Hist 3346     Central America and the Caribbean

Lecture: 9:20 – 11:30, M-F Physical Science bldg., room114

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Course Overview

This class is designed to expose students to major themes and events in the history of Central America and the Caribbean. It will be composed of three parts evenly distributed over the course of three weeks. Part I will cover events from European contact to Independence (ca. 1500-1800); part II will cover events from Independence to 1930; and the final part will consist of events from 1930-1990. As a class we will discuss important issues such as racial relations, gender, the economy, the Cold War, and U.S. Latin American relations. Throughout the course you will be introduced to a variety of written sources including primary and secondary sources, images, and literature. You will be asked to use your critical thinking skills in deciphering and evaluating these sources. The reading requirements for this course are, in my opinion, very reasonable for a three-week course. You are expected as responsible college students to keep up with the readings. The central task of reading history in college and beyond is in understanding an author’s central argument, and being able to evaluate that argument based on evidence, sources, narrative, and logic. You should approach your reading in this way.

*** Assigned Texts:

*** Assigned Articles are found on Blackboard: See course schedule for list of articles

Map Quiz 10% of overall grade. You MUST get a perfect score on this quiz. You will be allowed three attempts to get a perfect score.

Quizzes (x3) 25% of overall grade.

Essay’s (x2) 25% of overall grade. Undergraduates will write two 3-5 page papers. Graduate students will write three 6-8 page papers using a minimum of three additional sources.

Final 25% of overall grade.

Attendance & Participation 15% of overall grade. Active participation is expected from all students. This requires that all students carefully and thoroughly read all of the material for that day. In addition to daily attendance and participation students will also be asked to spend the next few weeks warming up their vocal cords for our grand finale.
Attendance

You are required to attend every class. This is an abbreviated semester, which means that a single absence can place you behind the rest of your peers. You don’t want that. You want to be able to compete and challenge your peers on important matters related to the class. I will, however, allow one unexcused absence. The second absence will involve a stern discussion with the student. A third absence will incur a 5-point penalty on your final exam. Each additional absence reserves a 10-point penalty. You don’t want that!

Tardiness

Please keep tardiness to a minimum. This class will begin promptly at 9:20. I understand that sometimes being late is unavoidable and that’s fine but don’t let that become a habit. If you are late, please be courteous and keep your noise level down. Repeat offenders will be penalized accordingly.

Laptops

My policy on laptops is simple: you may use them to take notes. You must, however, sit in the first two rows of the classroom.

Classroom conduct

This course meets every day to discuss relevant information and ideas included in the course texts and lectures. Part of the classroom experience is participation and the exchange of ideas. The classroom is a community of scholars and inevitably disagreements will arise, for which a high degree of respect for the ideas of others is expected from each student. This will allow for a significant learning experience where diverse interests, ideas, and experiences will expand the scope of knowledge. Some of the topics of discussion will be of a sensitive nature (religion, politics, sex etc.) and may invoke individual experiences. Be aware that it is necessary for students to distinguish opinion from argument. Arguments need to be coherent and substantiated by evidence. To ensure a lively classroom experience students are expected to have completed the required reading for that day.

Exams

All exams must be taken on the date and at time specified. I will allow only one make-up quiz per student. The make-up quiz will be harder and lengthier than the in-class version so don’t miss on exam days.

Exceptions: If you will be out of town on an officially sponsored university activity and will miss an exam, you will be allowed to take a make-up if and when you present official documentation from the appropriate coach, faculty member, or academic advisor. You must present this documentation prior to the scheduled exam.
Notes on Academic Honesty:

This course follows the principles of the Code of Academic Integrity of the University of Texas at El Paso http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?PageContentID=2255&tabid=30296. All students at UTEP are expected to follow the Code. Violations of the Code come in many forms and can merit severe penalties. In this course, violators of the Code will automatically receive a failing grade and the violations will be submitted to the Dean of Students. Unfamiliarity with the code does not excuse violations. In other words, all students should review, learn, and follow the University’s principles of academic honesty.

Class Schedule: (Please play close attention to when assignments are due)

** Indicates that the article is on Blackboard, *** Indicates a quiz or paper due date

**Week 1**

(June 9) – Introduction to Course: Land, People, and Society
Readings:
  o Syllabus

(June 10) – Conquest and Colonization: The Genesis of Inequality
Readings:
  o Higman, Chapter Three, “Columbian Cataclysm”

(June 11) – Colonial Societies: Slave Economies and Social Resistance
Readings:
  o Higman, Chapter Four, “Plantation Peoples”

(June 12) – Colonial Societies: Central America: Race, Gender, and Sexual Deviance
Readings:
  o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Three, “The Common History”
(June 13) – Late Colonial Society and the Coming of Independence
Readings:
  o ***Map Quiz
  o Film and Discussion

Week 2

(June 16) – Independence: Revolution and the Fear of a Black Republic
Readings:
  o Higman, Chapter Five, “Rebels and Revolutionaries”

(June 17) – The Origins of a Central American Economy
Readings:
  o **Ciro Cardoso, “Central America: The Liberal Era, 1870-1930”
  o ***Quiz #1

(June 18) – Cuba 1898-1959
Readings:
  o **Louis A Perez, “Cuba 1930-1959”

(June 19) – The Cold War: Arbenz, Castro, and the Dulles Brothers
Readings:
  o **Edelberto Torres Rivasm, “Central America Since 1930: An Overview”

(June 20) – Central America
Readings:
  o ***Quiz #2
  o Film and Discussion

Week 3

(June 23) – US Involvement in Central America and the Caribbean
Readings:
  o Higman, Chapter Six, Democrats and Dictators
  o *** First Paper Due
(June 24) – Revolution in Nicaragua
    Readings:
        o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Five, “Nicaragua”

(June 25) – Revolution in El Salvador
    Readings:
        o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Six, “El Salvador”
        o **Mark Danner, “Massacre at El Mozote”

(June 26) – Revolution in Guatemala
    Readings:
        o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Seven, “Guatemala”

(June 27) – Opposition and Control
    Readings:
        o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Nine, “Political Participation, Political Attitudes, and Democracy”
        o ***Quiz # 3
        o Film and Discussion

**Week 4**

(June 30) – Central America and the Caribbean: Special Topics
    o Graduate Student Presentations
    o ***Second Paper Due

(July 1) – Final Words and Singing Competition
    Readings:
        o Booth, Wade, and Walker, Chapter Ten “Power, Democracy, and US Policy in Central America”
        o Singing Competition

(July 2) – Final Exam