

# The Americas

Aug 22- Dec 2

M & W Liberal Arts Building. Room 210, 1.30-2.50 pm

\* Check Schedule for the location of the 4 Library meeting dates (during class period)

<p><b>Instructor:</b> Dr Silvia Torezani <b>Office:</b> 1514 Hawthorn St, Center for Inter-American and Border Studies (CIBS) <b>Email:</b> satorezani@utep.edu* <b>Phone:</b> 747-6829 *I prefer contact by email or in person right before or after class. <b>Office Hours:</b> Wed 2.30-4.00pm and by appointment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE</b></p> <p>The "Americas," is a broad label used to refer to vast and diverse geographies, languages, cultures, political and economic systems. This course aims to developed a comparative and practical understanding of contemporary events that shape some of the key countries that form the Americas. While aiming for broad interconnections, three countries constitute the focus of more detailed examination: El Salvador, Cuba and Venezuela. We will delve into the complexities, fractures and continuities of social processes that contribute to the creation of distinctive cultural, political and economic spaces. The three selected countries will serve as the case studies that help us understand critical contemporary problems as part of larger global contexts. Students will engage with the discussion and application of key social theories as they engage in developing a tangible final product of their learning through research.</p>
<p><b>T.A.:</b> Sam Simon <b>Office:</b> 1514 Hawthorn St, Center for Inter-American and Border Studies (CIBS) <b>Email:</b> swsimon@utep.edu Office Hours: email to arrange appointment time</p>	



## Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students should have gained a) a more nuanced understanding of social conflict and how to utilize this notion as a conceptual framework to analyze social reality; b) the ability to critically assess social narratives regarding the differences and common ties underlying relationships between North and Latin America; c) a nuanced critique of social discourses regarding political ideologies in relation to the countries of El Salvador, Cuba and Venezuela in particular and their implications for state, community and individual action; and d) a nuanced understanding of how social discourses and political ideologies impact on inter-generational and inter-cultural relations between these countries in the United States of America.

## Course Format

This course is designed for students to be engaged in class throughout the entire semester. The format of the class follows a student-centered, problem-based workshop model, which consists of (1) mini-lectures that introduce students to core themes and concepts and to review the comprehension of covered materials; (2) a variety of methods to assess students' learning progress, including class participation, team activities and individual reading comprehension quizzes, 3) an individual final research paper, 4) a final group presentation based, and 5) a skills learning journal. In other words, this course requires students to take an active role in their learning, *always* come to class with the readings completed and prepared to participate in discussions. The instructor's main role is to facilitate students' discussions, provide guidance and clarify doubts that may emerge from the readings. You will have readings (or other type of work) assigned for each class. An important component of the class format, incorporated in the grading, is the training and practice in the acquisition of the use of library resources and research skills.

## Required Texts

Students must purchase two books for this class:

1. Rosenberg Weinreb, A. (2009) *Cuba in the Shadow of Change*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
2. Velasco, A. (2015) *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela*. University of California Press.
3. Ward, T. W. (2013) *Gangsters Without Borders: An Ethnography of a Salvadoran Street Gang*. New York: Oxford University Press.

See your professor ***promptly*** if you have difficulties obtaining the books for any reason so that I can assist you. Any other required reading will be available for download via Blackboard or form part of your final research project. You can consult the course schedule for readings, activities and assignments' due dates.

## Assignments & Grades

There are six types of assignments for this class that will earn you up to a maximum of 500 points (100%). They are:

1. Individual reading tests, 4 x 30 = 120 (24%)
2. Library research activities, 4 x 20 = 80 points (16%)
3. Reflexive journal on learned skills, 4 x 10 = 40 points (8%)
4. Class participation, 50 points (10%)
5. Individual final research paper, 140 (28%)
6. Final group presentation, 70 (14%)

*Note:* Assignments required your **physical presence**. I do **NOT** accept emailed or hand written assignments -except those developed during the class period. There is not make up possible. Please plan your attendance carefully.

**6. Final Group Presentation:** at the beginning of the semester we will form teams, where by students get peer-support for discussing readings, their individual papers as well as building a more complex picture of Latin America by collaboratively looking at the topic of social conflict in connection to migrations to the USA from El Salvador, or Cuba or Venezuela. You can earn up to 70 points (14%) for this assignment.

## Grading Scale

A 90%-100% = 450 points or above

B 80%-89% = 400-449 points

C 70%-79% = 350-399 points

D 60%-69% = 300-349 points

F below 59% = 299 points or below

*Note<sub>1</sub>:* It is important, and your responsibility, to keep track of your grades. They will be uploaded onto Blackboard regularly.

*Note<sub>2</sub>:* In case of borderline points between letter grades, it will be at your professor's discretion to move your grade up or down, based on your demonstrated commitment to the class.

**Instructions for each of the graded assignments will be provided to students throughout the semester and well in advance the respective assignments' due dates.**

## Course Policies

### Class Attendance

Each class is designed to take you a step further into achieving each of the course objectives (listed above), therefore it is important that you come to class and participate. I will not take class attendance; however, each session has a graded component for in-class assessments. These **grades cannot be made up outside the classes in which they take place**. The participatory orientation of this course implies that there is knowledge to be gained from each discussion, which makes class attendance also important. During class, your peers and I will discuss important aspects of the readings that will help you develop your assignments for this course. I will also provide guidance, conceptual frameworks and clarifications, which can only be accessed during class.

