-slave-descendants-quilombos-cop30-ff980cc36dcd8f120eb1799c7fbf9aa0>