

Graduate Seminar: Contemporary Latin America

LABS 5302 CRN: 24521 | MAIS 5360 CRN: 29423 | WS 5390 CRN: 27985

Spring 2022 | UGLC Building, Room 340 | Tuesdays 6.00-8.50pm

Instructor: Dr Silvia Torezani

Email: satorezani@utep.edu | **Preferred Course Communication:** Blackboard Email

Phone: (915) 747-6829

Office: Center for Inter-American and Border Studies (CIBS)

Office Hours: in person or via Zoom, by appointment (email to arrange time)

Course Overview

There are many ways to describe 'Latin America.' The historical interconnections between Latin America and other regions of the world, including Europe and the United States, are inherent to what we call contemporary Latin America, as are the social, economic, cultural and political consequences of such long and complex interactions. In this class, we will discuss some of these connections in depth through a variety of scholarly readings and other materials. This seminar looks at the production and effects of some drastic changes that this region has undergone in the last couple of centuries, with a heavier focus on the 20th and 21st Centuries. We will consider critical events in the region from multiple and different perspectives, including cultural, ideological, territorial, technological, financial and political deployments. We will use conceptual toolkits to analyze moral and practical implications of contemporary issues in Latin America in particular relation to violence and hope.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will gain: a) a clear understanding of conceptual frameworks to analyze the production and effects of social life; b) the ability to assess critically the various contexts covered; c) the skills to critically apply conceptual frameworks to the analysis of practical challenges in diverse social contexts; d) the ability to identify larger (global) interconnections to seemingly localized issues; e) nuanced awareness of key contemporary issues in Latin America in historical depth.

Course Format

This *course runs as a seminar*. All meetings will be based on the extensive, in-depth, discussion of assigned readings. It is your responsibility to always come to class prepared, with all materials thoroughly and fully covered.

Required Texts

There are 7 required texts for this course. They are:

1. **On Violence** (Harvest Book) Paperback – [Hannah Arendt](#) ; 1970; Harcourt Brace Javanovich (publisher); ISBN 9780156695008
2. **Citizenship in the Latin American Upper and Middle Classes: Ethnographic Perspectives on Culture and Politics** Edited By [Fiorella Montero-Diaz](#), [Franka Winter](#); 2020, Routledge; ISBN 9780367729967
3. **The Biopolitics of Beauty: Cosmetic Citizenship and Affective Capital in Brazil**; [Alvaro Jarrín](#); 2017; Univ. of California Press; ISBN 9780520293885
4. **Life without Lead: Contamination, Crisis, and Hope in Uruguay**; Daniel Renfrew; 2018; Univ. of California Press; ISBN 9780520295476
5. **Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador**, [Suzana Sawyer](#); 2004; Duke; ISBN 9780822332725
6. **Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks**; Karen Fog Olwig; 2007; Duke University Press; ISBN 978-0822339946
7. **Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico**; [Alyshia Gálvez](#); 2018; Univ. of California Press; ISBN 9780520291812

Course Requirements

All detailed guidelines for course requirements are available via Blackboard. For due dates see the course schedule at the end of the syllabus.

- ◆ **Student-Led Class Discussion and Attendance:** (50 points) This is a seminar-style class, therefore, you must come fully prepared and contribute to the day's discussion. You are also expected to come to class on time or a few minutes earlier. Only ONE class absence is permitted. However, on the day you are absent you cannot earn points. I do not accept reading response papers corresponding to classes you did not attend, unless you contact me in advance with a very reasonable justification or in case of an emergency, for which I will require adequate documentation. More than one class absence may negatively affect your overall course grade.
- ◆ **Deeper Reading Presentation:** (50 points) Each student will have assigned chapters or articles from the due readings every class meeting. You are expected to always read the entire book or set of articles but deepen on the individually assigned chapters/articles. The chapters/articles will be assigned during class, a week ahead of their due date.
- ◆ **Reading Response Papers:** (70 points) (You will need to turn in 7 weekly response papers on each of the assigned readings. These papers must be submitted via Blackboard by 11pm the night prior to the class meeting. The grade of these papers is tied to your class attendance. There will be no make up or extension date for missed assignment deadlines. Missing more than one paper submission may negatively affect your overall grade for the course.

