

Course Syllabus

The Americas | LABS 3300

Summer I, 2018 | June 11 - July 6
Undergraduate Learning Center 336
M, T, W, R, F, 11:40 am - 1:50 pm

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00 - 11:00 am and by appointment

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Course Description

The Americas will take you on a journey to how some of the societies in Latin America have responded to past and contemporary social problems. The course requires the student to think of these problems in specific as well as larger social contexts and establish complex, thoughtful and scholarly informed relationships.

Course Format

This course run in a seminar-style format, recommended for motivated undergraduate students interested in developing their knowledge in Latin America. Therefore, the classes are designed as a series of interactive conversations each day over the four week period of the semester. Your group and individual oral and written assignments are set to encourage students analyze and synthesize information in a rigorous and scholarly manner.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

During the four weeks of this course we will delve into a variety of reading and thinking exercises aimed at critically assessing the validity and currency of commonly held assumptions at the call of "Latin America's" name.

At the end of this course, students will have gained:

1. General knowledge of relevant geographies and contemporary political events
2. A theoretical framework for understanding key social problems in selected countries in Latin America
3. A more nuanced perspective on the cultural, socio-economic and political interconnections between Latin American countries and the Global North; and
4. A critical perspective on the multiple forms that cultural identities take among contemporary Latin American societies.

Professional and Transferable Skills

The student will gain, make use of and improve skills that are transferable to other class and future professional work, including: academic writing, public speaking, team work, leading groups and critical and analytical thinking.

Required Texts

Students will need to procure two required books for the class. Other required readings will be selected by the students. See instructions in Course Schedule for details.

Eisenbrandt, M. (2017). *Assassination of a Saint : the plot to murder Oscar Romero and the quest to bring his killers to justice.* Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Jarrín, A. (2017). *The biopolitics of beauty : cosmetic citizenship and affective capital in Brazil.* Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Assignments and Grades

You can earn up to 500 points in the class. There are five types of grading for the course, as listed below. All assignments required your engaged participation and physical presence for the entire class period. There is no extra credit in this class.

1. Class Participation and Activities (graded daily, 20%)
2. Team Presentation (1 per team, weeks 1 or 3 15%)
3. Mid-Term short research paper (week 2, 15%)
4. Student Presentation and Led-Discussion (one time during the semester, week 2, 3 or 4 (20%))
5. Final research paper (week 4, 30%)

Specific assignment instructions will be given in advance and early in the semester via Blackboard.

You will be graded based on the following criteria for all assignments:

- a. **punctuality** (tardiness is considered unacceptable. If you encounter any issues preventing you to arrive on time or requiring you to leave early, you must communicate with your professor in advance or you will not be assigned a grade for the class period, even if you were in class for that class period).
- b. **preparedness**. You are expected to come to class prepared, with your readings completed and ready to engage in an informed conversation. While personal opinion is okay, full points toward the course grade can only be earned on demonstration of having completed the assigned readings.
- c. **critical and thorough reflection** on the topics covered through the assigned readings. Going beyond the mere summary of reading is expected.
- d. **peer-collaboration**. There are assignments that require team work. It is expected that you will work to contribute positively to the team. Should you not be able to attend a session or produce work agreed upon in due time, you will need to let your team mates and professor know in advance. Otherwise, you will not receive a grade for the assignment.
- e. **use of electronic devices**. The use of electronic devices while your professor is lecturing or in order to complete assignments for the class which you did not complete in advance, is considered unacceptable and you will receive a grade deduction to the assignment or activity taking place on the day.

All main written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard on or before their due dates. See course schedule. **I do NOT accept hand-written work**, with the exception of those developed during class periods, whenever required as part of the day's activities.

Grading Scale

A 90%-100% = 450 points or above B 80%-89% = 400 points or above C 70%-79% = 350 points or above D 60%-69% = 300 points or below F below 59% = 295 points or below	<p><i>Note₁</i>: It is important, and your responsibility, to keep track of your grades. They will be uploaded onto Blackboard within a week of each submitted assignment.</p> <p><i>Note₂</i>: You will notice a 5 point gap in between each letter grade listed above. It will be at your professor's discretion to move your grade up or down, based on your demonstrated commitment to the class.</p>
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Backing Up Your Work

It is your responsibility to make sure you back up your work safely and regularly to avoid missing deadlines. It is also your responsibility to keep copies of all your graded work. If you happen to lose your work due to technological malfunction of work not backed up, I will not be able to accept your late submission.

Technology Malfunction

There are computer labs and printers installed throughout campus accessible to students. Always plan your work with plenty of time to avoid missing deadlines. Note that technology malfunction (i.e. your computer dying, getting a virus or your printer running out of ink, for example) are not acceptable exceptional circumstances for this class.

Using Blackboard

This course uses the Blackboard for additional readings, grades, announcements to class, specified assignment submission (i.e. final paper), and other course activities. You can access help by contacting the Help Desk. Visit <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=63402> for more details.

Course Communication

I always welcome interaction with students. Should you have any questions or concerns relevant to this class or that may affect your performance at any point in time during the semester, please make sure to get in touch with me. I am available during the student hour each week and by appointment. My preferred means of communication with students is in person during student's hour or via email. I also use the "Announcements" function on Blackboard extensively. Hence, it is really important that you check Blackboard on a regular basis in between class times. Please note I do NOT reply to emails during weekends or public holidays. I tend to check my email between 9 am and 11am during business days (M-F) each day and will do my best to answer your enquiry as early as possible. However, you should allow 24 hours for the me to respond during week days. It is always in your best interest to act promptly and contact me with plenty of time, so I can assist you. Please do not wait until the last minute or after assignments are due to discuss you concerns with me, as I may not be able to help.

