LABS 3300: The Americas (ONLINE)
CRN: 25207
Spring 2022
Professor: Dr. Gary L. Kieffner
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(915) 747-7060
Office Hours: Virtually via Blackboard Collaborate: M, T, W, 10-11 am

Course Information: What this Class Is About and What We will Do

COURSE DESCRIPTION
LABS 3300 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 OBJECTIVES OR EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Understand selected historical and contemporary elements of Latin America
- Engage as a team of designers who collaborate to build an audiovisual production
- Draw on existing research sources to critically analyze and interpret knowledge
- Develop a knowledge of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela
- Address the arts, sciences, and environments of selected Latin American regions
- Develop content knowledge of assigned textbooks

LEARNING MODULES
This course is designed using a modular format—that is, each week is "packaged" as a single module so that all the non-textbook materials, discussion forum, quizzes, tests, assignments, submission areas, and submission links are in one area for a given week. The area is in our Blackboard classroom in Content. At various times throughout the semester, current modules, assessments and instructions will appear in Content in
chronological order. The main textbook is available via an e-book link located in the left-hand column. The two other assigned textbooks are available from the UTEP bookstore and other book vendors.

REQUIRED MATERIALS
There are three required textbooks:


You must purchase Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire,* only through our Blackboard classroom as an E-book during the first week of instruction when you click on your e-book link. You should purchase this e-book, including access to the required quizzes at that time. **Do not get any short-term free trial** that may be offered, since that particular option would only create problems with your grades later in the month when the connection between your quizzes and our grade-book would be severed and you would lose your grades.

**(Note: you should complete each InQuizitive quiz only through the Introduction Module and several of the other modules, not through the e-book itself.)**

You may purchase or rent the other two required textbooks from commercial vendors or the UTEP Bookstore.


Current textbook covers may possibly be different from the ones depicted on this syllabus.

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

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

All assessments for this course can be found by clicking on the appropriate links in our Blackboard classroom in Content or in the Content modules.

**Grade Distribution:**

700-450 = A  449-400 = B  399-350 = C  349-300 = D  299 and Below = F

- 110 points: Individual Quiz Scores (11 chapter quizzes on Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*)
- 50 Points: Individual Book Test 1 (Cabezas, *Economies of Desire*)
- 50 Points: Individual Book Test 2 (Velasco, *Barrio Rising*)
- 140 Points: Individual Research Paper
- 150 Points: Team Powerpoint Presentation
- Possible Points: Optional Extra Credit (if offered)

You must complete all required assessments so that you may earn a favorable grade. Your final grade corresponds to your cumulative earned points compared to this list and its five hundred point grading scale, not an overall percentage from work attempted.

**Eleven Quizzes (11x10=110 pts.):**

All quiz links are located in our Blackboard classroom. Click “Content” on the left-hand panel. The quiz links are in most of the “Content” Modules. During most weeks, you will complete a quiz. Questions are based on information from the Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* textbook. **Be sure to access every quiz through the Content Modules, not through the e-book.**
You must answer questions the quiz presents to you. Each time you answer a question correctly, you gain points and if you answer one incorrectly, you lose points. 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 differs 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 1,600 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 take each of two timed book tests online. Use only a laptop or desktop computer, not some other device. Begin each test only when you are well prepared and have good internet with no electronic or other distractions, because you have only one chance to complete each test. Follow all of the instructions carefully. Complete each test no later than its due date at 9:59 PM, Mountain Time Zone. You will find each book test, for only one week 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 3,200 words in length. You will submit your research paper in the Blackboard drop box only. You will find the assignment due date, 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 some of your classmates. 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 one of the sea crossings between this island nation and one of the following places: Jamaica, Haiti or 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. Although it will be a team-prepared Powerpoint, you will submit it individually, in the Blackboard drop box only, no later than the due date at 11:59 PM, US Mountain Time Zone. I will receive identical Powerpoints from each member of your Team. It may not be late. You will find additional details for the assignment and its drop box, after Week 1, in Blackboard in Content.
**Extra credit** may possibly be offered at the discretion of the instructor. If so, then they would appear in email and in Announcements. The submission links are in Content.

**Attendance and Participation:**

For this online course, attendance is not graded. Participation is required and it affects your grade. Attendance and participation may possibly be reported to the University for administrative purposes.

You are encouraged to complete all required assessments so that you may earn a favorable grade. Your final grade corresponds to your cumulative earned points only, as per the list above, not an overall percentage from work attempted.

