

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History  
Semester II, 1988/89

History 242 - MODERN LATIN AMERICA: From Independence to the Present

Joel Wolfe  
4135 Humanities  
263-1831/263-1800

Office Hours:  
Monday, 11-12  
Wednesday, 11-12

Course Description

Discussions of Latin America usually fall back upon facile generalizations that emphasize recent changes to explain "current events." The region's history, though, can be viewed as a process; a process begun long before Columbus "discovered" America. So, in order to understand Latin America, students must examine the unfolding of its history. In doing so, they will find human struggles between social classes, and against faceless external forces. Ultimately, students will discover a unique region, made up of very different countries, formed by common struggles.

This course will detail, in a variety of ways, the creation of modern Latin America (i.e., from political independence from Europe in the early 1800s to the present). The region's history will be explored through lectures, readings, essay writing, and group discussions. Some lectures will analyze broad developments; others will detail specific cases of importance or interest. In some class sessions we will move away from the standard format, and examine Latin American History through the testimony of peasants, industrial workers, revolutionaries, intellectuals, foreign travelers, and others. At all times, the instructor will seek to integrate analyses of class, race, and gender in the lectures.

Coming to grips with Latin America's history is a difficult, but worthwhile undertaking. If you are willing to open your mind to new ideas and ways of thinking, and if you are willing to work your way through challenging readings and writing assignments, you will be able to understand Latin America.

Requirements

- 1) Two short (ca. five pages) papers, inspired by the assigned readings. Your task is to use one of the readings as a starting point for a thought paper in which you explore an issue or issues suggested to you in the combination of that reading and related discussions/lectures.
- 2) Exams: (a) An in-class midterm, consisting of one essay question selected from a list of three review questions handed out ahead of time; and (b) A final exam, consisting of one comprehensive essay question, one essay on the second half of the course, and an I.D. section also based on the second half of the course.
- 3) Honors/Extra Credit Option: A semester project, consisting of an 8 to 10-page life history. You detail the experiences of a specific individual,

in a specific country over a period of forty years. The criteria for defining the individual will be established in consultation with the T.A. and/or the professor. In addition to the life history itself, you will also present a 1-page proposal for the project, due the fifth week of class. The details of the project, how to carry it out, and what it entails, can be discussed with the T.A. or professor periodically throughout the semester. As an extra credit or honors option, the project is undertaken in lieu of one of the short papers.

4) Grading: Short papers; 30% (15% each); midterm: 20%; final exam: 30%; discussion: 20%; honors/extra credit option: to be discussed with professor and T.A.

#### Assigned Readings

Argueta, Manlio. One Day of Life (New York: Random House, 1983).

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. One Hundred Years of Solitude (New York: Avon, 1971 ).

Joseph, Gilbert M. Revolution from Without; Yucatan, Mexico and the United States, 1880-1924 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

Mallon, Florencia E. The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition, 1860-1940 (Princeton University Press, 1983).

Stepan, Alfred. The Military in Politics; Changing Patterns in Brazil (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

Winn, Peter. Weavers of Revolution; The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

#### Suggested Reading

Skidmore, Thomas E., and Peter H. Smith. Modern Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

#### SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

##### UNIT I - FROM COLONIES TO NATION-STATES? (1810-1930)

1/23 - Introduction

1/25 - Independence and Its Aftermath

1/27 - The Frustrating Search for Stability: Mexico

No Reading: Set up Discussion Sections

1/30 - Plantation Agriculture and Slavery, the Cuban Case

2/1 - Plantation Agriculture and Slavery, the Brazilian Case

Reading: Mallon, pp. 3-122.

2/6 - The Birth of an Authoritarian State: Mexico

2/8 - The Struggle Over Democracy: Chile

Reading: Mallon, pp. 125-242.

2/13 - Yaqui Resistance and Survival

2/15 - A Millenarian Response to the Penetration of Capital

Reading: Joseph, pp. iii-39.

2/20 - The Mexican Revolution

2/22 - El Salvador, 1932

2/26 - SUNDAY REVIEW SESSION -- TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED

Reading: Joseph, pp. 93-132.

#### UNIT II - THE FRUITION OF CAPITALISM (1910-1960)

2/27 - MIDTERM IN CLASS

3/1 - The Development of Industry in Brazil and Chile

3/3 - The Rise of the Working Class in Brazil and Chile

Reading: Garcia Marquez, pp. 11-229.

NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS

3/6 - Authoritarianism vs. Popular Front: Argentina,  
Brazil, and Chile in the 1930s

3/8 - The Populist Alternatives: Cárdenas of Mexico and  
Perón of Argentina

Reading: Joseph, pp. 185-287.

FIRST PAPER DUE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 10TH, AT 5:00 P.M.

3/13 - The Bolivian Social Revolution

3/15 - La Violencia in Colombia

Reading: Garcia Marquez, pp. 230-383.

\*\*\*\*\*SPRING BREAK, MARCH 19-27\*\*\*\*\*

3/29 - Special Discussion by João da Silva: "My Life in a Brazilian  
Shanty Town."

NO DISCUSSIONS SECTIONS

#### UNIT III - REFORM, REVOLUTION, AND REPRESSION (1959-1989)

4/3 - The Cuban Revolution, Part 1

4/5 - The Cuban Revolution, Part 2

Reading: Mallon, pp. 247-348.

4/10 - Guerilla focos in Latin America

4/12 - Puerto Rico and the U.S. Model of Development

Reading: Stepan, pp. 3-121.

4/17 - Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in Brazil

4/19 - The "Revolutionary" Peruvian Military

Reading: Stepan, pp. 123-271.

4/24 - The Long and Steady Road to Socialism in Chile

4/26 - Dependent Development in Mexico and Brazil

Reading: Winn, pp. vii-136.

5/1 - MAY DAY LECTURE: Brazilian Workers Challenge the Dictatorship

5/3 - The "Redemocratization" of the Southern Cone

Reading: Winn, pp. 139-256.

SECOND PAPER DUE BY FRIDAY, MAY 5TH AT 5:00 P.M.

5/8 - Revolutions Under Siege: The U.S. in Central America

5/10 - Concluding Lecture and Evaluations

Reading: Argueta, entire novel.