

Re-imagining Cuba, 1868-Present

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AFR 374 Unique #: 35375

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Fall 2011

University of Texas at Austin

Course Instructor: Dr. Frank A. Guridy

Time and Place: MWF 10am-11am, MEZ 1.120

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Course Description: Cuba is a fascinating place to many U.S. Americans, despite the ongoing diplomatic tensions between the Cuban and U.S. governments that dates from the Cold War era. Cuban music and dance are popular in the U.S. and many U.S. citizens travel illegally to the island to see the "last Communist country" in the Western hemisphere. The growing interest in Cuban culture and society indicates that it may now be feasible to imagine a post-Cold War relationship between the two nations. These trends suggest a need not only to rethink the contemporary Cuban/U.S. relationship, but also to re-examine the history of interaction between the two societies on all levels, from popular culture to the heights of state power.

This course explores Cuban/U.S. relations from the nineteenth century to the present. Drawing upon monographs, travel writings, primary documents, and audio/visual materials, students will examine the complex interactions between the island's population and their U.S. American neighbors across all facets of society. A particular emphasis will be placed on the social and cultural engagements between Cuba and the United States *before* the Cuban Revolution in an effort to grasp the profound impact of the Cold War on the conceptualization of Cuban history and society in the post-1959 period. While this is a course primarily rooted in Cuban history, it does not attempt to provide a "national" survey of the island's past. Instead, it invites students to think about writing transnational histories of Cuban/U.S. interaction, one that explores the multiple connections and alternative principles of affiliation that exist among Cubans and U.S. Americans.

Course Objectives:

- (1) Enable students to develop a working knowledge of the key social, political, economic, and cultural developments that have shaped Cuba's relationship to the United States from the outbreak of the Cuban War for Independence to the present.

- (2) Encourage students to think about the writing of history beyond a nation-based perspective.
- (3) Expose students to the “historian’s craft” by analyzing primary documents and making coherent arguments based on an interrogation of historical evidence.

Course requirements:

FIRST AND FOREMOST...you need to know from the beginning that this will be a challenging class. In other words, THIS IS NOT A BLOW-OFF COURSE. This is not meant to scare you, only to let you know that the most general expectation of the course is that you come prepared to work every class session. Often students organize their semester based on the degree of difficulty of their classes. I want to dissuade you from thinking that this will be one of your “easier” classes. That said, our journey through the history of Cuba’s relationship with the United States promises to be an exciting and rewarding experience, one that should lead you to feel that your work was worth your time. To be sure, your instructor will work as hard as you will to make this a rewarding semester.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: The success of this course requires your consistent presence in class.

For this reason you are expected to attend every session. Moreover, lateness will not be tolerated. Late arriving students disrupt class. Beginning the second week of class, an attendance sheet will be available for you to sign in the front of the classroom. If you do not sign your name on the sheet within five minutes of the beginning of class time, you will be considered absent. Leaving class early will also constitute an absence. **After three (3) absences, you will be penalized a full letter grade for each additional absence thereafter. No exceptions.**

A Note on Electronics:

Please turn off your cellphone before you come to class.

Laptops/notebooks/i Pads are permitted ONLY IF you are using them to take notes for the class. If the temptation is too great to use them for other purposes during class (checking Facebook, Hulu, Twitter, etc), I reserve the right to ban them from class altogether. **Using electronics for non-course related purposes will result in a severe lowering of your class participation grade.**

Although the class is designed around some lecturing, it is also centered on discussion and group interaction. This means that prior to class *do the readings, think critically about them, and be ready to discuss them*. This advance preparation is *essential* to the success of this class. You will not be judged on whether or not your instructor or classmates agree with your ideas, but rather on how well you articulate them. This requires you to be open to new perspectives posed by the course and your fellow classmates, to reflect on them, and to come up with your own thoughts on the various topics we will explore this semester. **Please consult the Course Schedule below on a regular basis to ensure you are prepared for each class session. Class Participation is worth 20% of your final grade.**

We will also use Blackboard to distribute assignments.

EXAMS: Each test will cover approximately one third of the course. You will have one in-class exam and two take home exams. The in-class exam will include a mixture of short identification and essay questions. Tests are not cumulative. Tests will cover weekly readings, lectures, as well as in-class discussion.

