

# HSTLAC 285: Latin American History through Film

Summer 2015

Mon-Thu, 9:40a.m. to 11:50a.m. & Fri, Aug 21, 9:40a.m. to 11:50a.m.

Savery 260

**Course Website:**

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Office Hours:

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The multiple regions and peoples comprised under the rubric of “Latin America” or the “Caribbean” are too vast and complex to cover in any survey course. Facing this insurmountable task, we can only aspire to gain an overview of significant historical processes that have marked the individuals and communities inhabiting and passing through these varied landscapes. This survey class will focus on moments of conflict and struggle and the ways in which they have contributed to the continuing subjugation of large sectors of the Indigenous, Black, and female populations in the Americas and, at the same time, have unleashed severe social upheavals and political processes through which subordinated and racialized populations have forged impressive alternative models of sociability.

The first section focuses on the workings and reproduction of colonial society and its social, political, and economic implications for the centuries that followed it. We will place particular attention to the Spanish and Portuguese endeavors in the Americas to govern, economically exploit, and morally/culturally shape the lives of native communities, African slaves, colonizers of various backgrounds, and their racially mixed offspring. By the same token, we will explore the myriad of ways in which people challenged, subverted, or simply negotiated in their everyday life the regimes of rule imposed upon them, during the colonial period and beyond.

In the second section, we will make a leap in time and focus on two specific nation-state developments: Revolutionary Cuba during the Cold War era and Jamaica in the late twentieth century. We will examine how a variety of historical, social, and political factors—including the colonial legacy, the Cold War, and global neoliberal reforms—have affected the lives of people in the Caribbean. By focusing on two specific societies within a small region in this section, we will have the chance to take a closer look at the interplay of global and local developments. We will learn about the impact of bigger political and economic changes on everyday life and about people’s ways of navigating and contesting these changing realities.

In the third and final section, we will again look at the twentieth century in Latin America, but from a different perspective. Like earlier colonial subjugation, the “nation” was another arrangement to organize power and has led to continuous struggles, often violent ones, about the terms of inclusion and exclusion. Economic projects, such as the call for free trade in the global market we have studied on the example of Jamaica, were only one example for the search of the “modern” in those nation-states. We will also examine notions of “development” and social and political processes, including militarized state violence, and U.S. imperialism, which remain at the heart of the present-day social movements in the region.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Introduce students to the conceptualization of historical questions and to the multidisciplinary analysis of a wide array of primary sources.
- ✓ Introduce students to the evaluation of secondary sources.
- ✓ Teach students to think historically about the social constructions of race, gender, and class as well as to think about these categories as mutually-constituted (intersectionality).
- ✓ Place the processes in Latin America and the Caribbean within broader dynamics and exchanges in the Hemispheric Americas and in global contexts.
- ✓ Offer students the opportunity to explore key historical events and socio-political, cultural processes in the multiple regions and sites that we refer to as Latin America and the Caribbean through reading, writing, and digital media production.
- ✓ Guide students in analyzing and presenting information to both academic and non-academic audiences.

## CLASS MATERIALS

### Required Texts:

- ❖ Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- ❖ Maria De Los Reyes Castillo Bueno et al. *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
- ❖ Gabriel García Márquez. *Clandestine in Chile: The Adventures of Miguel Littín*. New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2010.
- ❖ Archdiocese of Guatemala. *Guatemala: Never Again!* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

**Additional required readings** are available for download through the course website, under “Files” > “Readings” or as part of electronic books through the UW library.

If you need a textbook for brief reference, you can use:

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

**\*\*All required texts are available for 24-hour check-out on class reserves at Odegaard.\*\***

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to change and add readings as deemed appropriate over the course of the quarter. It is the students' responsibility to keep up with these changes, which will be announced in class.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- ✓ *Digital Project: Latin American History through Film – A Case Study*
  - The final project for this class consists of the development and presentation of a WordPress site. WordPress is a free, open-source content management system. For the creation of a basic website using WordPress, no prior knowledge is necessary. However, should you already have experience in creating blogs and/or websites, feel free to customize the website as much as you like.
  - Please pick **two topics** discussed in class you would potentially like to write about from the syllabus and **bring a laptop or a tablet** on Monday, July 27. At the beginning of class, you will receive a short introduction to WordPress, form groups of two, and set up the WordPress site you will use for your group's digital project. You will also sign up for an appointment with me to discuss the progress of your project and any questions you may have.
  - Please refer to the handout you will receive on Monday, July 27 for instructions regarding the content of the website and with literature recommendations.
  - **On Friday, August 21 you will present your project in class.** This final presentation is part of your grade for the final project. Prepare to speak for about ten minutes per group.

