

Introduction to Latin American Studies

Xela Korda
Tulane University
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Course Description:

This is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary course intended to introduce students to the region of Latin America and to the field of Latin American Studies. This course will familiarize students with the physical, political, and cultural boundaries of the region and including its historical context - with an emphasis on the 20th century. The course is designed to engage both the shared experiences that have shaped Latin America, and to reveal the immense diversity within the two American continents and numerous island nations that comprise the region broadly designated as "Latin America." By surveying different types scholarship on Latin America (e.g. anthropology, sociology, Public Health, history, and cultural studies) as well as by exploring film, literature, texts, and policy produced within the region, students will be exposed to numerous ways to think about Latin America culture and society, and will observe how Latin American artists, writers and intellectuals represent their nations and cultures to themselves and to the world.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to introduce students to the region, institutions, and cultures of Latin America and to the field of Latin American Studies. Students will become familiar with the physical, political, and cultural boundaries of the region and will examine modern Latin America using case studies, primary source materials, discussion and analysis.

- To survey some salient points in the general history, culture and geography of Latin America;
- To examine the ethnic, political, and cultural diversity within Latin America;
- To discuss, debate, and —hopefully—inspire a lasting interest in contemporary issues in Latin America and Latin American Studies;
- To develop the critical vocabulary necessary to understand and discuss the historical structure and contemporary conditions of Latin America;
- To introduce various forms of "knowledge"—local and foreign; scholarly and popular—that contribute to a broad understanding of Latin American culture and society;
- To learn to interpret and evaluate historic documents, testimonials, and academic scholarship;
- To explore the differences and relations between academic disciplines and the basic methods scholars employ to study Latin America.

Conceptions of Interdisciplinary Themes

In addition to following the historical trajectory of the region, the course is structured around four themes: **encounter, identity, nation, and welfare**. We will use case studies from diverse countries in the region to explore these themes in the context of

Latin America.

Course Assessment (Total = 300 Points)

- **Attendance/quizzes (30 points)**
- **Map Quiz (20 points):** Students will demonstrate their knowledge of Latin America's physical features, languages, and political boundaries on a map quiz.
- **Leadership & Participation (70 points):** Students will hone their understanding of modern Latin America through classroom discussion, debate, and exercises. Students will team-lead discussion, *providing questions for the whole class*, on one week's readings during the semester. All variety of questions, ideas, and discussion are expected and encouraged in this class.
- **Four 2-page critical response papers (15 points each = 60 points):** Students will write four short response papers (approximately 2 pages) based on our class readings. Summarize the authors' arguments, give a brief critical reaction to the weeks' readings and ask a few questions directed to the author(s) and/or the class. Ask yourself – what are these readings about and how do they relate to the unit we are studying? Is something particularly interesting? Explain why. Is it problematic in some sense? Does it conflict with the way you see the world? You choose which weeks you want to write on (one from each unit).
- **Final (60 points):** Students will demonstrate their mastery of this semester's class material on one take-home final exam.
- **Service Learning (60 points):** Students will serve 20 hours at a community site during the semester and complete several assignments. These include attending an orientation and a training session, writing a one-page proposal and four reflection papers, keeping a brief electronic log of your activities, and attending two "rap" sessions.

Leading Discussion

Students will take turns leading discussion on one set of readings. In order to do this, you must read the assigned articles in your set, meet with the other students in your group, develop ten to fifteen questions (or an activity for the class) total for all of the readings in your set, and bring photocopies for the whole class on your leadership day. *Good leaders will identify the most important points in the readings and actively lead class on their assigned day. Excellent leaders will go beyond this, making connections with the themes of the course and other readings from class.* Superficial/general questions, poor preparation, and weak leadership will receive a low grade. These questions should help your classmates focus in on the important themes in the readings each week.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: First Day Intros

Course, Instructor, and student introductions

Week 2:

Two class periods

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire* Ch. 1 & 2
- “A View From the South” Ch. 1
Americas Winn
- “Area Studies in a Global Age”
Smith
- *Chile Global Studies*

Film: *The Mission* (125 minutes)

UNIT I - ENCOUNTER

Week 3: Encounter

Two Class periods

MAP QUIZ

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire* Ch. 3 & 4
- *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* Jared Diamond Prologue, Ch's 3, 4, & 18
- “The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico” Bernal Díaz del Castillo
- *Peru Global Studies*

Week 4: Encounter

Two Class periods

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire* Ch. 5
- “The World of the Slaves” Ch. 10 Rogozinski
- “Runaways and Rebels” Ch. 12 Rogozinski
- “Cuba” from *Santería: African Spirits in America* Joseph M. Murphy Ch. 2
- *Cuba Global Studies*

Week 5: Encounter – contemporary case study

Two class periods

Readings:

- *What's Love Got to Do With it? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in The Dominican Republic* Denise Brennan (entire book)
- Dominican Republic *Global Studies*