EXTRA CONSIDERATION OPPORTUNITIES: Students seeking to improve their grades may write short reviews of various lectures and events that are relevant to Cuban/U.S. Relations that might take place on campus throughout the semester. These assignments must be well-written and reflect your engagement with the issues/ideas raised by the event. Students should aim to complete extra credit assignments within one week of the lecture/event. While I will identify “extra consideration” events throughout the semester, you can also suggest an “extra consideration” opportunity to me as well. Extra consideration paper guidelines will be posted on Blackboard.

The breakdown of your grade is as follows:

Exams one and two (25% each)	50%
Exam Three	30%
Active Class Participation	20%

Grades will be determined as follows:

93-100=A
90-92=A-
87-89=B+
83-86=B
80-82=B-
77-79=C+
73-76=C
70-72=C-
67-69=D+
63-66=D
60-62=D-
00-59=F

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES: Under no circumstances do I give incompletes. If you are finding that you are having difficulty keeping up with the work in class for whatever reason, please see me immediately.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All students are expected to adhere to UT’s guidelines regarding plagiarism. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Refer to the

Student Judicial Services website for official University politics and procedures on scholastic dishonesty. Please see me if you have any further questions about plagiarism.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS STATEMENT: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

Finally, some words about what you can expect of your instructor. As one who is concerned with the issues we are dealing with in this course, I am very invested in you finding this experience a satisfying one. For this reason, I have sought to provide you with the tools necessary to do well in this class, and more important, for you to walk away from this course thinking differently about the issues we will explore throughout the semester. You can expect from your instructor consistent feedback on your work and availability for any questions and concerns that you may have.

For many in the United States, Cuba is a polarizing topic. This class is designed to encourage debate and meaningful discussion. However, one of my goals is to get us beyond the sterile dogma that has historically plagued conversations about Cuba's relationship with the United States. You should not be afraid of your instructor judging you on your particular position on this subject, and if you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, you should let me know immediately. I expect to be able to learn as much as you will from this course and hopefully we will have found this semester a challenging, yet worthwhile experience.

The following books are available at Monkey Wrench Books 110 E. North Loop,
Phone: 512-407-6925

Margaret Randall, To Change the World: My Years in Cuba (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009)

C. Peter Ripley, Conversations With Cuba (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

Article readings available on Blackboard (see course schedule below).

Course Schedule

Wednesday, August 24, Introduction and Syllabus Overview

The Colonial Era (1776-1868)

Friday, August 26, Conceptualizing the Cuban/U.S. Relationship

Topics/concepts:

Different approaches to U.S.-Cuban relations: modernization, nationalist, and transnational perspectives.

Monday, August 29, Historicizing Nationalism, Theorizing Transnationalism

Topics/concepts:

Nationalism, Nation, Transnationalism, Globalization, Empire, Hegemony

Wednesday, August 31, Historicizing Nationalism, Theorizing Transnationalism (Cont.)

Discuss: (On Blackboard):

Louis A. Pérez, "Introduction," in On Becoming Cuban pp. 5-15.

Laura Briggs and Gladys McCormick and J. T. Way. "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis." American Quarterly 60.3 (2008): 625-648.

Friday, September 2, *Sin Azúcar no hay país*: the Sugar Revolution in Cuba

Topics/concepts: Spanish colonialism, the Sugar Revolution, Slavery, U.S. attempts to annex Cuba.

Monday, September 5, **LABOR DAY NO CLASS**

Wednesday, September 7, Cuban/U.S. relations (Cont.)

Discuss (On Blackboard):

Pérez, Cuba and the United States, p. 1-54

Friday September 9th, Slavery and Spanish Colonialism

FILM: "La Ultima Cena"

Monday, September 12 Slavery (Cont.)

FILM: La Ultima Cena (Cont.)

Cuba Libre and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism (1868-1902)

Wednesday, September 14, *Cuba Libre*: The Wars for Independence

Topics/Concepts: Ten Years' War, Slave Emancipation, Martí, Maceo, and the Final War

Friday, September 16, *Cuba Libre* and the U.S. Intervention (Cont.)

Topics/Concepts: Imperialism, the "Age of Empire," the Cuban War for Independence, U.S. intervention and occupation (1898-1902), the Platt Amendment

Monday, September 19, *Cuba Libre* (cont.)

