

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester I, 1987-88

History 441

Professor Skidmore

"Revolution and Conflict in Twentieth-Century Latin America"

This semester History 441 will focus entirely on the history of Cuba and the Cuban Revolution -- the most significant revolution in the Western Hemisphere in the last half century. In studying Cuba's history we shall trace the long U.S. involvement -- military intervention, military occupation, followed by continuous U.S. political and economic manipulation. Fidel Castro's rise to power in 1959 began transition to the most systematically socialist regime in the Americas. It deeply influenced revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries in every other country. An understanding of how Cuba became Marxist-Leninist is essential for understanding of the Nicaraguan Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and the subsequent military struggle involving both the Cuban and the U.S. governments. In a word, Cuba is the key to understanding the history of revolution in Latin America's most volatile region -- the Caribbean basin.

I. Colonial and Nineteenth-Century Background

Sept. 2 : Introductory

Sept. 4 : The Early Centuries: Spanish Settlement and European Rivalries

Sept. 7 : Labor Day (no class)

Sept. 9 : Spanish Colonial Institutions in Cuba

Sept. 11: The Nineteenth Century: The Rise of Sugar

Sept. 14: The African Presence

Sept. 16: 1860-1895: Agonies of a Rebellious Colony

Required Reading:

Rius, Cuba for Beginners, (New York, 1970) entire

"Cuba: Late Colony, First Socialist State," in Thomas Skidmore & Peter H. Smith, Modern Latin America (New York, 1984), 256-285

II. The Cuban Republics

Sept. 21: José Martí: Apostle of Nationalism

Sept. 23: 1895-1902: From Spanish Colony to U.S. Protectorate (Title for book report due)

Sept. 28: 1902-1933: A Sugar Republic in the Shadow of Uncle Sam

Sept. 30: The Revolution that Failed: 1933-34

Oct. 5 : Batista and U.S. Hegemony: 1934-52

Oct. 7 : The Cuban Economy of the 1950s

Oct. 9 : 1952-59: The Dictatorship and the Insurrection

Oct. 12: Review

Oct. 14: Six Weeks Exam

Required Reading:

Ramon Ruiz, Cuba: The Making of a Revolution (New York, 1970), entire

III. The Cuban Revolution: The Heroic Years

Oct. 16: A Nationalist Revolution Takes Shape: 1959

Oct. 19: The Turn to Socialism and the East: 1960

Oct. 21: The Bay of Pigs: Graveyard of the Exiles

Required Reading:

Juan M. del Aguila, Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution (Boulder, 1984), 45-184

Oct. 26: Consolidating the Social Revolution: 1961-63 (Book report due)

Oct. 28: Applying the Soviet Model, 1961-63 (Topic for paper due)

Nov. 2: Pragmatic Interlude, 1963-66

Nov. 4: The "New Man": Moral Incentives Under Socialism

Nov. 9: Exporting the Revolution

Nov. 11: Che Guevara: Death in the Altiplano

Required Reading:

Lee Lockwood, Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel (New York, 1969), entire
 Carlos Franqui, Family Portrait with Fidel (New York, 1984), entire

IV. The Cuban Revolution: Facing Realities

Nov. 16: 1970: Back to Orthodoxy

Nov. 18: The Arts & the Revolution: Creativity and Conformity

Nov. 23: "People's Power" and the Military: Key Institutions

Nov. 25: Cuba's African Adventures (paper due)

Nov. 30: The Cubans Who Flee

Dec. 2: What Future for the Revolution?

Dec. 7: The Nicaraguan Link

Dec. 9: The U.S. and Cuba

Dec. 14: Review and Overview

Required Reading:

Fidel Castro Speeches vol. II: Our Power is that of the Working People (New York, 1983), 7-24; 91-136; 154-214; 280-298; 316-358
 Irving Louis Horowitz, ed., Cuban Communism 6th ed. (New Brunswick, 1987), chapters 9, 19, 21, 32 & 33

Lectures and Discussions:

This course meets three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Normally there will be two lectures and one discussion per week, with the discussions usually during the class hour on Friday. Any variations will be announced in advance. Students can expect to have ample opportunity to discuss the lectures and reading material.

Undergraduates:

There will be a six-weeks examination and a final examination. (The format of the exam -- take-home of classroom -- will be discussed in class.) Undergraduates will also be required to write a book report and a short paper.

The book report should be a critical analysis of the author's assumptions, line of argument, evidence used, and conclusions. The book is to be chosen by the student and should be a significant work not included among the required reading for the course. Many appropriate titles may be found in the footnotes and bibliographies which will be distributed. The choice of book must be approved by the instructor, who will be happy to make suggestions of books that correspond to areas of special interest. The book report should be approximately 4-6 pages long.

