

LABS 3300: The Americas

Class Syllabus

Fall Semester 2019

Section 13387

August 26 - December 13, 2019

Faculty Contact

Dr. Gary L. Kieffner

Office: Liberal Arts Building, room 331

Mobile (live voice only): +679.863.3454

Instructor [Skype](#): g.kieffner

Instructor Email: Kieffner@utep.edu

I am available from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. USA Mountain Time Zone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays during this Fall Semester. If these times are not convenient, then I would gladly accommodate other schedules, when possible. Should you need to contact me beyond such time frames, then you should not hesitate to do so. Email and Skype are my preferred methods of contact. To have a Skype meeting or Skype message me, send a Skype contact request that includes your name, the class and section number, above. I may check Skype and my email once every two workdays. You may also use the non-USA mobile number. Voicemail and phone text message are technologically tenuous and infeasible from most regions.

Course Description

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, three countries constitute the focus of more detailed examination: 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 three 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.

Course Materials

There are three required textbooks:

John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. Fourth Edition. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2016. (to be purchased only via Blackboard quiz link.)

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.

Other course materials are located in Blackboard in Content including YouTube video links and required assessments. You must read and be familiar with all of the information as described in the assigned textbooks and other materials, in accordance with the Assignment Schedule of this syllabus.

You must **purchase Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* only through our Blackboard course site as an Ebook**, during the first week of instruction when you go to “Content” and click on your first quiz link. You should purchase this Ebook, including access to the required quizzes at that time. **Do not get any twenty-day free trial** that may be offered, since that particular option would only create problems with your grades later this month when the connection between your quizzes and my gradebook would be severed and you would lose your grades. You may purchase or rent the other two required textbooks from commercial vendors. You should use a laptop or desktop for this course, **not** a tablet or cell phone, so that you may have no technical problems.

Grading Information

Assessment

I will grade quizzes, book tests, research papers and Powerpoint presentations as follows:

Individual Quiz Scores (11 chapter quizzes on Chasteen, <i>Born in Blood and Fire</i>)	110 pts.
Individual Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>)	50 pts.
Individual Book Test 2 (Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>)	50 pts.
Individual Research Paper	140 pts.
Team Powerpoint Presentation	150 pts.
Optional Extra Credit (if offered)	possible extra pts.
Total	500 pts. (100%)

These assessments are subject to change by the instructor. Extra credit may possibly be offered at the discretion of the instructor.

The Course Week

The course week begins on a Friday and ends on a Thursday night, with the exception of Week 1, which is shorter. The deadlines of all assessment completions and submissions are on designated Thursday nights at 11:59 p.m. USA Mountain Time. For more information, see the Assignment Schedule, below.

Late Policy

The grades of any late works submitted for a grade after their deadlines will decrease at the rate of ten percent of the total possible value, per day late, with the exception of work due after Week 11. In the case of these later weeks, submissions may not be late. No late submissions will be accepted after that time, and no excuses will be accepted.

Assessment Descriptions

Eleven Quizzes (11x10=110 pts.)

All quiz links are located in the Blackboard course site. Click “Content” on the left-hand panel. During most weeks, you will complete a quiz. Questions are based on information from the Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* textbook.

You must answer questions the quiz presents to you. Depending on how the quiz is programmed, it is possible that each time you answer a question correctly, you gain points and if you answer one incorrectly, you lose points. You may possibly be able to adjust your confidence level and, if so, then that would affect the quiz in various ways. Obviously, you need to study the Chasteen textbook in order to do well on the quizzes.

There are eleven such quizzes in this course. Note that the point system within the quiz may possibly differ from the Blackboard point system in this course, for the quizzes are operated by W.W. Norton, the Chasteen textbook’s publisher. Blackboard will convert Norton quiz points into our LABS 3300 course’s 500-point grading system. For example, you may possibly need to earn more than 1,500 Norton points on a quiz in order to earn 10 Blackboard points. As each of these transactions is automatically calculated, the maximum number of LABS 3300 points that you may earn from one quiz in the Blackboard grade book is 10.

Two Book Tests (2x50=100 pts.)

You will individually download each of two book tests, give it your name, save it, enter your answers directly into that document, save it again, upload and submit it in its drop box. Follow all of the prompts until you get a confirmation message that it has been submitted for grading. Submit each completed test, in the Blackboard drop box only, no later than its due date at 11:59 PM, US Mountain Time Zone. You will find each book test and its drop box, for only seven days prior to its due date, in Blackboard in Content.