Dropping Class

I do NOT drop students from class. It is your responsibility to know important dates such as University drop dates, and officially withdraw.

Information subject to change

While I have made my best effort to provide dates for due readings and assignments, they may be subject to change at your professor's discretion. Changes will be given due notice in class and via Blackboard.

Help with Writing

The UWC or University Writing Center (Library Building 277, on the ground floor) provides a range of services at no cost. Call 747-5112 or visit <http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter> for more information. The UWC offers on-line tutoring whereby you upload your paper and they provide comments.

Library Services

The UTEP Library offers a range of services to support students' research (i.e. how to use databases, how to cite and reference). Visit <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/services/contact.php> for more details. You are required to incorporate your research sources by using the APA 6th edition citation and referencing style. You will find an excellent breakdown on how to correctly use this style by visiting the following site at the UTEP Library, <http://libguides.utep.edu/apa>. I also provide you with a sample guide at the end of the syllabus. For outside sources, another excellent site to visit is the Purdue Online Writing Lab, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

Technology Support

Students have access to a wide range of readily available technological resources and support. You will be needing to use video editing technology for the production of your final video. Although your professor will give you guidelines and free-software options, I strongly encourage you to work closely with the assistance of staff at the UTEP Technology Support Center. For more details, visit <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74082>.

Counseling Center

The University Counseling Center offers confidential support to students struggling in their studies due to a diverse range of issues, in English and Spanish. They are located at 202 Union West. Call 747-5302 to make an inquiry or visit their website <http://sa.utep.edu/counsel/>, for more information.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

As a university student, you are responsible for your own academic behavior and for making yourself fully aware of the university's policies and definition of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and passing unauthorized materials during an assessment. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional; regardless, it is a form of academic dishonesty. Intentional plagiarism occurs when someone knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person as her/his own. Unintentional plagiarism occurs when someone else's work has been paraphrased (instead of copying verbatim) but without properly acknowledging the source of information, that is without providing the in-text citations (author, year, page number) and the full source of reference at the end of the text (so that your paraphrasing can be tracked down and checked if needed). Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit academically dishonest actions. If you have any questions about how to correctly cite sources, please discuss it with me. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action. In addition to receiving a failing grade in this class, students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Further information can be gained from the UTEP Dean of Students web page. Go to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/>, then click the "Student Conduct" tab on the top.

University Policy on Special Needs

If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Disabled Student Services Office in the East Union (747-5184) I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me before or after class as early in the semester as possible, to discuss any special needs you might have.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Biopolitics of Beauty - The Case of Brazil

WEEK 1 June 11-15	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
	Monday	Syllabus	Introductions Pick a Country,	Topic introduction, Video Clips, Maps Pick a Reading
	Tuesday	Your Selected Article	Class discussion Team presentation preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic introduction • Preparing Team presentation
	Wednesday	Jarrin, Introduction & Ch 1	Class / team discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading discussion
	Thursday	Jarrin, Ch 2	Team Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations
	Friday	Bring selected scholarly reading (hard copy) for mid- term paper	Class discussion Mid-term preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Term preparation/ bring your article • Week Content Recap

Module 2: Affective Capital - The Case of Brazil

WEEK 2 June 18-22	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
	Monday	Selection of News /Current Affairs on a Latin American country	Bring your article (hard copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Introduction • News Article discussion /Class participation
	Tuesday	Jarrin, Chs 3 & 4	Class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • class participation/ reading discussion
	Wednesday	Jarrin, Chs 5, 6 & Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion • Work on your final paper (bring selected readings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final paper advance (class activity) • Class discussion
	Thursday	Student-led discussion on reading	Class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral presentation advance (class activity) • Class discussion
	Friday	Mid-Term short research paper	In-Class mid-term short research paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class mid term short research paper

Module 3: Poverty, Social Action and Reactions - The Case of El Salvador

WEEK 3 June 25-29	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
	Monday	Eisenbrandt, Introduction, Chs 1 & 2	Class discussion Movie	Movie and reading discussion
	Tuesday	Eisenbrandt, Chs 3 & 4	Class discussion Student-led discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class participation Student-led discussion
	Wednesday	Eisenbrandt, Chs 5 & 6	Class discussion Student-led discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class participation Student-led discussion
	Thursday	Eisenbrandt, Chs 7 & 8	Progress on final presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full final presentation draft
	Friday Drop/Withdrawal deadline	Final research paper preparation	In-Class final research paper preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In class final research paper preparation

Module 4: The Americas & The Global North

WEEK 4 July 2-3 & 5-6	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
	Monday	Eisenbrandt, Chs 9, 10, 11 & 12	Class discussion Student-led discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class participation Student-led discussion
	Tuesday	Eisenbrandt, Chs 13, 14 & 15	Class discussion Student-led discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> class participation Student-led discussion
	Wednesday	July 4th - NO CLASSES		
	Thursday	Selected readings for your final paper	In-Class final research paper preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In class final research paper preparation
	Friday	Final research paper preparation	Final Paper development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Paper - bring completed draft
	Saturday, July 7th Midnight	Final Paper DUE Submit via Blackboard!		