Discuss (both on Blackboard):

Pérez, "Incurring a Debt of Gratitude"

Guridy, "Forging Diaspora in the Midst of Empire"

Wednesday, September 21, IN-CLASS EXAM

Neocolonial Cuba and the U.S.-Caribbean World (1902-1952)

Friday, September 23 and Monday, September 26, The Cuban Republic and the U.S. Caribbean Empire

Topics/Concepts: Neocolonialism, imperialism, client state, economic aspects of Cuban-U.S. interaction

Wednesday, September 28, The Neocolonial Republic: Politics and Society
Topics/Concepts: Political and Social Aspects of Cuban-U.S. Relations, Massacre of 1912

Friday, September 30, The Republic in Perpetual Crisis
Topics/Concepts: The “Dance of the Millions” and the Crisis of the 1920s, the *machadato*, resurgent Cuban nationalism, the Revolution of 1933

Monday, October 3, Crisis (Cont.)
Discuss (On Blackboard) Primary documents from 1933

Wednesday, October 5, The Revolution of 1933 and After

Friday, October 7, Historicizing Transnational Linkages
Topics/Concepts: Afro-diasporic linkages, transculturation

Monday, October 10, The Black Cultural Renaissance from Harlem to Havana
Topics/Concepts: U.S.-Caribbean World, Langston Hughes, Mario Bauzá, Afro-Cuban Jazz

Wednesday, October 12, More Than "Good Neighbors"
Discuss (From Blackboard):
Guridy, "Destination without Humiliation"

Revolution, Reaction, and Exile (1952-1991)

Friday, October 14, The Cold War and the Cuban Revolution
Topics/Concepts: Periodization of the Cuban Revolution, Cold War, Socialism, Communism

Monday, October 17, The Crisis of the 1950s
Discuss Pérez On Becoming Cuban, ch.7 (On Blackboard)

Wednesday, October 19, The Outbreak of the Revolution
TAKE HOME EXAM DUE

Friday, October 21, The Revolutionary Struggle
Topics/Concepts: 26th of July Movement, Guerrilla Warfare, Underground Struggle

Monday, October 24, The Revolutionaries Takes Power
Topics/Concepts: Revolutionary Reforms, U.S. Reaction, Cuba-Soviet Alliance

Wednesday, October 26, The Revolution Takes Power (Cont.)
Discuss: Randall, To Change the World, pp. 1-124

Friday, October 28, The Consolidation of the Revolution

Topics/Concepts: The Creation of Cuban Exile Communities, Achievements and Failures of the Revolution

Monday, October 31, Consolidation (Cont.)

Documentary: "Fidel Castro" VIEWING TIME AND LOCATION TBA.

Wednesday, November 2, Building Socialism? Cuba During the 1970s (Cont.)

Discuss Randall, To Change the World, FINISH

The "Special Period" and the (Post)Cold War Era (1991-present)

Friday, November 4, Cuba and the United States During the "Special Period."

Topics/Concepts: The "Special Period," Impact of the Fall of the Soviet Union on Cuba, Dollarization, *balseros*, revival of tourism in the 1990s

Monday, November 7, The "Special Period," (Cont.)

Wednesday, November 9, The Special Period (Cont.)

Discuss: C. Peter Ripley, Conversations with Cuba, pp.1-68

Friday, November 11, U.S. Policy Toward Cuba during the 1990s

Monday, November 14, Wither the Revolution?

Wednesday, November 16 Wither the Revolution? (Cont.)

Discuss: Ripley, Conversations with Cuba 68-156

Friday, November 18, Elian and After: Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century

Topics/Concepts: The Elian Gonzalez saga, growing fascination with Cuba in the U.S., Buena Vista phenomenon, the "War on Terror" and Cuba

Monday, November 21, Cuba and the U.S. in a post-September 11th World

Wednesday November 23 and Friday November 25, **THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASS**

Monday, November 28, Where do We Go From Here?

Discuss: Ripley, Conversations with Cuba 156-END

Wednesday, November 30, Debate on U.S. Policy Toward Cuba

Friday, December 2, Last Class

TAKE HOME EXAM DUE, Wednesday, December 7