### **Submitting Assignments**

I will not allow late submission except in critical circumstances (i.e. serious illness). All exceptional circumstances must be documented accordingly (i.e. doctor's note, death certificate). Notification of exceptional circumstances **MUST** be given **in advance and before the deadline** for submission. I prefer if you inform **me**, your professor, **in person** whenever possible, or via email. The sooner you inform me of the situation, the more feasible it is for us to make alternative arrangements. If more than two business days have elapsed between the assignment deadline and your notification, I will **NOT** allow you to make up for work.

Format: All assignments should contain: 1 inch top, bottom, left, and right margins, double spaced with font size 12. All required Blackboard submissions of papers (i.e. Final Research Paper) should be formatted as doc. or docx. files **ONLY**. Please note, I cannot properly grade any other format.

**All papers** should include in-text citations and the list of references used at the end of your document (see end of syllabus). Should you (or the university) have problems with Blackboard at the time an assignment is due, you will need to email it to [satoezani@utep.edu](mailto:satoezani@utep.edu) by the deadline or earlier until you can upload via Blackboard. If your problem also includes email access, then you should bring your printed paper in final format and submit it on the due date at the beginning of class. **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.

### **Extra credit**

This course is designed to be completed progressively throughout the semester and contains multiple grading opportunities for students to succeed. Therefore, no extra credit will be offered.

### **Backing Up Your Work**

We all know that technology can, at times, interfere with our workflow, potentially causing loss of work. The good news is that we can avoid these situations by setting up a system of regular backups for all our 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, as I will return it to you. It is a good idea to back up using more than one device and means. Generally, emailing yourself a copy of your work to your personal email address, using free storing applications such as Dropbox, using an usb flash drive and an external drive, besides saving your work to your personal computer's hard drive, is highly recommended. 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 for students to use. 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 utilizes the Blackboard for additional readings, grades, announcements to class, specified assignment submission (i.e. final paper, syllabus quiz), and other course activities. It is your responsibility to learn how to use Blackboard. You can access help by contacting the Help Desk. Visit <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=63402> for more details.

### **Course Communication**

My preferred means of communication with students is in person during student's hours 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 between class times. Please note I do NOT reply to emails during weekend or public holidays periods. I tend to check my email between 10am and 3pm 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, and between 48 and 72 hours during weekend or public holidays. 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 or by appointment. 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 and with the purpose to enhance learning. Should any change take place you 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>. 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: Introduction to The Americas

	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
<b>WEEK 1</b>	M 8/22		Intros, Groups, Some Facts	
	W 8/24	1. Syllabus 2. Calderon (see Bb*)	Class Discussion	Class Participation

\*"Bb" stands for Blackboard

\* All Library Research Training Sessions will be held in the Library Building, Room 204 A

	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
<b>WEEK 2</b>	M 8/29	Selection of News Articles on Latin America	Facts & Fantasies	Class Discussion
	W 8/31	1. Syllabus 2. Calderon (see Bb*)	Test	Individual Reading Test 1

### Module 2: Social Conflict & the Case of El Salvador

	Day of Week	Due Reading	Activity	Assignment/ Assessment
<b>WEEK 3</b>	M 9/5 Labor Day	None	None	None
	W 9/7	Ward, Chs 1& 2		Class Participation

	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 4</b>	M 9/12	Ward, Chs 3 & 4		Class Participation
	W 9/14		*Library Research Training	Research Journal 1 Submit via Bb by 11pm
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 5</b>	M 9/19	Ward, Ch 5		Class Participation
	W 9/21	Ward, Chs 6 & 7		Class Participation
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 6</b>	M 9/26	Calderon; Ward (Whole book)	Test	Individual Reading Test 2
	W 9/28		*Library Research Training	Research Journal 2 Submit via Bb by 11pm

### Module 3: Social Conflict & the Case of Cuba

	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 7</b>	M 10/3	1. Calderon (review) 2. Rosenberg, Intro & Ch 1	Discussing Havana's "middle class"	Class Participation
	W 10/5	Rosenberg, Ch 2		Class Participation
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 8</b>	M 10/10	Rosenberg, Ch 3		Class Participation
	W 10/12	Rosenberg, Chs 4, 5 & 6		Class Participation



	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b>	M 10/17	Rosenberg, Ch 7		Class Participation
	W 10/19		*Library Research Training	Research Journal 3 Submit via Bb by 11pm
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 10</b>	M 10/24	Resenberg, Ch 8 & Conclusion		Class Participation
	W 10/26	Calderon; Rosenberg (Whole book)	Test	Individual Reading Test 3

#### Module 4: Social Conflict & the Case of Venezuela

	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b>	M 10/31		Class Activity- intro to Venezuela	In-class instruction
	W 11/2	Velasco, Intro & Ch 1		Class Participation
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 12</b>	M 11/7	Velasco, Ch 2		Class Participation
	W 11/9	Velasco Ch 5*		Class Participation
	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
<b>WEEK 13</b>	M 11/14	Velasco Ch 6		Class Participation
	W 11/16	Velasco, Ch 7 & Conclusion		Class Participation

\* Note: you are not required to read chs 3 and 4, although you may want to consult them for your final paper, if appropriate to your specific topic, or simply to further your learning.

<b>WEEK 14</b>	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
	M 11/21	Calderon (review); Velasco (Whole book)	Test	Individual Reading Test 3
	W 11/23		Team Presentations	Final Team Presentations
<b>WEEK 15</b>	<b>Day of Week</b>	<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
	M 11/28		Team Presentations	Final Team Presentations
	W 11/30		Team Presentations	Final Team Presentations
<b>WEEK 16</b> <b>Exams Week</b> <b>Day of Week</b>		<b>Due Reading</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment/ Assessment</b>
	M 12/5			<b>Final Paper</b> Submit via Bb