

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Center for Inter-American and Border Studies**

**Syllabus**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

LABS 5302: Comtemporany Latin America

CRN: 22813

Term: Spring 2024

Duration: January 16 - May 2

Delivery Method: In-person

Meeting Day and Time: Tuesdays. 6:00 - 8:50 pm

Location: Classroom Building, Room C203

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Dr Silvia Torezani

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





**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3-4:30pm and by appointment, in person or via Zoom, (email to arrange time)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Objectives and University Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

Student Learning Objective	Outcome
Demonstrate the ability to work with different conceptual frameworks to analyze contemporary social issues	 Critical thinking skills
Demonstrate the ability to identify larger regional and global interconnections to seemingly localized issues, with a particular focus on Latin America	 Critical thinking and social awareness skills
Demonstrate the ability to apply and reflect on learned materials through service learning	 Social responsibility and team work
Demonstrate the ability to summarize and articulate a nuanced analysis of contemporary social issues in writing and orally	 Communication skills

### 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 6 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 Beckett, Greg. ***There is No More Haiti: Between Life and Death in Port-au-Prince***. University of California Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-0520378995
- 6 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 at least one week ahead of their due dates.

### **Assignments and Grading**

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**: (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.
- ◆ **Student-Led Reading Discussion**: (80 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**: (70 points) You will need to turn in 7 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**: (60 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. Hours must be documented via the CUE website to receive the assignment's points.
- ◆ **Service Learning Oral Presentation and Written Report**: (80 points) You will need to prepare a written report documenting and analyzing your service learning work, and present the results during the class period. Both required components, the oral presentation and the written report must be fulfilled to receive points for the assignment.
- ◆ **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 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).

**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 500 points (100%):

- ◇ **A 90%-100%** = 450 - 500 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%** = 400 - 449 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%** = 350 - 399 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%** = 300 - 349 points;
- ◇ **F below 59%** = 299 points or below

### Course Schedule

Date	Due Readings	Due Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> Tue 1/16	<b>1. Todorov (2009)</b> (link sent via email prior to the start of semester) <b>2. Selected videos commentary</b>	1. Introductions 2. Class Discussion due materials 3. Response (oral) Paper 0 -zero- (practice, graded as extra credit)
<b>Week 2</b> Tue 1/23	<b>Bauman &amp; Donskis</b> (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

<b>Week 3</b> Tue 1/30	<b>Montero-Diaz, Fiorella, &amp; Franka Winter</b> (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 2
<b>Week 4</b> Tue 2/6	<b>Jarrin</b> (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 3
<b>Week 5</b> Tue 2/13	<b>Cox Hall</b> (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 4
<b>Week 6</b> Tue 2/20	<b>Service Learning</b>	No Class Meeting
<b>Week 7</b> Tue 2/27	<b>Service Learning</b>	No Class Meeting
<b>Week 8</b> Tue 3/5	<b>Service Learning</b>	1. <b>Oral Presentation</b> 2. <b>Written Report (due 3/10 midnight via Bb)</b>
<b>Week 9 3/11-3/15 SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS MEETING</b>		
<b>Week 10</b> Tue 3/19	Student-selected Articles (students will present 3-4 articles of their choice, relevant to their chosen topic for their final paper)	Define final paper topic (send your articles to the professor at least 3 days before the class meeting)
<b>Week 11</b> Tue 3/26	<b>Beckett</b> (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 5
<b>Week 12</b> Tue 4/2	<b>Gálvez</b> (whole book)	1. Student-led discussion 2. Response paper 6
<b>Week 13</b> Tue 4/9	Student-selected articles (3-4)	Continue defining your final paper
<b>Week 14</b> Tue 4/16	Develop Your Final Paper	1. <b>Proposed Draft for Final Paper</b>
<b>Week 15</b> Tue 4/23	Final Presentations	1. <b>Presentation &amp; Feedback on Final Paper</b>
<b>Week 16</b> Tue 4/30	Final Research Paper and wrap up	1. <b>Final Paper</b> (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.

**Course Drop Policy:** I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initi-

ate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

**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 ones' 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](#).

**AI Prohibited:** Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as [ChatGPT](#) or [DALL-E](#), is **not allowed** for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

**Plagiarism Detecting Software:** Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

**COURSE RESOURCES:** Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit [https://www.utep.edu/advising/student\\_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html](https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html).

