

PORT3340: Cultures of Brazil

FALL 2023

Professor: Erika Stephens

Days/times: TR 1:30 - 2:50 pm

Office Hours: By appointment

Format: Online

e-mail: enstephens@utep.edu (expect a response within 24 hours)

Course Description:

Cultures of Brazil (PORT 3340) provides an interdisciplinary, critical introduction to Brazilian culture, history and society. The course is structured primarily around themes rather than chronology so that each week provides the opportunity to consider key distinctions or developments within the broader history of Brazil. In this course, we will use short texts, films, music, short stories, and more to explore and examine how Brazil came to be the diverse, dynamic, and troubled place that it is today.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of *Cultures of Brazil*, students should be:

- familiar with the most important historical and cultural aspects of Brazilian society.
- familiar with various canonical works of Brazilian literature, film, music and scholarship.
- capable of contextualizing key events and ideas related to Brazil within broader trends and debates in the country.
- capable of analyzing examples of written fiction and non-fiction, film, and music in order to identify important themes and concepts as they relate to Brazilian history and culture.
- capable of explaining their knowledge and/or analyses of Brazilian history and culture to others in a clear, well-reasoned manner.

Required Technology and Materials:

- A functioning computer or tablet, with Microsoft Word or Apple Pages installed. (All readings will be provided in PDF format on Blackboard.)
- Internet access capable of supporting live streaming of video and audio. (Videos, songs and other multimedia materials will be posted on Blackboard or provided as links.)
- A functioning camera and microphone for participating in live Zoom class sessions.

GENERAL COURSE STRUCTURE:

Weekly activities:

1. Weekly course material and comprehension questions—to be completed at home before class; each student will be responsible for approx. 4-8 questions and write a 2-4 sentence response for each
2. Weekly discussion board post—minimum 1 per student, posted to Blackboard *by Monday*.

3. Class discussions and activities—Tuesday and Thursday (attendance mandatory)

Other activities:

1. Short essays / presentations—two total throughout the semester
2. Mid-term Exam—written exam in the ninth week of the semester
3. Final Exam—written exam during Finals Week

It is important to pay attention to the type of material we will study each week since a film, for example, cannot be consumed the same way as a short story. Students should plan to spend a total of 2-3 hours on weekly activities.

Please note: all assignments listed above (and described in detail below) are mandatory. Failure to complete any activity fully and on time will significantly affect your final grade. Failure to complete three or more weeks of discussion board postings may result in removal from the course.

Accommodations:

If you require accommodations based on a disability or other special circumstances, please communicate with the professor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

COURSE CONTENT AND REQUIREMENTS:

Course material:

On our Blackboard page, you will find folders containing each week's course materials. These may include short readings, films, online videos, or music. When necessary, videos will be subtitled and music will include written lyrics. Comprehension question sheet: For each week of class, you will find on Blackboard a Word document with comprehension questions that we will go over in the following week's class. These questions are meant to help guide you as you read/watch/listen to that week's material. Each student will typically be responsible for 4-8 questions and write a 2-4 sentence response for each, demonstrating their comprehension and consideration of the question. You will submit the answers to your questions on Blackboard; they will be graded as simply complete/incomplete. You may also be called on to give one of your answers in class. The questions that appear on the midterm and final exam will be very similar to these comprehension questions.

Attendance / Participation:

Cultures of Brazil is primarily a seminar course, which means most classes will center around group discussion and exploration of that week's topic. Students are required to attend all classes on Zoom and actively participate in all discussions, activities, and assignments. **Full participation means: 1) logging in on time; 2) having your camera and microphone turned on for the entire Zoom session; 3) having**

your comprehension questions open; 4) doing your best to ask and answer questions from the professor and your classmates.

Attendance is essential. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed—contact a classmate and/or your professor. If you must miss class due to a serious emergency or illness, you should communicate as soon as possible with the professor so that you can make arrangements in order to not fall behind in the class. Students who miss more than three total classes over the course of the semester will lose five points from their attendance/participation grade for each additional absence. Students who regularly arrive more than a couple minutes late will lose points for attendance. According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of ‘W’ before the course drop deadline and with a grade of ‘F’ after the course drop deadline.” See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences.