The paper is to be a topic of student's choosing, and should be approximately 10 pages long. The paper should draw on several secondary sources and present an original interpretation of the topic discussed, i.e., it should not simply summarize the sources. Again, the topic must be approved by the instructor. Early choice of a topic is advisable in order to insure availability of books. Students may wish, in the paper, to expand upon a topic discussed in their book report. Or they may prefer to work on a completely different topic.

Title of book for Book Report due on September 23

Book Report due on October 26

Topic for undergraduate paper due on October 28

Undergraduate paper due on November 25

The weighting of grades for undergraduates will be as follows:

Participation in discussion section	15%
Six Weeks Exam	15%
Book Report	15%
Paper	25%
Final Exam	30%

Graduate Students:

Graduate students are required to take the six-weeks examination and the final examination. They will also be required to write a term paper (of approximately 20 pages) on a topic of student's choosing. Students should feel free to pursue any special interests (political sociology, economic history, the military, relations with the USSR, literary history, the Church, land systems, student politics, etc.) in choosing their paper topic. The instructor will be happy to suggest bibliography, of which there is a rapidly growing quantity. Graduate students are expected to use Spanish language sources, where such sources are relevant and available (the Memorial Library collection is excellent).

If enrollment justifies, there will be a separate discussion section for graduate students, at an hour to be arranged. Attendance at these sections is required, since each graduate student will be asked to

present an oral report to the section, which will then discuss the report. The topic will usually be in the area of the term paper and is to be agreed upon with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Graduate student term papers due on November 30

Professor Skidmore's History Department office is 5223 Humanities (Telephone 263-1863 or 263 1800).

1959 & 1960: CRITICAL YEARS: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boris Goldenberg, The Cuban Revolution and Latin America (London, 1965)

An insightful analysis by a Russian-born German ex-Communist, who saw the Cuban revolution in the context of Latin America's social upheavals and of the East-West struggle.

C. Wright Mills, Listen, Yankee: The Revolution in Cuba (New York, 1960)

An eloquent sociologist of populist persuasion who in this book tried to don the mantle of the Cuban revolutionaries in order to get through to his uncomprehending compatriots.

Herbert L. Matthews, The Cuban Story (New York, 1960)

The famous New York Times reporter who had a great stake in portraying Fidel as a nationalist reformer being pushed left by uncomprehending U.S. hostility.

Theodore Draper, Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities (New York, 1962)

Another ex-Communist who effectively rebutted Matthews by showing the innumerable contradictions in Fidel's positions as the realities closed in. Nonetheless, he missed much of the real revolutionary process in Cuba.

Paul Hollander, Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba (New York, 1981)

A chilling analysis of how sympathetic travellers can let their ideological preconceptions distort their hurried looks at socialism in practice. Yet the reader is left with the question of what is (or was) the reality.

Philip W. Bonsal, Cuba, Castro, and the United States (Pittsburgh, 1971)

The professional Foreign Service officer who was assigned to volatile Cuba in 1959 and was withdrawn in 1960. Bonsal describes the radicalization of Cuban policy from an intelligent but hostile U.S. viewpoint.

Cole Blasier, "The Elimination of U.S. Influence," in Carmelo Mesa-Lago, ed., Revolutionary Change in Cuba (Pittsburgh, 1971)

A judicious account of how Fidelista revolutionary momentum and U.S. hostility interacted to end the era of the Platt Amendment.

Tad Szulc, Fidel: A Critical Portrait (New York, 1986)

Chapter IV includes revelations about Fidel's hitherto-unknown contacts with the Cuban Communist Party in 1959, suggesting that he had embraced the Marxist-Leninist option, or at the least was rapidly moving toward it, sooner than generally believed.

History 441
Cuba in the Twentieth Century
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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY: THE RISE OF SUGAR

- Franklin W. Knight, Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century (Madison, 1970) esp. chapter 2
- Ramiro Guerra y Sanchez, Sugar and Society in the Caribbean: An Economic History of Cuban Agriculture (New Haven, 1964) first pub. in 1927
Foreword by Sidney Mintz
- Manuel Moreno Fraginals, El Ingenio: complejo económico social cubano del azúcar
3 vols. (Havana, 1978)
- , The Sugarmill (New York, 1976) trans. of 1964 edition of first
volume
- Franklin W. Knight, The Caribbean (New York, 1978)
- Noel Deerr, The History of Sugar, 2 vols. (London, 1949-50)
- Sidney W. Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History
(New York, 1985)