Why Study Latin America and the Andes?

What is “LATIN” America and does it impact our study of SA?
- That part of the Western Hemisphere conquered and colonized by Portugal, Spain and France
- What does this include?
  - Caribbean Islands
  - Central America and Mexico
  - South America

What about other parts of Latin America?
- Dutch Islands? Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Maarten
- Dutch colony/country-Surinam
- Former Brit Islands
- Florida, California and the SW
- Puerto Rico
- Belize

Latin America is a
- Concept
- Partially geographic
- Partially cultural
- Partially historical
- Partially ethnocentric
- Partially scientific
What about South America?
- Is Panama a part of SA?
- Surinam?
- French Guiana?
- Easter Island?
- Falklands/Malvinas?
- Controversies still exist that carry political consequences

Is Latin America a united front?
- Do all the Latin Americans get along with each other?
- Do they all feel the same way about the “Gigante del Norte”?
- Are there significant cultural differences among peoples of Latin/South American nations?
- No, No, and Yes

Who are the North Americans?
- If there is a concept of South Americans, is there a reciprocal concept for North Americans?
- If so, who would be part of this group?
- How is the concept of North America different for US Americans than it is for non-US Americans?

Some general (ethnocentric?) notions held by North Americans about Latin/South America
- S. A. has not contributed much to a global culture?
- S. A. is underdeveloped economically and politically?
- Most Latin Americans are poor?
- The quality of life in the US is much better?
Most South Americans live in rural areas and are farmers or herders?

Most South Americans are descendants of native indigenous peoples?

South Americans take lots of time off (siestas) and are not concerned about the value of time?

. S. A. Is not very important to Americans in the general scheme of things?

In this course, we want to examine (in particular)

- The truth of the items listed previously
- The presence/absence of natural resources
- The conflict of cultures
- The development of native and mixed cultures
- The role of heritage and identity in the "New" S. America

Why Should We Study Latin America/South America?

- Demographic – Latinos in the US
- Cultural – Pervasive and growing influence of Hispanic culture
- Economic – Latin America is the US’s most important trading partner and growing integration among the economies, NAFTA, CAFTA, 7 & other c’s (DR, Chile, etc.)
- Geo-political – Ever since the Monroe Doctrine (1815)...
- Transnationalism – Frequent intermingling of lives and movement back and forth, e.g.. Mexico, Andean c’s

- The role archaeology and anthropology may have played in the above
- The development of modern political culture in South America
- The role of the US in South America
- The impact of South Americans on US culture
- The impact of South America on global culture
- The lessons South American culture history has for the global community
Reasons to Focus on the Andean Region

- Very distinct region of the world and within South America – the Andes are among the highest mountains in the world.
- Their interaction with the coastline of Western South America (the Pacific) produces unique climatic features.

More reasons to focus on the Andean region

- Highland cultures are distinct from lowland cultures and more like highland cultures in Asia (Himalayan) and Western Guatemala and Mexico
- The focus of the Spanish Conquest and Colonization in South America centered on Peru and Bolivia, while Colombia was an important connecting point between the Caribbean and Western South America; Ecuador provided a quick access to the Amazon from above the Andes.

More reasons to focus on the Andean region

- Much of the focus of anthropological and archaeological research has been in terms of the Central Andean region, because of the Incas.
- We have an ethnohistorical knowledge (the chronicles) of the Inca period and archaeological data from the Pre-Inca period, unlike the rest of South America.
- Deep time depth data from this region provide insights into general issues of human development and progress.

More reasons to focus on the Andean region

- The largest concentration of indigenous peoples in South America is found in three countries: Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, and to a lesser extent-Colombia
- The indigenous population of these 3 countries carried the Spanish conquest colonization on their backs, unlike Venezuela, Chile and Argentina.
More reasons to focus on the Andean region

- This is the region with the most political and economic instability and much ink has been spilled over why that is the case.
- It is also the region in South America in which significant political cultural and political changes are most rapidly occurring, portending major changes in ethnic relationships.

More reasons to focus on the Andean region

- A significant focus of human rights issues among international scientists, activists, etc. how to enhance them among indigenous peoples is centered here.
- A lot of anthropological research has taken place in the highlands of S.A.

Why hasn’t South America developed faster economically?

- Why wasn’t it like Japan?
- Was it due to the Iberian culture?
- Defeat of native cultures?
- Latent effects of the conquest?
- Bad mix of cultures?
- If it had been England instead?
- Use of Latin America as a commodity base for the European imperialist expansion?
- Uneven spread of natural resources across the region?
- Has the division of the Hispanic countries into smaller political entities hurt the development of the continent?

Moving on to the Cultural Geography of South America...

- In the next section
- Overview of the continent
  - Regions
  - Cities
  - Economies
  - Geography & Topography
  - Climate
- Discussion of the similarities and differences among countries
  - Social
  - Political
  - Ethnic
  - Economic