- ✓ *Weekly Discussion Posts:*

This is the space to discuss one of the films shown in class during the week and put them in conversation with at least one of the readings. Discussion participation is one way to demonstrate that you are engaged in the various conversations developed in class and that you can connect them with the films and books. These contributions are open to everyone in the class to see and comment on others' postings. These contributions should have, at least, some form of commentary (200 words) regarding the historical referent in these movies (migration, gender and sexuality, revolution, etc.). **These contributions are due every Friday at 5:00p.m.** in the "Discussions" section of the course website.

- ✓ *Two Short Writing Assignments:*

There are two written assignments that will allow students to engage more in depth with the materials we work with in this class. In these assignments, students will write on the concepts and processes discussed in class related to the readings and the films of the week. These writing exercises **are formal pieces of writing** and each should be three pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12 with one-inch margins. Please insert page numbers.

**Paper #1: What Makes a Hero?**

Drawing on *Malintzin's Choices* and Norma Alarcón's essay, explain how the perception of Malintzín as a historical figure has changed over time. What do changing notions of race and gender have to do with Malintzín's changing significance as a historical figure?

**DUE Monday, August 3, 9:00a.m.**

**Please submit electronically through Canvas (under "Assignments")**

**Paper #2: From Colonialism to 'Development'**

Drawing on either *Life and Debt* or *The Blood of the Condor* and at least two of the readings assigned between Tuesday, July 28 and Monday, August 10, respond to the following question: Identify continuities, ruptures, and entanglements between European colonialism and twentieth-century relationships between Latin America and the United States/international organizations. You are not expected to provide an outline of the bigger picture. Rather, formulate a thesis statement focused on one or two larger issues. These issues include, but are not limited to: economic relationships, gender and sexuality, notions of race, ideas of civilization and development.

**DUE Monday, August 17, 9:00a.m.**

**Please submit electronically through Canvas (under “Assignments”).**

**Late papers will be penalized .2 for each day. Papers more than three days late will be penalized one full grade point and may not receive any written comments. Extensions will be granted only in cases of a documented medical problem or another verifiable case of emergency.**

### **GRADING PHILOSOPHY AND STEPS TO DISCUSS GRADES**

Grading is not an easy process, especially because we are working within a framework in which grades are more often understood as a teacher’s punishment and not as an evaluation of one class exercise. When class members operate within this framework, if certain expectations are not met then anger and conflict ensue. Because this is not how I work in my classes, I ask students to take your graded assignments home, re-read them, write a short paragraph reflecting on the things you did well and which ones you can improve, and then we will set up a meeting to talk about the process. The goal is reflection, discussion, and improvement: I seek a productive engagement where we all can learn and grow. To me, a grade is just the assessment of a set of skill through one particular exercise. It is not a reflection of your personal value or a measurement of your intelligence. As such we can make many mistakes, discuss it, and do better the next time.

### **GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

Digital Project	30%
Go-Posts	20%
Writing Assignments	25%
Participation	25%

For the Grading Scale I use, please, refer to our class website.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ The classroom is a professional space where we come to work. It does not mean impersonal, inflexible, or unfriendly. However, we all are expected to come prepared with reading and written assignments done, behave diligently, and engage our peers attentively and with respect.
- ✓ Students should arrive on time to every class. Late arrivals are inconsiderate and distracting to one's classmates and the instructor.
- ✓ **No one should miss class except under extraordinary circumstances. If you must miss class, please, contact me beforehand. Absences will have a negative impact on your discussion grade.**
- ✓ **Meet deadlines.**
- ✓ Students are responsible for successful class discussion. You are expected to read all assigned material on time. Each student has to make an effort to talk in class. All questions, comments, and/or suggestions are always welcome in class.
- ✓ Write clearly, concisely, and coherently. Not only must you develop a critical argument effectively, but the presentation of your work will also be taken into account.
- ✓ Email protocol: I will reply within 24 hours during weekdays. It may take longer during the weekend.
- ✓ Electronic devices (computers, cell phones, ipads) can only be used for class-related activities (i.e. note-taking)
- ✓ \*Cell phones should be turned-off or in vibrating mode.
- ✓ \*Bring assigned readings, blank paper, and pen/pencils to class

## STATEMENT ABOUT DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

The instructor and the teaching assistants are committed to fostering a class environment that is open and welcoming to all students. The instructors are willing and committed to providing an atmosphere of support and affirmation for all people. Do not display disrespectful behavior toward any individual based upon age, ability, race/color/ethnicity, religious/spiritual, political affiliation, socioeconomic, immigration, marital, military/veteran status, gender identity/expressions, sexual/affectional orientations, relationship status, and/or anything that is likely to be perceived as disrespectful to someone's background, culture, or identity. For instance, some derogatory, but commonly used language includes 'that's gay' or 'that's retarded.' Unprofessional, derogatory, and/or offensive behavior may result in disciplinary action. Please, note that encouraging respect is not meant to prevent serious debate about important issues. But keep in mind that our ultimate goal is to question the logics that create and maintain the historical marginalization of individuals and communities.

