Key Ideas and Issues in Latin America

LAS 301/ HIS 306N  
Fall 2011  
T/TH 3:30-5:00  
UTC 3.104

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Course Description

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of Latin America. With 20 nations and a total population of over 500 million, Latin America is an area of fascinating cultural diversity as well as troubling socioeconomic inequality. The course aims to acquaint students with the richness, complexity and diversity of historical experiences and cultural practices in Latin America through an array of source materials that include historical monographs, ethnography, fiction, music, film, and documentaries. Through case studies culled from throughout the region, the course will shed light on the processes, structures, and forces that have shaped Latin America. Topics include: pre-Columbian civilizations, Iberian expansionism and the Conquest of Latin America; the Church in colonial Latin America; sugar plantations in Brazil and the trans-Atlantic slave trade; Independence movements; agro-export economies; U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean Basin; populism, urbanization, and import-substitution industrialization; popular culture, art, literature and music; revolutionary alternatives; the Cold War in Latin America and state-sponsored violence; transnational flows of capital and labor.

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. Assignments cover the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.
Course Requirements

Students final grade will be computed according to the following criteria:

- Attendance and Participation in Lectures, Debates, and Discussion (20%*),
- Take-Home Midterm Exam - 40%
- In-Class Final Exam - 40%

*Sign-up sheets will be passed around within the first five minutes of lecture. Students with no more than two unexcused absences from lectures will automatically receive at least an A- for this segment of their grade. Students with more than four unexcused absences from lecture can expect to receive a lower grade for attendance and participation.

Required Readings:

Course Packet available at Speedway Copies in Dobie Mall (478-3334)
Course Packet is also on 2-hour reserve at the Benson Latin American Library.

Schedule:

August 25
Introduction: The Idea of Latin America

I. Colonial Latin America
Aug. 30 Pre-Columbian Civilizations: The Aztec Empire and the Spanish Conquest of Mexico
Derek Lomax, “Spain During the Reconquest,” pp. 15-19
Excerpts from People and Issues in Latin America History: The Colonial Experience, eds. Lewis Hanke and Jane Rausch:
Bernal Diaz de Castillo, The True History of the Conquest of Mexico, pp. 105-12
Miguel Leon-Portilla, ed., The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico, pp. 113-22
Ross Hassig, “The Conquest of Mexico was not the Victory of a Spanish Juggernaut,” pp. 123-26

Sept. 1 The Inca Empire and The Conquest of Peru
Garcilaso de la Vega, “The Incas Had Attained. . .” pp. 75-81

Sept. 6 The Catholic Church in Colonial Latin America
Inga Clendinnen, Ambivalent Conquests, pp. 72-92

Sept. 8. Film: The Mission

Sept. 13: The Mission (continuation) and Discussion

September 15. Colonial Brazil

Mark Burkholder and Lyman Johnson, Colonial Latin America, pp. 131-33; 250-52
Katia Mattoso, To Be a Slave in Brazil, pp. 33-44.


September 22 The Columbian Exchange
Alfred Crosby, Jr., The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492, pp. 64-121.

Sept. 25. Gender, Race, and Colonial Society
Susan Socolow, The Women of Colonial Latin America, pp. 60-77; 112-29
Excerpt from The Mexico Reader: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz “On Men’s Hypocrisy” pp. 156-59.

Sept. 29. The Casta Paintings
Guest Lecture: Professor Susan Deans-Smith, UT Department of History

Oct. 4 and Oct. 6 Film: The Maid (Chile)
Class Discussion on Oct. 6

II. Independence and Nation-Building in the Nineteenth Century

Oct. 11 Independence and the Challenges of Nineteenth-Century Nationhood
David Bushnell and Neil Macaulay, The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 13-37

Take-Home Midterm Examination Distributed

October 13. Slavery and Abolition in Brazil
Documentary (Excerpt): Bahia: Africa in the Americas
October 18.  **Liberalism and Agro-Export Economies (c. 1880-1930)**  
(Bananas)  
George Black, *The Good Neighbor*, pp. 31-36  
(Henequen)  
(Rubber)  

Take-Home Exam Due

### III Economic and Cultural Nationalism in Latin America

October 20  **Nationalism, Populism, Industrialization, (c. 1930-1955): Peron and Cardenas**


October 25.  **Popular Culture and Nationalism in Latin America**  
Excerpts from Chasteen and Woods, eds., *Problems in Latin American History*, pp. 183-93:  
Joseph Arbena and David LaFrance, “Introduction” in *Sport in Latin America and the Caribbean*, pp. xi-xxxi  
Julie Sellers, *Merengue and Dominican Identity: Music as National Unifier*, pp. 1-7

October 27.  **In-Class Debates:**  
Export-oriented growth launched Latin America on the road to progress.  
**Economic and Cultural Nationalism in Latin America: A Legacy of Inclusion.**

November 1.  **Urban Growth and Inequality**

Alan Gilbert, *The Latin American City*, pp. 79-101

**Film:** *The Americas: Continent on the Move* (excerpt)
Nov. 3 New Trends in Latin American Cities
Guest Lecture: Fernando Lara, Professor of Architecture, UT School of Architecture

**IV. The Cold War in Latin America: Revolutions and National Security States**

Nov. 8. 1 Revolutionary Movements: Cuba (1959- ) and Nicaragua (1979-90)
Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, *Politics in Latin America*, pp. 338-68; 525-55

Tina Rosenberg, “The Good Sailor,” in *Children of Cain*, pp. 79-141
Steve Stern, *Remembering Pinochet’s Chile*, pp. 39-51

November 15: Resistance to Military Rule
Film: *Tapestry of Hope* (Chile)

**V. Neoliberalism and Globalization in Latin America**

Nov. 17 The Maquila Industry
Teresa Weersma Haworth, “Export Processing Free Zones as an Export Strategy for Central America and the Caribbean,” in *Latin America’s New Insertion in the World Economy*
Film: *Zoned for Slavery*

Nov. 22 Environmental Issues in Latin America
Mark London and Brian Kelly, *The Last Forest: The Amazon in the Age of Globalization*, pp. 113-83

Nov. 24- Thanksgiving

Nov. 29 Contemporary Political Challenges and Opportunities in Latin America
Guest Lecture: Raul Madrid, Professor of Government, UT Dept. of Government

Dec. 1 Transnational Labor Flows, Immigration, and the Remaking of Latino-America
Justin Akers Chacon and Mike Davis, *No One is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border*, pp. 155-70
Charles Ramirez Berg, *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance*, pp. 66-77
Samuel Huntington, *Who are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, pp. 221-56
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (short stories), pp. 3-11; 28-30

**Final Exam**: Thursday, Dec. 8, 9-12 noon.