

LABS 3300: The Americas

Class Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Gary L. Kieffner
Spring Semester 2019
Class series: 27279
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Class: Liberal Arts, room 122
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:00-7:20 p.m.
Office: Liberal Arts, room 331
Office Hours:
Mondays and Wednesdays: 12:30-1:30 p.m.;
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 7:35-8:05 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.
Other required readings are posted in Blackboard.

Classroom, Blackboard, and Assessment:

This course has a face-to-face classroom component and an online Blackboard component. You must attend face-to-face class meetings regularly. You must submit some assignments in class and other assignments in Blackboard. 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 and activities during class. Information not found in the readings will be provided during class and the participation portion of the grade is contingent upon proper 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 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. You will submit your essay in Blackboard no later than the due date at 11:59 PM USA Mountain Time Zone. You will find additional details for the paper and the assignment folder in Blackboard under Content.

Final Team Presentation: (200 pts.)

During the first week of class, you will be randomly assigned to 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 deliver a 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.

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%)	_____	
Total Points	500 (100%)	_____	

Remediation and Make-up:

The map quiz and three tests may not be retaken or re-tested; once you have submitted your completed 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 instructor's office hours.

Remediation for lack of participation is unavailable. You must 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. 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. If you fail to contribute and participate with your team, then you must consult the instructor, who will assign a completely different topic, which you must prepare and submit individually 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. 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.

Blackboard Support:

To successfully navigate the Blackboard component of this class, 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 915.747.5257.

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 assignment 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 the instructor.

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.

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 if you make a personal request to the Instructor to drop you.

Syllabus Changes:

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

Calendar and Reading Requirements:

Module A: Structure and Theory

Week 1 (Jan. 22, 24)

Latin American Geography and History

Maps and readings online in Blackboard.

Week 2 (Jan. 29, 31)

Communalism, Capitalism, Socialism and Latin America

Readings in Blackboard.

Jan. 29: **Map Quiz.**

Week 3 (Feb. 5, 7)

Borders and Frontiers

Readings in Blackboard.

Module B: Paraguay

Week 4 (Feb. 12, 14)

Environment, the Arts, Events, and International Relations

Ganson, ch. 1-2.

Week 5 (Feb. 19, 21)

Technology, Economic Change and Socio-political Structures

Ganson, ch. 3.

Week 6 (Feb. 26, 28)

Population Movements, Economic Change and Identity

Ganson, ch. 4-5.

Week 7 (Mar. 5, 7)

Health, Socio-political Structures and Identity

Ganson, ch. 6-7.

Mar. 7: **Test 1.** (Ganson)

Module C: Cuba and the Dominican Republic

Week 8 (Mar. 12, 14)

Economics and Environment

Cabezas, Introduction and ch.1.

Week 9

Spring Break. No classes.

Week 10 (Mar. 26, 28)

International Relations and Technology

Cabezas, ch.2.

Mar. 26: **Research Paper due.**

Week 11 (Apr. 2, 4)

Health, Identity, Population Movements and the Arts

Cabezas, ch.3-4.

Week 12 (Apr. 9, 11)

Socio-political Structures

Cabezas, ch. 5.

Apr. 11: **Test 2.** (Cabezas)

Module D: Venezuela

Week 13 (Apr. 16, 18)

Identity and Environment

Velasco, ch. 1-2.

Apr. 16: **Final Team Presentation Due.**

Week 14 (Apr. 23, 25)

Socio-political Structures

Velasco, ch. 3-4.

Week 15 (Apr. 30, May 2)

Economic Change, Events, Health, the Arts and Technology

Velasco, ch. 5-6.

Week 16 (May 7, 9)

Population Movements and International Relations

Velasco, ch. 7, Conclusion.

May 7: **Test 3.** (Velasco)