

# LABS 3300: The Americas

## Class Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Gary L. Kieffner  
Fall Semester 2018  
Class series: 13647  
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Email: Kieffner@utep.edu

Class: Hudspeth, room 100  
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:00-7:20 p.m.  
Office: Liberal Arts, room 331  
Office Hours:  
Tuesdays through Thursdays: 10:45-11:45 a.m.;  
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7:45-8:15 p.m.;  
or by appointment

### Purpose of the Class:

This course treats selected modern themes as manifested in the Americas, including population movements, the arts, economic change, identity, socio-political structures and events, health, the environment, international relations, borders, and technology. Consideration of each theme includes a discussion of its dynamic historical development and an interdisciplinary perspective.

The "Americas," is a broad label referring to vast and diverse geographies, languages, cultures, political and economic systems. This course aids in the development of a comparative and practical understanding of modern events that have shaped some of the nations in the Americas. While drawing broad interconnections, four countries constitute the focus of more detailed examination: Paraguay, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela. We will delve into complexities, fractures and continuities of social processes that contribute to creation of distinctive cultural, political, gendered and economic spaces. The four selected countries will serve as case studies that help us understand critical contemporary problems within larger global contexts. We will engage in discussion and application of key social theories as we develop tangible final productions of research.

### Required Textbooks:

Barbara Ganson, *The Guarani under Spanish Rule in the Rio de la Plata*. Stanford University Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 9780804754958.  
Amalia L. Cabezas, *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*. Temple University Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 9781592137503.  
Alejandro Velasco, *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela*. University of California Press, 2015. ISBN-13: 9780520283329.

Books are available at the University Book Store and at off-campus bookstores. They may also be rented at chegg.com. A copy of each book is also on reserve at the UTEP Library Reserve Desk.

### Course Assessment:

Assessment will be accomplished via evaluation of individual participation, contributions to team presentations, research papers, a quiz and three tests as follows:

#### Continuous Assessment of Participation: (30 pts.)

Quality of your participation will be assessed including your discussions during class. Information not found in the readings will be provided during class and the participation portion of the grade is contingent upon proper classroom participation. If you would miss more than four class sessions, or portions thereof, then you are advised not to take this course. Silent or passive attendance will be counted as non-participation.

#### Map Quiz: (20 pts.)

You will take a 30-minute map quiz in class in Week 2 of the course. The quiz will cover Latin American countries, their capital cities, geographical regions, rivers and bodies of water.

### Three Tests: (50X3=150 pts.)

Test material is drawn from assigned chapters in the textbooks, other reading materials, lectures, discussions, and films.

### Individual Research Paper: (100 pts.)

You will individually write a research paper in the form of an essay based on a topic selected from the instructor's list of topics. The essay must be a minimum of ten pages in length. The instructor will distribute the specific requirements during class.

### Final Team Presentation: (200 pts.)

At the beginning of the semester, you and some classmates will form into a team. Your team will participate in various questions, issues, exercises and projects on Latin American studies. For your final team presentation, your team will select one of the following nations: Paraguay, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Venezuela. If you select Paraguay, the Dominican Republic or Venezuela, then you will focus on that country's terrestrial borderlands with only one of its neighboring countries (i.e., with Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Haiti, Guyana, or Colombia). If you select Cuba, then you will focus on the sea crossing between this island nation and Florida. You and your team will collaboratively research, compile and give an in-class presentation on your team's selected borderlands/frontier area. Each member of your team will contribute to our knowledge of that frontier's relationship to dynamics and issues in at least one thematic area (i.e., population movements, the arts, economic change, identity, socio-political structures and events, health, the environment, international relations, borders, and technology), thus providing a more complex picture of Latin America.

### Final Grade for the Course:

| Requirements              | Weight            | Student Grade | Grading Scale     |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Class Participation       | 30 (6%)           | _____         | 450-500 points, A |
| Map Quiz                  | 20 (4%)           | _____         | 400-449 points, B |
| Test 1                    | 50 (10%)          | _____         | 350-399 points, C |
| Test 2                    | 50 (10%)          | _____         | 300-349 points, D |
| Test 3                    | 50 (10%)          | _____         | 0-299 points, F   |
| Individual Research Paper | 100 (20%)         | _____         |                   |
| Final Team Presentation   | 200 (40%)         | _____         |                   |
| <b>Total Points</b>       | <b>500 (100%)</b> | _____         |                   |

### Remediation and Make-up:

The map quiz and three tests may not be retaken or re-tested; once you have taken the quiz or a test, the grade earned is the grade that you will receive. It is in your best interest to take the quiz and the tests as scheduled. If you do not take them as scheduled, then you must make arrangements to take the makeup quiz or makeup tests during the final exam period.

Remediation for lack of participation is unavailable. You must attend and participate in order to get a good grade.