UNIT II - NATION

Week 6: Nation

Two Class Periods

Guest Lecturer, Political Science

Readings:

- Born in Blood and Fire Ch. 6
- "Latin America, The United States, and The World" *Modern Latin America* Ch. 11 Skidmore & Smith
- *Why the Cocks Fight* "The Massacre River" Wucker
- Haiti *Global Studies*

Week 7: Nation

Two Class Periods

Film: *In the Time of the Butterflies*

Week 8: Nation

Two Class periods

CLASS PARTY

Readings:

- Born in Blood and Fire Ch. 7 & 8
Revolutionizing Motherhood: Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo
Bouvard
- *Guerrilla Warfare* Ché Guevara
- Argentina *Global Studies*

Film: *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*

UNIT III - IDENTITY

Week 9: Identity

Two Class Periods

Guest Lecturer, Art History

Readings:

- Born in Blood and Fire Ch. 9
- “Art and Revolution” (various 1-15)
David Alfaro Siqueiros
- “Anthropophagite Manifesto”
Oswald de Andrade
- Mexico *Global Studies*

Week 10: Identity

Two Class Periods

Readings:

- Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Era Kevin Bales, Introduction & Ch. 4
- “Sugar Cane Slavery: Bateyes in the Dominican Republic” Barbara L. Bernier
- Brazil *Global Studies*

Week 11: Identity

Two Class Periods

Film: *Bus 174*

UNIT IV - WELFARE

Week 12: Welfare

Two Class Periods

Readings:

- “Scapegoating Outsiders: The Murders of Street Youth in Modern Brazil” Huggins and Mesquita
- “Kids Out of Place” Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman
- *Marginality From Myth to Reality, 1969-2002* Perlman

Week 13:

No Class

Readings :

- Born in Blood and Fire Ch. 10

Week 14: Welfare

Two classes

Guest Lecturer, Medical Sociology

Readings:

- Kawachi, Ichiro. 2000. "Income inequality and health" *Social Epidemiology*, Berkman and Kawachi. Pp 76-94
- *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* Paul Farmer Preface, Intro, Ch. 1 & 3
- *Shadows of Tender Fury* Zapatista letters

Week 15: Welfare

Two Classes

Film: *Life + Debt* (86 minutes)

Readings:

- Jamaica *Global Studies*

FINAL EXAM

Texts

Bales, Kevin. 1999. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Bernier, Barbara L. 2003. "Sugar Cane Slavery: Bateyes in the Dominican Republic." *New England Journal of International and Comparative Literature* 9(1):17-46.

Bouvard, Marguerite Guzman. 1994 *Revolutionizing Motherhood: the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Scholarly Resources, Wilmington. (Ch. 1).

Brennan, Denise. 2004 *What's Love Got to Do With It? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in The Dominican Republic*. Duke University Press, Durham.

Chasteen, John Charles. 2006. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

del Castillo, Bernal Díaz 1996 *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*. Da Capo Press. (Excerpts) (Various editions exist, any would do).

Diamond, Jared. 1999. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. Norton, New York. (Ch. 3 & 4)

Farmer, Paul. 2005 *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Goodwin, Jr., Paul B. 2004. *Global Studies: Latin America*, 11th ed. McGraw Hill.

Guevara, Che 1985. *Guerrilla Warfare*. University of Nebraska Press, London. (Ch.1)

Huggins, Martha & Myriam Mesquita P. de Castro. 1995. "Scapegoating Outsiders: The Murders of Street Youth in Modern Brazil." *Policing & Society* 5(4):265-280.

Kawachi, Ichiro. 2000. "Income inequality and health" *Social Epidemiology*, Lisa Berkman and Ichiro Kawachi, eds., pp 76-94. Oxford University Press, London.

Marcos, Subcomandante. 1995. *Shadows of Tender Fury: The Letters and Communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation*. Monthly Review Press, New York. (Sections: 1, 2, 3, 8, 43).

Murphy, Joseph M. 1993. *Santería: African Spirits in the Americas*. Beacon Press, Boston. (Ch. 2)

Perlman, Janice E. 2003. *Marginality: From Myth to Reality in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro 1969-2002*. Conference Paper at "Staying Poor: Chronic Poverty and Development Policy." (available for download).

Rogozinski, Jan 1999. *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and the Carib to the Present*. Plume Publishing. New York.

Skidmore, Thomas and Peter H. Smith. 2001. "Latin America, the United States, and the World" *Modern Latin America*, 5th ed. Oxford University Press, New York.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Daniel Hoffman. 1998. "Kids Out of Place" *NACLA Report on the Americas: Report on Youth XXXII*, No. 1.

Smith, Peter H. 2002. "Area Studies in a Global Age" LASA Forum.

Winn, Peter. 1992. *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin American and the Caribbean*. University of California Press, Berkeley. (Ch. 1)

Wucker, Michele. 1999. *Why the Cocks Fight*. Hill & Wang, New York. (Ch. 2)