Individual Research Paper (140 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. You will submit your research paper, in the Blackboard drop box only, no later than the due date at 11:59 PM, US Mountain Time Zone. You will find additional details for the paper and its drop box in Blackboard in Content.

Team Powerpoint Presentation (150 pts.)

After Week 8, I will randomly assign you to a team consisting of classmates enrolled in this class. You and 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). For example, if you select the Dominican Republic, then you will focus on its borderlands with Haiti. 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, upload and submit a Powerpoint presentation on your team's selected borderlands/frontier area. Each member of your team will contribute information about 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. You will submit your Powerpoint, in the Blackboard drop box only, no later than the due date at 11:59 PM, US Mountain Time Zone. You will find additional details for the assignment and its drop box, sometime after Week 8, in Blackboard in Content.

Grading Scale

450-500 points, A

400-449 points, B

350-399 points, C

300-349 points, D

0-299 points, F

Using Library Services

Extensive Library resources, including Library research databases covering a wide variety of subject areas with thousands of full text articles and other materials as well as extensive e-book collections, and services are available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at <https://www.utep.edu/library/>. To find the library links within this course, in Blackboard click on the "Student Services" tab located in the navigation bar at the top, then select from the "UTEP Library Resources for Students" links.

The UTEP Library provides research assistance in creating search strategies, selecting relevant databases, and evaluating and citing resources in a variety of formats via its “Ask Us” service at <https://www.utep.edu/library/>. The Research Guides area of the library's website at <https://betawww.utep.edu/library/research/index.html#research-guides> provides a search engine, research guides, scholarly article and other databases, and other resources along with technical and citation assistance.

Special Accommodations

Students with physical or other challenges who require accommodation(s) in order to participate in this course should contact the [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS, Union Building, East, room 106). Telephone: +1.915.747.5148. Email: 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.

Student Services

Blackboard Support

To successfully navigate the online classroom new students are encouraged to view the “Blackboard FAQs for Students” links, or the “Student Bookmarks” links, which are located under the “Student Services” tab at the upper right hand side of the Blackboard header. Those requiring technical assistance can access “UTEP’s Help Desk” under the “UTEP Blackboard” header. Scroll down to the lower right hand of the page to find it under “UTEP Resources.” Technical support is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week via the Help Desk link or via phone at +1.915.747.5257.

Student Course Evaluations

UTEP values its students' feedback. You will be asked to complete an online evaluation toward the end of the term. The primary purpose of this evaluation process is to assess the effectiveness of classroom instruction in order to provide the best learning experience possible and make continuous improvements to every class. Responses are kept confidential. Please take full advantage of this opportunity to provide your feedback.

More Information

For more information about student services and other general information, visit the “Community and Student Services” tabs on the Blackboard header.

Course Policies and Information

You are responsible for understanding and abiding by the policies and procedures described below. Any problems that I encounter in this course may be reported to the Dean of Students.

Course Civility

You must uphold a mature level of interaction with fellow students and with the instructor. When you post anything in Blackboard or communicate via any other medium, please respect other students, showing courtesy in all interactions.

Disputed grades

If you disagree with a grade, 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.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

The team Powerpoint assignment 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 other assignment materials submitted for course requirements.

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 academic dishonesty, or about the University policy, then you should consult me.

Course Management

I will promptly grade all assignments, and other work submitted for a grade soon after your deadlines.

External Link Disclaimer

This course may contain links to external sites neither owned nor maintained by UTEP. UTEP bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of external sites or for that of subsequent links. In addition, the terms of use, security policies, and privacy policies may differ from those of UTEP. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content, terms of use, and policies.

Syllabus Changes

All items on this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Assignment Schedule

Week Number	Topics and Assignments	Due Date
1 (Aug. 26-29)	<p>Theory, Latin American Geography and History Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 1 • Maps, online in Blackboard • Readings, online in Blackboard • WatchMojo, “Top 10 Latin American Countries to Visit” (7 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 1 	Thursday, August 29 at 11:59 pm MT
2 (Aug. 30-Sep. 5)	<p>Invasion of the Americas Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 2 • Readings in Blackboard • Al Jazeera English, “Race and Racism: Paraguay's linguistic equality - 28 July 08” (3 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 2 <p>September 2 is Labor Day. The university is closed.</p>	Thursday, September 5 at 11:59 pm MT
3 (Sep. 6-12)	<p>Colonial Changes Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 3 • Readings in Blackboard • Google Earth, “Amazon Deforestation: Timelapse” (3 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 3 <p>Begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper <p>September 11 is Census Day. If the university does not receive payment by this day, the student is dropped from the class.</p>	Thursday, September 12 at 11:59 pm MT
4 (Sep. 13-19)	<p>Latin American Independence, Cuba, Cuban Economics and Environment Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 4 • Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>, Introduction and ch.1 • Brent McDonald, prod., “Cuba's Coral Garden: Jardines de la Reina, The New York Times” (8 min) 	Thursday, September 19 at 11:59 pm MT