*There is **no make-up** of missed class work, exams, essays or presentations. Students who miss more than 5 class sessions risk being dropped from the course. Talk to your instructor about any attendance problems.*

Discussion board questions / thoughts:

By Monday, each student must post a question or thought to consider on our course’s Blackboard forum. Your question should relate directly to that week’s material (reading, film, etc.). It can be a question about something you did not understand. It can also be a question or thought that you think would make for a good class discussion. We might not be able to use everyone’s questions or ideas every week, but the professor will use them regularly to drive the class discussion. Your response will also allow the professor to see that you finished the material and have considered it thoughtfully before arriving to class.

Short essays / presentations:

Two times over the course of the semester each student will choose a topic that is of greater interest to them in order to write a 3-4 page, double-spaced essay in which they develop and defend an argument related to their chosen topic. Students should find and utilize at least 2-3 legitimate academic sources to help explain their argument. Short essays can be a way to explore more in depth a topic that is new to you or one that is already of personal and/or academic interest to you. The professor will give more detailed instructions and examples during the first week of class. On the day that essays are due, each student will give a short presentation of their work to the class.

Midterm and final exams:

Twice during the semester, students will complete a written exam on the material covered up to that point. Exam questions will require some short answer (1-2 sentences) and some long answer (3-4

paragraphs) responses. Although students will occasionally be asked to learn an important name or date, exams will primarily test students' understanding of important ideas, debates and developments in Brazilian history and culture.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Attendance / Participation	15%	Short essays/presentations (2)	25%
Discussion board post (13)	5%	Midterm Exam	20%
Comprehension questions (13)	10%	Final Exam	25%

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Class atmosphere and behavior:

Students are expected to demonstrate respect and consideration for each other, the professor, and the course material. Each student will undoubtedly bring their own unique viewpoints, analyses, and ways of explaining their ideas. In this type of course, we are less concerned with finding the “right” or “best” interpretation of a given topic, and more concerned with exploring the topic from different angles and understanding its nuance.

Disagreements and heated discussions can be a valuable part of the learning process, provided that they are respectful and based on thoughtful analysis of the material. Inappropriate comments, personal criticisms and the like will negatively impact your participation grade and may result in referral for disciplinary action from the university.

Academic integrity:

All work for this course must be your own. For the short essays / presentations you will be using course materials as well as outside sources. Any outside source that you use must be fully and correctly cited according to MLA style. Using language or ideas from another person or source without citing them is considered plagiarism and is a serious violation of academic honesty.

In discussion board posts, you are encouraged to include direct quotes (and page numbers if relevant) when you make reference to a particular part of a text, song, etc. However, because discussion board posts are informal reflections on a piece of material provided by the professor, you do not need to use a formal citation style when writing them.

For more information, please consult official UTEP policies on “Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty” found here: <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>

COURSE CALENDAR:

***Attention:** The assignments, policies and schedule outlined in this syllabus are subject to change. Students are responsible for acquainting themselves with any modifications instituted by the professor. Not being familiar with changes to the syllabus or course requirements does not constitute an excuse for late or missed assignments.

WEEK 1

Date	Topic	Materials
Aug 29	"For the English to see": Myths and Realities	Syllabus Song: Ary Barroso - "Aquarela do Brasil" Song: Jorge Ben - "País Tropical"
Aug 31		Book chapter: Novinger, Tracy - "Jeito as Worldview"

WEEK 2

Date	Topic	Materials
Sep 5	"For the English to see": Myths and Realities	Book chapter: Reid, Michael - "The Brazilian Way of Life"
Sep 7	*Brazil's Independence Day	Book chapter: Novinger, Tracy - "A Capsule of History"

WEEK 3

Date	Topic	Materials
Sep 12	Colonization and Slavery	Video: "Brazil - An Inconvenient History" Song: Jorge Ben - "Zumbi"
Sep 14		Short story: Machado de Assis - "Father versus Mother"