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## I Colonial Legacies

### THURSDAY, JULY 23

*Introduction*

#### Life Before the "Conquest"

READING:

- ❖ Inga Clendinnen. "The Cost of Courage in Aztec Society." *Past and Present* 107 (1982): 44-89. (Canvas)

### FRIDAY, JULY 24

*Watch movie at home or at the library & explore digital projects on Las Soldaderas and the Mexican Revolution*

#### From Colonization to Revolution: Heroes, Race, and Gender in Mexican History

FILM: *Viva Zapata!* (Available on VHS at Suzzallo or for rent on iTunes or amazon (\$2.99).)

READINGS:

- ❖ University of Michigan, American Culture 213. "Las Soldaderas." [http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student\\_projects06/joelan/index.html](http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects06/joelan/index.html).
- ❖ PBS. "The Storm that Swept Mexico." <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/storm-that-swept-mexico/>. (Pay special attention to the "The Revolution" section and the short essay about Emiliano Zapata under "The Revolution" > "Faces of the Revolution.")

### MONDAY, JULY 27

*Introduction to WordPress, Distribution of group assignments, and sign up for appointments*

READINGS:

- ❖ *Malintzin's Choices*, chapters 2-3 & 7-8.
- ❖ Norma Alarcón. "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism." *Cultural Critique* 13 (1989): 57-87. (Canvas)

### TUESDAY, JULY 28

#### Racial Underpinnings of the Political and Economic Administration of the Colonies and the Frontier

FILM: *Madame Satã*

READINGS:

- ❖ Francisco Scarano, "The Plantation Complex of Latin America and the Caribbean."
- ❖ María Elena Martínez. "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Colonial Mexico." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3 (July 2004), 479-520. (Canvas)

## **WEDNESDAY, JULY 29**

### READINGS:

- ❖ Camillia Cowling, “‘As a Slave Woman and as a Mother’: Women and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro.” *Social History* 3 (August, 2011): 294-311. (Canvas)
- ❖ Franklin Knight. “The Haitian Revolution.” *American Historical Review* 1 (February 2000, 103-115. (Canvas)

## **II The Cold War and its Legacy in the Caribbean**

## **THURSDAY, JULY 30**

### **Cuba**

FILM: *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (Memories of Underdevelopment)

### READINGS:

- ❖ Introduction and Chapter 7 or 8 from: Lilian Guerra. *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. (EBook)
- ❖ Selected readings from: Aviva Chomsky et al., eds. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. (EBook)
  - “The Platt Amendment,” 147-149
  - “Imperialism and Sanitation,” 150-153.
  - “The Invasion of the Tourists,” 244-252.
  - “Castro Announces the Revolution,” 341-343.

## **MONDAY, AUGUST 3**

PAPER #1 DUE AT 9:00 A.M.

*Discussion and visit to Special Collections*

### READING:

- ❖ *Reyita*

## **TUESDAY, AUGUST 4**

### **Jamaica**

FILM: *Life and Debt*

## **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5**

### READINGS:

- ❖ Jamaica Kincaid. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988. (Canvas)
- ❖ Kamala Kempadoo. "Prostitution, Marginality and Empowerment: Caribbean Women in the Sex Trade." *Beyond Law* 5 (1996): 69-84. (Canvas)

## **III Imperialism and the Human Cost of State Violence**

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 6**

#### **Development or Imperialism? U.S. Intervention in Bolivia and Puerto Rico**

FILM: *Blood of the Condor* (Yawar Mallku)

### **MONDAY, AUGUST 10**

#### READINGS:

- ❖ Barbara Weinstein. "Developing Inequality." *American Historical Review* 1 (2008), 1-18. (Canvas)
- ❖ Laura Briggs. "Discourses of "Forced Sterilization" in Puerto Rico: the problem with the speaking subaltern." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2 (1998): 30-66. (Canvas)

### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 11**

#### **The Media and the Military: U.S. Intervention in Latin America**

FILM: *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12**

#### READINGS:

- ❖ Chapters 1 and 4 from: Lesley Gill. *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. (EBook)
- ❖ Seth Fein. "Producing the Cold War in Mexico: The Public Limits of Covert Communism." In: *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, 171-213. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. (EBook)

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 13**

#### **Military Dictatorships: Chile and Argentina**

FILM: *La historia oficial* (The Official Story)

### **MONDAY, AUGUST 17**

**PAPER #2 DUE AT 9:00 A.M.**

#### READING:

- ❖ *Clandestine in Chile: The Adventures of Miguel Littin*

### **TUESDAY, AUGUST 18**

#### **Central America: The Human Cost of State Violence**

FILM: *El silencio de Neto* (Neto's Silence)

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19**

#### READINGS:

- ❖ Excerpts from *Guatemala: Never Again!* [Pages TBD]
- ❖ Donna DeCesare. "The Children of War: Street Gangs in El Salvador." *NACLA: Report on the Americas* 1 (1998): 21-29. (Canvas)

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 20**

FILM: *Sin nombre*

*FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS*



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