	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 4 <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	
5 (Sep. 20-26)	<p>Postcolonial Latin America, Cuban International Relations and Technology</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 5 • Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>, ch. 2 • Russia Today, "Putin & Cuba's new president speak in Moscow (Streamed live)" (13 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 5 <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	Thursday, September 26 at 11:59 pm MT
6 (Sep. 27-Oct. 3)	<p>Latin American Progressivism, Cuban Health, Identity, Population Movements and the Arts</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 6 • Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>, ch. 3-4 • Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, "CIMAvox: The Cuban Lung Cancer Vaccine Explained" (8 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 6 <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	Thursday, October 3 at 11:59 pm MT
7 (Oct. 4-10)	<p>Neocolonialism and Cuban Socio-political Structures</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 7 • Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>, ch.5 • Rome Reports, "Historic encounter with Pope and Patriarch of Moscow: We are not competitors but brothers" (4 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 7 <p>Begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>) <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	Thursday, October 10 at 11:59 pm MT
8 (Oct. 11-17)	<p>Latin American Nationalism, Venezuela, Venezuelan Identity and Environment</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 8 • Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>, ch. 1-2 • Empire Files, "Venezuela Economy Minister— 	Thursday, October 17 at 11:59 pm MT

	<p>Sabotage, Not Socialism, is the Problem” (28 min)</p> <p>Complete and Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>) <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	
9 (Oct. 18-24)	<p>Latin American Nationalism and Venezuelan Socio-political Structures</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 8 • Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>, ch. 3-4 • TeleSUR TV, “Venezuela Farmers” (3 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 8 <p>Begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper 	Thursday, October 24 at 11:59 pm MT
10 (Oct. 25-31)	<p>Latin American Revolution, Venezuelan Economic Change, Events, Health, the Arts and Technology</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 9 • Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>, ch. 5-6 • TeleSUR TV, “Venezuela: Government to Stop Trading in US Dollars” (1 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 9 <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation • Research Paper 	Thursday, October 31 at 11:59 pm MT
11 (Nov. 1-7)	<p>Reaction, Venezuelan Population Movements and International Relations</p> <p>Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 10 • Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>, ch. 7, Conclusion • C-SPAN, “Word for Word: Exchange between Rep. Ilhan Omar and Elliott Abrams” (5 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 10 <p>Begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Test 2, (Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>) <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation • Research Paper <p>November 1 is the Fall Course Drop/Withdrawal Deadline.</p>	Thursday, November 7 at 11:59 pm MT

<p>12 (Nov. 8-14)</p>	<p>Reaction from the North Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 11 • Silko, “Up North” through “Coyote Holds a Full House in his Hand” • RT America, “Koch brothers behind US coup in Venezuela” (7 min) <p>Complete and Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Test 2, (Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>) <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation • Research Paper <p><u>Only quizzes, Research Papers, and Team Powerpoint Presentations will be accepted after November 14.</u></p>	<p>Thursday, November 14 at 11:59 pm MT</p>
<p>13 (Nov. 15-21)</p>	<p>Neoliberalism and Latin America Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 11 • Greenpeace International, “Broken promises for the Amazon” (7 min) <p>Complete and Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation <p><u>Only Quizzes and Team Powerpoint Presentations will be accepted after November 21.</u></p>	<p>Thursday, November 21 at 11:59 pm MT</p>
<p>14 (Nov. 22-28)</p>	<p>Beyond Neoliberalism Read and View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasteen, ch. 11 • UN Environment, “Environmental Rule of Law in the Americas” (2 min) <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 11 <p>Continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation <p>November 28 is Nikkomosachmiawene, a public holiday. The university is closed.</p>	<p>Thursday, November 28 at 11:59 pm MT</p>
<p>15 (Nov. 29-Dec.5)</p>	<p>Beyond Neoliberalism View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Jurca, “KSU Architecture students redesign a Havana neighborhood” (3 min) <p>Complete and Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Powerpoint Presentation <p>November 29 is an institutional holiday, The university is closed. December 5 is the last day of this class. <u>Assignments are not accepted after December 5.</u></p>	<p>Thursday, December 5 at 11:59 pm MT</p>

	December 6 is Dead Day, an institutional holiday. No classes meet.	
Final Examination Week (Dec. 9-13)	Final Exam Week	No submissions