The grade of any late research paper will decrease at the rate of ten percent per each day of tardiness. Remediation for papers that are more than nine days late is available upon request by the student; this consists of a double-length paper written on a completely different topic selected by the instructor. Late papers must be submitted in person, in class, and days when we have no class will be counted as late days. However, no paper will be accepted if submitted after Week 14.

The assessment of your team's presentation represents a critical portion of your final grade and occurs only once during the semester. If you miss class on the day when your team presents, then you must consult the instructor, who will assign a completely different topic for a lecture, which you must prepare and deliver individually, in class on a predetermined date, for a grade.

## **Course Policies and Procedures:**

You are responsible for understanding and abiding by the classroom policies and procedures described below. Problems in the classroom may be reported to the Dean of Students.

### **Classroom environment:**

You must uphold a mature level of interaction with each other and with the instructor. Please respect other students by listening to them when they respond to the classroom discussion. Please do not work on other courses during class. Cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate. You should try to complete all of your calls and text messaging before or after class. If a call must be taken during class, which should only be in the event of an emergency, you should step outside of the classroom. If you utilize a laptop computer for taking notes, then the volume control should be set to mute or off before coming to class. Do not engage in unauthorized communication or entertainment (web surfing, tweeting, messaging, chatting, video viewing, music playing, gaming, etc.) during class. If your conduct distracts the instructor or other students, you will be asked to leave.

### **Special Accommodations:**

Students with physical or other challenges that require accommodation(s) in order to participate in this course should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at the Union Building, East, room 106. Telephone: 747.5148. Email: [Cass@utep.edu](mailto:Cass@utep.edu). Internet: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. It is your responsibility to speak with a counselor in order to receive necessary help. Within the first week of the beginning of the semester, you must provide documentation from CASS in order to receive any accommodation(s). Failure to contact CASS and provide documentation in a timely manner may delay such accommodation(s) being made.

### **Disputed grades:**

If you disagree with a grade, you should consult the instructor during regularly scheduled office hours, or you should schedule an appointment.

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity:**

The team presentation is the only collaborative assignment that is graded. All other assessments are for individual productions. You are expected to do your own work on all graded material submitted for all course requirements. The names and student numbers of students suspected of knowingly using, or attempting to use, another person's work as though such work is their own, and of students suspected of permitting, or attempting to permit, another student to use their work, will be given to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Such conduct may constitute grounds for sanctions ranging from the assignation of a grade of "F" for the work to expulsion from the University. If you are uncertain regarding what actions constitute plagiarism, or about the University policy, then you should consult the instructor.

### **Dropping the Class:**

You are entitled to drop this class with a grade of "W" until the official university drop deadline, as described in the Schedule of Classes and the University Catalog. You are responsible for dropping the class. There will be no faculty-initiated drops, except under special circumstances.

**Calendar and Reading Requirements:** This calendar is subject to change by the instructor.

**Module A: Structure and Theory**

Week 1 (Aug. 28, 30)

**Latin American Geography and History**

Maps and readings online in Blackboard.

Week 2 (Sep. 4, 6)

**Communalism, Capitalism, Socialism and Latin America**

Readings in Blackboard.

Sep. 4: **Map Quiz.**

Week 3 (Sep. 11, 13)

**Borders and Frontiers**

Readings in Blackboard.

**Module B: Paraguay**

Week 4 (Sep. 18, 20)

**Environment, the Arts, Events, and International Relations**

Ganson, ch. 1-2.

Week 5 (Sep. 25, 27)

**Technology, Economic Change and Socio-political Structures**

Ganson, ch. 3.

Week 6 (Oct. 2, 4)

**Population Movements, Economic Change and Identity**

Ganson, ch. 4-5.

Week 7 (Oct. 9, 11)

**Health, Socio-political Structures and Identity**

Ganson, ch. 6-7.

Oct. 11: **Test 1.** (Ganson)

**Module C: Cuba and the Dominican Republic**

Week 8 (Oct. 16, 18)

**Economics and Environment**

Cabezas, Introduction and ch.1.

Week 9 (Oct. 23, 25)

**International Relations and Technology**

Cabezas, ch.2.

Oct. 23: **Research Paper due.**

Week 10 (Oct. 30, Nov. 1)

**Health, Identity, Population Movements and the Arts**

Cabezas, ch.3-4.

Week 11 (Nov. 6, 8)

**Socio-political Structures**

Cabezas, ch. 5.

Nov. 8: **Test 2.** (Cabezas)

**Module D: Venezuela**

Week 12 (Nov. 13, 15)

**Identity and Environment**

Velasco, ch. 1-2.

Nov. 13: **Final Team Presentation Due.**

Week 13 (Nov. 20)

**Socio-political Structures**

Velasco, ch. 3-4.

Week 14 (Nov. 27, 29)

**Economic Change, Events, Health, the Arts and Technology**

Velasco, ch. 5-6.

Week 15 (Dec. 4, 6)

**Population Movements and International Relations**

Velasco, ch. 7, Conclusion.

Dec. 4: **Test 3.** (Velasco)