WEEK 4

Date	Topic	Materials
Sep 19	Deconstructing and Debunking Brazil's "Racial Democracy"	Book chapter: Garmany, Jeff & Anthony Pereira - "Race and Ethnicity in Brazil" (from <i>Understanding Contemporary Brazil</i>) Song: Ney Lopes - "Lundu Chorado"

Date	Topic	Materials
Sep 21		Articles: <i>Brazil Reader</i> - various essays on race Short video: "Why race in Brazil is a confusing, loaded topic"

WEEK 5

Date	Topic	Materials
Sep 26	Brazilian Religions: Mixture and Tension	Videos: YouTube videos on Candomblé Film: Keeper of Promises
Sep 28		Book chapter: McCann, Bryan - "The Pentecostal Boom"

WEEK 6

Date	Topic	Materials
Oct 3	Views of the Northeast and Rural Society	Fiction: Ramos, Graciliano - "A New Home", "The Dog", "Flight" (from <i>Barren Lives</i>) Song: Nara Leão - "O galo cantou na serra"
Oct 5		Poetry: Cabral de Melo Neto, João - selected poems Short story: Guimarães Rosa, João - "The Third Bank of the River" Song: Caetano Veloso - "A terceira margem do rio"

WEEK 7

Date	Topic	Materials
Oct 10	The Invention of Brasília	Videos: YouTube shorts on Brasília Selections from book: Holston, James - <i>The Modernist City</i>
Oct 12	Short Essay / Presentation #1 *Brazil's "Dia das Crianças"	

WEEK 8

Date	Topic	Materials
Oct 17	Midterm Exam Review	
Oct 19	*Midterm Exam*	

WEEK 9

Date	Topic	Materials
Oct 24	The Role of Culture and Race in Modernization Projects	Book chapter: Leu, Lorraine - "Race, Ethnicity, and Urbanization"
Oct 26		Short story: Guidice, Victor - "The File Cabinet"

WEEK 10

Date	Topic	Materials
Oct 31	Hills vs. Asphalt: Favelas, Periphery, and Insurgent Communities	Podcast: Brazil Unfiltered - "A Look Inside Rio's Favelas" Selection from book: Holston, James - "New Foundations of Rights" (from <i>Insurgent Citizenship</i>)
Nov 2	*Brazil's "Dia de Finados"	Film: <i>Bus 174</i>

WEEK 11

Date	Topic	Materials
Nov 7	Futebol & Carnaval	Book chapter: Garmany, Jeff & Anthony Pereira - "Soccer in Brazil" (from <i>Understanding Contemporary Brazil</i>) Article: Shirts, Matthew - "Socrates, Corinthians, and Democracy"
Nov 9		Short story: Lispector, Clarice - "Remnants of Carnaval" Song: Tom Jobim & Miúcha - "Turma do funil"

WEEK 12

Date	Topic	Materials
Nov 14	Dictatorship and Resistance	Book chapters (selections): Wright, Thomas C. - "Introduction" and "Fidelismo and the Brazilian Crisis" Book chapter: Reid, Michael - "The Long Dictatorship"
Nov 16		Songs: Chico Buarque - "Cálice", "Apesar de você"

WEEK 13

Date	Topic	Materials
Nov 21	Preservation and Peril: Indigenous Communities and the Environment	Film: Rubber Jungle (documentary) Podcast: Brazil Unfiltered - "The Economics, Ecology and Politics of Brazil's Rainforest" Book chapters: Warren, Jonathan - "Introduction" and "Post traditional Indians"
Nov 23	*Thanksgiving Holiday	

WEEK 14

Date	Topic	Materials
Nov 28	Disorder and Progress?: Politics in Present Day Brazil	Podcast: Brazil Unfiltered - "Who Exactly is Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva" Podcast: Brazil Unfiltered - "Who Exactly is Jair Bolsonaro"
Nov 30		Short story: Nery, Adalgisa - "Premeditated Coincidence"

WEEK 15

Date	Topic	Materials
Dec 5	Short Essay / Presentation #2	
Dec 7	Final Exam Review *Last day of classes	

WEEK 16

Date	Topic	Materials
Dec 14 (THU)	*Final Exam* 1:00 - 3:45 pm	