- ◆ **Country Correspondence Brief Reports:** (4 x 20 = 80 points) Each student would have selected a specific country to focus for the first week of class. You will be developing insights on the country's problems, select a couple or just one specific issue to focus on throughout the semester and look at the problem from different vantage points. This will eventually become your final research paper. You will need to present 5 reports throughout the semester. Students will be assigned the dates for their respective country reports. Not every student will present on the same days. You will need to make connections to the most relevant class readings, preferable if applicable, the day's due reading. You will also need to address at least one of the two overarching themes for the course, namely, violence and hope. Your week 1, 1-page country selection is worth 10 extra credit points.
- ◆ **Final Oral Presentation:** (75 points) This is the final and comprehensive country correspondence. You would have developed a vision about the issues discussed throughout the semester in connection to a) your selected country, and b) the themes of violence and hope. What pathways do you see developing? What future action or research recommendations can you outline? What is the rationale for your proposal (justify your perspective). You have an option of formats to present here: 1) PowerPoint Presentation, or 2) A podcast accompanied by a few images. You also have the option of preparing the presentation by yourself OR teaming up with a peer to collaborate on presenting a comparative analysis of the two selected countries. Whatever you choose, make sure to put some effort on visualizing your report by using relevant images.
- ◆ **Final Comprehensive Country Report:** (75 points). This is the written version of your final country correspondence report. (See guidelines on Blackboard).

Course Schedule

Date	Due Readings	Due Assignments
Week 1 Tue 1/18	Todorov (video link sent via email prior to the start of semester)	1. Class Discussion on video 2. Response paper 0 -zero- (practice, graded) 3. 1-page Country Selection paper
Week 2 Tue 1/25	Arendt (whole book)	1. Student-led Class Discussion 2. Response paper 1
Week 3 Tue 2/1	Montero-Díaz & Winter (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 2 3. Country Correspondence Report paper # 1 (3 students)
Week 4 Tue 2/8	Jarrin (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 3 3. Country Correspondence Report paper # 1 (3 students)

Week 5 Tue 2/15	Renfrew (whole book)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 4 3. Country Correspondence Report paper # 2 (3 students)
Week 6 Tue 2/22	Sawyer (whole book)	<p>Student-led discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response paper 5 2. Country Correspondence Report paper # 2 (3 students)
Week 7 Tue 3/1	Fog Olwig (whole book)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student-led discussion 1. Response paper 6 2. Country Correspondence Report paper # 3 (3 students)
Week 8 Tue 3/8	Gálvez (whole book)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 7 3. Country Correspondence Report paper # 3 (3 students)
Week 9 3/14-3/18 SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS MEETING		
Week 10 Tue 3/22	Developing Your Vision Part 1 (integrating key ideas/concepts). Review readings from weeks 1-6	1. Roundtable Discussion: Concepts
Week 11 Tue 3/29	Developing Your Vision Part 2 (Student-selected authoritative articles on country and issue of focus (2-3 articles))	1. Roundtable Discussion: Applications
Week 12 Tue 4/5	Student Selection of Authoritative Readings (on country of choice, 2-3 articles)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student-presentation of readings 2. Country Correspondence Report paper # 4 (6 students)
Week 13 Tue 4/12	Work independently on your final project (presentation and written report) (no class meeting)	. Work on your final assignments
Week 14 Tue 4/19	Final Research Paper Presentation (Part 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Presentations -Submit via Blackboard by Monday 4/18 11pm 2. ALL STUDENTS MUST SUBMIT, regardless of week of presentation
Week 15 Tue 4/26	Final Research Paper Presentation (Part 2)	Continues from previews week
Week 16 Tue 5/3	Final Research Paper and wrap up	1. Submit your Country Correspondence Written Report (submit via Blackboard by Tuesday 5/3 11pm)

Course Policies

Late Submission Policy: Assignments submitted passed their deadlines will receive a 10% deduction per day. Only under serious and exceptional circumstances I may waive this penalty.

But you must contact me ***before*** the deadline. After 3 days passed the deadline (weekend days are counted), assignments will ***not*** be accepted or graded.

Grading Policy: Grades will be assigned based on the completeness and quality of your work (in writing and orally), your ability to follow guidelines, how you address and incorporate feedback from previously graded assignments and your engagement during class periods. The more consistent you are in addressing all the course requirements, the better you will do in this course. The grading scale for the course is out of 400 points (100%):

- ◇ **A** 90%-100% = 360-400 points, based on consistent high-quality work, excellent incorporation of theories, use of concepts and critical analysis of the class materials. The student goes above and beyond the mere completion of assigned readings. The assignments are clearly structured and well written. The student carefully incorporates feedback and follows guidelines.
- ◇ **B** 80%-89% = 320-359 points, based on very good consistent work, with incorporation of key concepts, demonstrated ability to identify key issues and implications for the analysis of social problems. The student reports on the readings accurately. The student incorporate most feedback and tends to follow guidelines well but, at times, not consistently.
- ◇ **C** 70%-79% = 280 - 319 points, based on mostly scant readings, possibly with some inconsistencies in quality of work and/or tendency to focus on too much detail but with some difficulty to address the more abstract or conceptual aspect of the assigned materials. Arguments, concepts and theories may not be adequately or consistently incorporated. It is also possible that the student does not express ideas with clarity in their written work. Utilizing the services of the Writing Center is required in such cases.
- ◇ **D** 60%-69% = 240 - 279 points;
- ◇ **F** below 59% = 239 points or below

Academic Honesty and 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. 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.

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 online tutoring whereby you upload your paper and they provide comments.