

# LABS 3300: The Americas

## Class Syllabus

Summer 2020

Section 34046

July 7 – 30, 2020

---

### 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](mailto:Kieffner@utep.edu)

I am available online from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. USA Mountain Time Zone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays this Summer term, via Skype. 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 mobile numbers. 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 e-book link near the top of the page. 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 2. 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. Each week, you will complete several quizzes. Questions are based on information from the Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* textbook.

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 1,500 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 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 ten pages 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 1, 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 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 Team Powerpoint individually, in the Blackboard drop box only, no later than the due date at 11:59 PM, US Mountain Time Zone. It may not be late. You will find additional details for the assignment and its drop box, 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

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 this chart, not an overall percentage from work attempted.

---

## **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-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 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](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 two weeks of the beginning of the term, 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 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." 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.

### **More Information**

For more information about other UTEP resources, visit the "Institution Page" 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.

---

## **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 (July 7-9)	<p><b>Latin American Geography, Historic Invasion of the Americas, Theory and Tourism; Cuban and Dominican Socioeconomics, International Relations and Environmental Sustainability</b></p> <p><b>Read and View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chasteen, chapters 1 and 2</li> <li>• Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i></li> <li>• Maps, online in Blackboard</li> <li>• Readings, online in Blackboard</li> <li>• WatchMojo, “<a href="#">Top 10 Latin American Countries to Visit</a>” (7 min)</li> <li>• Brent McDonald, prod., “<a href="#">Cuba's Coral Garden: Jardines de la Reina, The New York Times</a>” (8 min)</li> </ul> <p><b>Complete:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quizzes 1 and 2</li> </ul> <p><b>Begin:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>)</li> <li>• Research Paper</li> </ul>	Thursday, July 9 at 11:59 pm MT
2 (July 10-16)	<p><b>Colonial and Postcolonial Latin America; Contemporary Socio-political Structures and Struggle in the Dominican Republic and Cuba; Health, Medical Technology, and Religious Diplomacy</b></p> <p><b>Read and View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chasteen, chapters 3-5</li> <li>• Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i></li> <li>• Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i></li> <li>• Readings in Blackboard</li> <li>• Russia Today, “<a href="#">Putin &amp; Cuba’s new president speak in Moscow (Streamed live)</a>” (13 min)</li> <li>• Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, “<a href="#">CIMAvax: The Cuban Lung Cancer Vaccine Explained</a>” (8 min)</li> <li>• Rome Reports, “<a href="#">Historic encounter with Pope and Patriarch of Moscow: We are not competitors but brothers</a>” (4 min)</li> </ul> <p><b>Complete:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Test 1 (Cabezas, <i>Economies of Desire</i>)</li> <li>• Quizzes 3-5</li> </ul> <p><b>Continue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Paper</li> </ul>	Thursday, July 16 at 11:59 pm MT

	<p><b>Begin:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Test 2 (Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>)</li> <li>• Team Powerpoint Presentation</li> </ul> <p><u>Book Test 1 is not accepted after July 16.</u>  <u>Only Quizzes, Book Test 2, Research Papers, and Team Powerpoint Presentations will be accepted after July 16.</u></p>	
<p>3 (July 17-23)</p>	<p><b>Neocolonialism, Latin American Progressivism and Nationalism; Venezuelan Economic Changes, Anti-imperial Resistance, Agricultural Sustainability and Fiscal Policy</b></p> <p><b>Read and View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chasteen, chapters 6-8</li> <li>• Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i></li> <li>• Readings in Blackboard</li> <li>• Empire Files, "<a href="#">Venezuela Economy Minister—Sabotage, Not Socialism, is the Problem</a>" (28 min)</li> <li>• TeleSUR TV, "<a href="#">Venezuela Farmers</a>" (3 min)</li> <li>• TeleSUR TV, "<a href="#">Venezuela: Government to Stop Trading in US Dollars</a>" (1 min)</li> </ul> <p><b>Complete:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Test 2 (Velasco, <i>Barrio Rising</i>)</li> <li>• Quizzes 6-8</li> </ul> <p><b>Continue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Paper</li> <li>• Team Powerpoint Presentation</li> </ul> <p><u>Book Test 2 is not accepted after July 23.</u>  <u>Only Quizzes, Research Papers, and Team Powerpoint Presentations will be accepted after July 23.</u></p>	<p>Thursday, July 23 at 11:59 pm MT</p>
<p>4 (July 24-30)</p>	<p><b>Latin American Revolutionary History, Reaction and Neoliberalism; Contemporary Racism, Movements, Identity and Struggle in Paraguay and Venezuela; Biospheric Destruction and Possibilities for Responsible Environmental Stewardship</b></p> <p><b>Read and View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chasteen, chapters 9-11</li> <li>• RT America, "<a href="#">Koch brothers behind US coup in Venezuela</a>" (7 min)</li> <li>• C-SPAN, "<a href="#">Word for Word: Exchange between Rep. Ilhan Omar and Elliott Abrams</a>" (5 min)</li> <li>• Al Jazeera English, "<a href="#">Race and Racism: Paraguay's linguistic equality - 28 July 08</a>" (3 min)</li> <li>• Google Earth, "<a href="#">Amazon Deforestation: Timelapse</a>" (3 min)</li> <li>• Greenpeace International, "<a href="#">Broken promises for</a></li> </ul>	<p>Thursday, July 30 at 11:59 pm MT</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">the Amazon</a>” (7 min)</li><li>• UN Environment, “<a href="#">Environmental Rule of Law in the Americas</a>” (2 min)</li><li>• David Jurca, “<a href="#">KSU Architecture students redesign a Havana neighborhood</a>” (3 min)</li></ul> <p><b>Complete:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research Paper</li><li>• Team Powerpoint Presentation</li><li>• All Quizzes, including 9 through 11</li></ul> <p><u>July 30 is the final day of this class. There is no final exam for this class. No assignments, quizzes, or assessments will be accepted after July 30.</u></p>	
--	--	--