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system and W. W. Norton publishers online, our Blackboard course’s Tool Provider for quizzes and the main textbook (e-book). Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a desktop computer or laptop. You should **not** use a tablet or cell phone for this course, so that you may have no technical problems.

You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about **Microsoft Office 365** and follow the instructions.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance unless it is a problem with a quiz or the e-book. In that case, I would refer you to the W. W. Norton helpdesk.

**Course Communication: How We will stay in Contact with Each Other**

Because this is an online class, we will not see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to. There are no class times and no in-person face-to-face office hours. However, there are a number of ways we can keep the communication channels open.

Blackboard Collaborate and Email are my preferred methods of contact. An online Collaborate Office Hours link is available in our Blackboard classroom. Alternatively, if you would rather have a live meeting or chat via Skype or Messenger, first notify me via email that you wish to send me a contact request (that must include your name, the class number and section number, above). For a live phone call you may use my mobile number, which I can provide upon request.
• **Office Hours**: We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Blackboard Collaborate via the link in our Blackboard classroom, and during the following times:
  - Mondays: 10-11 a.m. Mountain Time
  - Tuesdays: 10-11 a.m. Mountain Time
  - Wednesdays: 10-11 a.m. Mountain Time

My physical office location is in Liberal Arts room 320 on the El Paso main campus. However, I will not be on campus this semester and the main office may possibly operate with limited hours due to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

• **Email**: UTEP e-mail is one of the best ways to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please write your name, LABS 3000 and the CRN number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to include your first and last name, and your university identification number.

• **Message Board**: If you have a question, you may post it in the Message Board in Blackboard.

• **Announcements**: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

• **Alternative Skype or Messenger Contacts**: available upon request via UTEP email.

**NETIQUETTE**

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**.

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It is possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider your audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other’s ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When responding to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professors only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.
Course Policies: What do you Need to Do to be Successful in the Course

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.

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND ABSENCE POLICY

I measure student attendance and participation in this course according to the date and time of a student’s most recent Blackboard log in and by the number of assignments and assessments completed. Your final letter grade is measured by the cumulative grades of all assignments and assessments as assigned, not by your attendance. Although attendance in the course hardly affects your grade, participation is a critical component of your grade. Attendance and participation may possibly be important for University or organizational administrative purposes.

DEADLINES AND LATE WORK

All assignments and assessments will be due on Thursdays at midnight (11:59 PM). 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 14. 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. As assessment deadlines are rigorous during the latter weeks of the course, they cannot be made up after the deadline.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND COURSE DROP POLICY

There are no excused absences. 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 feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, first contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process, then let me know that you have done so. If you do not, then you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented physical or other challenges in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a challenge must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, visit their website at https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/ or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.
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). You must also consult the instructor in order to ensure timely accommodation. Failure to contact CASS, provide documentation, and consult the instructor in a timely manner may delay such accommodation(s) being made.

**COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS**

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

**COPYRIGHT AND NON-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS**

This Class Syllabus constitutes a contractual agreement between the student and the instructor as agent for the University of Texas at El Paso. All students enrolled in this class are legally bound by the following two paragraphs:

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

Violations of this regulation may be subject to, and punishable by, local, state or federal statutes. Criminal or civil legal remedies may be pursued by the Board of Regents, the University of Texas at El Paso, or the instructor.

**DISPUTED GRADES**

If you disagree with a grade, 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.

Course Resources: Where you Can Go for Assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

- **Help Desk**: To successfully navigate the Blackboard Ultra classroom or seek other technical support, new students are encouraged to click the question mark near the bottom of each page, or click the “Technology Support” link, located near the top of the “Institution Page.” Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Technical support is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week via the Help Desk link or via email, chat, website, phone at 915.747.5257, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- **UTEP Library**: 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-books 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, click on the “Institution Page” link located in the “Blackboard” navigation bar on the left, then scroll down the page to find the library link.

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 provides a search engine, research guides, scholarly article and other databases, and other resources along with technical and citation assistance.

- **University Writing Center (UWC)**: Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

- **RefWorks**: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

- **Military Student Success Center**: Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

- **Center for Accommodations and Support Services**: Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

- For more information about other UTEP resources, visit the “Institution Page” in Blackboard and scroll down to find the links.

