

Puerto Rico Project

Due date: October 16, 2017

Background: As of September 28, 2017, the United States' territory, Puerto Rico and its 3.4 million residents, are on the verge of a humanitarian crisis. Hurricane Maria hit the island on Wednesday, September 20th as a category 4 storm with sustained winds of 155 mph which knocked out 100% of the island's electrical grid. The storm also disabled most radar systems, weather stations, and cell phone towers which meant that communicating vital information to the mainland United States was nearly impossible for days. Many of the island's roads have been left impassible, and it did not have a fully functioning airport until nearly a full week after the storm hit.

The response of groups like FEMA and other disaster response agencies to deliver aid and supplies to Puerto Rico has been slow, and in the days after the storm necessities like fuel, food, and fresh water have grown increasingly scarce. The reasons for this delayed response are as numerous as they are complicated.

A troubling reality has come to light in the wake of this tragedy which is that even though Puerto Rico's people are United States citizens, many Americans know little about this territory, its history, or the nature of its relationship to the mainland United States. Due to the geographic and cultural divides separating the island from the mainland United States, Puerto Rico is "out of sight, out of mind." Consequently, American citizens living there have not received the media coverage, the public support, or federal assistance typically relied upon by American citizens in similar situations.

Alignment to elements of Human Geography course articulation:

- **Unit 1:**
 - Use and interpret maps:
 - identify spatial patterns and processes at different scales
 - use and interpret multiple types of thematic and reference maps
 - landscape analysis: provides context for understating the location of people, places, regions and events
- **Unit 2:**
 - Physical factors and cultural factors that influence the distribution of population
 - Analyze population composition based on age, sex, and ethnicity
 - Evaluate numerous population policies
 - Explain how push and pull factors contribute to migration
 - Analyze the cultural, economic, environmental, and political consequences of migration
- **Unit 3:**
 - Explain cultural patterns and landscapes as they vary by place and region
 - Regional patterns of language, religion, and ethnicity contribute to a sense of place, enhance place making, and shape the global cultural landscape
 - Explain the diffusion of culture and cultural traits through time and space
 - Colonialism, imperialism, and trade helped to shape patterns and practices of culture
 - Acculturation, assimilation, and multiculturalism are shaped by the diffusion of culture
- **Unit 4:**
 - Explain the evolution of the contemporary political map
 - Colonialism and imperialism led to the spread of nationalism and influenced contemporary political boundaries
 - Evaluate the geopolitical forces that influence the contemporary political map
 - Independence movements are democratization have shied the political map since the end of WWII
 - Explain the concepts of political power and territoriality
 - Political power is expressed geographically as control over people, land, and resources (e.g. heartland, rimland, and organic theories)
 - Territoriality is the connection of people, their culture, and their economic systems to the land
 - Analyze spatial relationships between political systems and patterns of culture and economy
 - Political boundaries do not always coincide with patterns of language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and economy

Assignment: Essentially, your task is to education yourself and others about Puerto Rico through the lens of human geography. In this project you will explore the island's history, its relationship to the mainland United States, how it has been impacted by the storm, and what the recovery process has been like.

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To do this you and/or a partner will create a public facing website/youtube video. Regardless of your project's format, to receive an "A" for this major grade assignment, the information you provide should be well organized, meticulously sourced, and meet each of the requirements

- **Provide Historical Context:**

- Provide a brief overview (500 word maximum) of Puerto Rico's history, covering the following periods:
 - pre-colonial period
 - Spanish rule
 - United States rule

- **Government**

- Explain the following:
 - How did Puerto Rico become a territory?
 - What is the difference between a territory and a state?
 - Summarize the arguments for and against Puerto Rico being granted statehood

- **Maps**

- Produce a maps showing the following:
 - Political boundaries within Puerto Rico
 - Population concentrations within Puerto Rico
 - A map of Puerto Rico's natural resources
 - A map of Puerto Rico's road system
 - A map reflecting the damage caused by Hurricane Maria
 - *NOTE: You do not have to create your own maps. It is alright to use maps you find from trusted sources, provided you correctly site them.*

- **Demographics**

- Your project should show the following demographic information:
 - An updated (no older than 2015) population pyramid of Puerto Rico
 - Mortality and fertility measures: Life expectancy, CBR, CDR, NIR, TFR, IMR, CMR
 - Ethnic and cultural demographics:
 - ethnicities in Puerto Rico
 - religions practiced
 - languages spoken

- **Economics**

- Overview of Puerto Rico's economy including the following:
 - Puerto Rico's economic sectors
 - Puerto Rico's exports and imports
 - A brief explanation of Puerto Rico's debt problem (500 word max.)

- **Hurricane Maria**

- Details about the storm
 - winds, storm surge, etc.
- Storm damage details (bullet point format/graphics are OK)
 - casualty information
 - effects on transportation system
 - effects on water supply
 - effects on food supply
 - effects on power grid
 - effects on hospital system
 - effects on communication systems
 - effects on emergency response (911, police, fire departments, EMS)
- How many people are homeless/ in shelters?

- **Relief Effort**

- Actions taken by Puerto Rican authorities
 - obstacles

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- Actions taken by US government agencies
 - FEMA, US Coast Guard, US Border Patrol, US Customs, Department of Defense, etc.
 - types of aid given
 - obstacles
- Laws and Policies for relief efforts
 - what is the Jones act and why does it matter?
- Relief effort from non-government organizations
 - what organizations are providing help?
 - fundraising and donations
 - humanitarian assistance (food, water, medicine)
 - barriers to providing aid
- **Possible**
 - Discuss two ways (one for each partner) that YOU think the response could have been improved/ how issues delaying aid this time can be prevented in the future
- **How to Help**
 - For someone viewing your site who would like to get involved in the relief effort, list three ways they can help - include links.