

Graduate Seminar: Contemporary Latin America

LABS 5302 CRN: 23098 | MAIS 5360 CRN: 26221

Spring 2023 | Classroom Building, Room C202 | Tuesdays 6.00-8.50pm

January 17 - May 4

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Office Hours: Wednesday 3-4:30pm and by appointment, in person or via Zoom, (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 morality, power, violence and hope. This course has also a small component of service learning.

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; f) the ability to apply and reflect on learned materials through service learning in collaboration with a relevant community organization.

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. The service learning component will be completed outside of

the classroom. See the schedule for details.

Required Texts

There are 9 required texts for this course. They are:

- 1 Bauman, Zygmunt, & Leonidas Donskis. ***Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity***. John Wiley & Sons, 2013. ISBN: 9780745669625
- 2 Montero-Diaz, Fiorella, & Franka Winter. ***Citizenship in the Latin American Upper and Middle Classes: Ethnographic Perspectives on Culture and Politics***. Routledge, 2019. ISBN: 978-0367729967
- 3 Jarrín, Alvaro. ***The Biopolitics of Beauty: Cosmetic Citizenship and Affective Capital in Brazil***. Univ of California Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0520293885
- 4 Hall, Amy Cox. ***Framing a Lost City: Science, Photography, and the Making of Machu Picchu***. University of Texas Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1477313688
- 5 Muir, Sarah. ***Routine Crisis: An Ethnography of Disillusion***. University of Chicago Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0226752785
- 6 Sawyer, Suzana. ***Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador***. Duke University Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0822332725
- 7 Mintz, Sidney W. ***Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations***. Harvard University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0674066212
- 8 Beckett, Greg. ***There is No More Haiti: Between Life and Death in Port-au-Prince***. University of California Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-0520378995
- 9 Gálvez, Alyshia. ***Eating Nafta: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico***. Univ of California Press, 2018. ISBN:978-0520291812

The list is numbered in the order in which the books will be used. Ideally, I recommend getting all the books early to avoid any potential out of stock complications.

Other readings and resources will be used. The professor will email them to you or make them available via Blackboard well ahead of their due dates.

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.

- ◆ **Class Participation and Attendance**: (100 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.

- ◆ **Student-Led Reading Discussion:** (140 points) Every student will be assigned sections of the due reading and be responsible for presenting the content each week. Note that you are expected to always read the due materials in their entirety but deepen on the individually assigned chapters/articles. The chapters/articles will be assigned during class, a week ahead of their due date, or earlier whenever possible.
- ◆ **Reading Response Papers:** (90 points) You will need to turn in 9 weekly response papers on the assigned readings. These papers must be submitted via Blackboard by midnight 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.
- ◆ **Service Learning:** (100 points) Each student is required to complete 10 learning services hours with a local community organization of their choice, as long as the work and mission of the organization are well suited to the course. We will be working with and through the Center for Community Engagement for this section of the course.
- ◆ **Final Oral Presentation:** (80 points) Each student will present an advance draft of their final paper of the social problem and/or Latin American country of their choice. Throughout the course, you would have developed a deeper understanding about key social issues in connection to a) your selected country, and b) at least of one of the class themes, namely morality and power, 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 (e.g., the traditional PowerPoint presentation, or any form of graphic format, or a podcast). 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. (See guidelines on Blackboard).
- ◆ **Final Paper:** (80 points). This is the written version of your final presentation. (See guidelines on Blackboard).

Course Schedule

Date	Due Readings	Due Assignments
Week 1 Tue 1/17	1. Todorov (2009) (link sent via email prior to the start of semester) 2. Chavez (2015) (link sent via email prior to the start of semester)	1. Introductions 2. Class Discussion due materials 3. Response Paper 0 -zero- (practice, graded)
Week 2 Tue 1/24	Bauman & Donskis (whole book) (key themes in this book will need to be related to various other books throughout the semester)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 1

Week 3 Tue 1/31	Montero-Diaz, Fiorella, & Franka Winter (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 2
Week 4 Tue 2/7	Jarrin (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 3
Week 5 Tue 2/14	Cox Hall (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 4
Week 6 Tue 2/21	Muir (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 5
Week 7 Tue 2/28	Service Learning	No Class Meeting
Week 8 Tue 3/7	Service Learning	1. Class Defriefing 2. Written Report (due 3/10 midnight via Bb)
Week 9 3/13-3/17 SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS MEETING		
Week 10 Tue 3/21	Sawyer (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 6
Week 11 Tue 3/28	Mintz (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 7
Week 12 Tue 4/4	Beckett (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 8
Week 13 Tue 4/11	Gálvez (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 9
Week 14 Tue 4/18	Develop Your Final Paper	1. Proposed Draft for Final Paper
Week 15 Tue 4/24	Final Presentations	1. Presentation & Feedback on Final Paper
Week 16 Tue 5/1	Final Research Paper and wrap up	1. Final Paper (submit via Blackboard by Tuesday 5/1 midnight)

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.