**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.

**Weekly Calendar (Subject to Change by the Instructor)**

This calendar provides an overview of the course. 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 always on designated Thursday nights at 11:59 p.m. US Mountain Time. No late work will be accepted after Week 14.

This calendar and all items on this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read and View; Textbooks and Content Modules</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
<th>Course Notes, and Assignments to Begin or Continue</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;1/18-1/20</td>
<td>Latin American Geography, History and Tourism, Theory, Cuban and Dominican Socioeconomics</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 1; Cabezas, <em>Economies of Desire</em>, Introduction. <strong>Bién venidos... Module:</strong> WatchMojo, “Top 10 Latin American Countries to Visit” (7 min); Maps. <strong>Module 1:</strong> Readings.</td>
<td>Begin Quizzes in the Content Modules, due by Thursdays of most weeks. Begin to study for Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <em>Economies of Desire</em>), available in Week 6, due by 2/24. Monday, 1/17 is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a federal holiday. The university is closed.</td>
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<td>Week 3 1/28-2/3</td>
<td>Historic Invasion of the Americas, Cuban International Relations and Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 2; Cabezas, <em>Economies of Desire</em>, ch. 2. <strong>Module 3:</strong> Russia Today, “Putin &amp; Cuba’s new president speak in Moscow (Streamed live)” (13 min); Brent McDonald, prod, “Cuba’s Coral Garden: Jardines de la Reina, <em>The New York Times</em>” (8 min).</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (in Module 3) due by Thursday, February 3</td>
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<td>Rome Reports, “Historic encounter with Pope and Patriarch of Moscow: We are not competitors but brothers” (4 min); AP Archive, “Pope Francis and Raul Castro, Lombardi” (3 min).</td>
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<td>Empire Files, “Venezuela Economy Minister—Sabotage, Not Socialism, is the Problem” (28 min).</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>3/4-3/10</td>
<td>Neocolonialism and Venezuelan Agricultural Sustainability</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 7; Velasco, <em>Barrio Rising</em>, ch. 3-4.</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>3/25-3/31</td>
<td>Historic Latin American Revolutions, Contemporary Venezuelan Movements, Identity and Struggle</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 9; Velasco, <em>Barrio Rising</em>, ch. 7 and Conclusion. <strong>Module 10:</strong> TRNN, “TRNN Visits a Working Class Neighbourhood in Caracas” (7 min); Venezuelananalysis, “In Commune: The Panal 2021 Commune” (15 min); Venezuelananalysis, “In Commune: The Ché Guevara Commune” (14 min).</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>4/1-4/7</td>
<td>Latin American Revolutionary History and Today’s Historical Amnesia</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 9. <strong>Module 11:</strong> C-SPAN, “Word for Word: Exchange between Rep. Ilhan Omar and Elliott Abrams” (5 min); New Internationalist, “Noam Chomsky on the Economic War on Latin America” (31 min).</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>4/8-4/14</td>
<td>Historic Reaction, Misogyny and Racism</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 10. <strong>Module 12:</strong> Reading; Al Jazeera English, “Race and Racism: Paraguay's linguistic equality - 28 July 08” (3 min).</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>4/15-4/21</td>
<td>Reaction from the North, and Today's Environmental and Biospheric Destruction</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 10. <strong>Module 13:</strong> Reading; Greenpeace UK, “Sarah on Bertin, Cattle and the Amazon” (3 min); AFP News Agency, “Cattle Ranching: Biggest Threat to Amazon Rainforest” (3 min).</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>4/22-4/28</td>
<td>Neoliberalism, Environmental Irresponsibility and Latin America</td>
<td>Chasteen, ch. 11. <strong>Module 14:</strong> Reading; Greenpeace International, “Broken promises for the Amazon” (7 min).</td>
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| Week 16 | 4/29-5/5 | Problems of Neoliberalism in Latin America, and Possibilities for Responsible Environmental Stewardship | **Modules 15 and 16:**  
Reading;  
UN Environment, “Environmental Rule of Law in the Americas” (2 min);  
*The Guardian,* “How Brazil is Halting Deforestation in the Amazon” (5 min);  
David Jurca, “KSU Architecture students redesign a Havana neighborhood” (3 min). | **Team Powerpoint Presentation due by Thursday, May 5** | May 5 is the final day of this class.  
Team Powerpoint Presentations and Quizzes are not accepted after 5/5. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Final Exam Week | 5/6-5/13 |  |  | 5/6 is Dead Day, an institutional holiday.  
There is no final exam for this class. |