

LACIS 260
LATIN AMERICA: AN INTRODUCTION

Professor Patrick Iber

Spring 2020 / TR 1PM-2:15PM / Social Science 5231

Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-4:30, Mosse Humanities 5123, and by appointment

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Office hours: Thursdays, 10am-12pm, Mosse 4260, and by appointment

This course will give a broad overview of Latin American history from the pre-colonial era to the present day. Particular emphasis will be placed on the socioeconomic, cultural, and political structures and processes that shaped and continue to influence life in Latin America. Key issues such as colonialism, nationalism, democracy, and revolution will be examined critically in light of broad comparative themes in Latin American and world history. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach: using materials from multiple disciplines as well as primary documents, fiction, and film in order to provide insight into the complex and diverse history of the region. Among the topics to be explored in detail will be labor and slavery, the Mexican and Cuban revolutions, and the transition from dictatorship to democracy. We will examine present-day issues in Latin America, including violence and inequality, and how they fit into a changing global environment.

This course counts for four credits. This course meets as a group (or with dedicated online time) for 4 hours per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

The primary goals of this course are that students will be able to

- Describe the basic contours of Latin American history, culture, and society,
- Apply key concepts relevant to Latin American history such as imperialism, democracy, race, and inequality to comparative world history,
- Read for a dedicated purpose across different genres and forms of writing,
- Apply techniques from different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to generate knowledge and interpret the world, and
- Communicate effectively through presentations, discussion, and written work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I, will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaff/other/faculty/syllabus.php>

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

COURSE TEXTS

John Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* (4th edition), New York: Norton, 2016. ISBN # 0393911543, 2016, approximately \$50. Can be rented for less.

Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*, New York: Penguin Classics, 2008, ISBN 0143105272, approximately \$10.

Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, ISBN 0226893944, approximately \$25.

Other than the main texts, PDFs and links to readings will be available through Canvas.

GRADING INFORMATION

The course is going to use a grading system that is designed to give you a lot of control over the grade you want to earn. It is my belief that college years should be full of intellectual experimentation and I fear that grades now interfere, rather than support, that process. This grading system is designed to maximize learning, while also giving you flexibility. Rather than percentages, you will earn points for your work meeting established standards and for improving it. The points are earned as follows:

Exams (there are two), at approximately 1/3 and 2/3rds points of the semester. The first midterm will include a map quiz. There is no in-class final. Each is worth:

>90%: 5 points

>80%: 4 points

>70%: 3 point

>60%: 2 points

If you narrowly miss a cutoff, you will be asked to improve a weak part of the exam for half a point. This option is at the instructor or grader's discretion.

Mid-point essay: I will give you a take-home essay to write, based on class readings. 4-5 pages. The essay will have a grading rubric, for up to three points of credit. You will be asked to make revisions for an additional point, giving a total of four.

Final project. At the end of the course, you will pick an issue in contemporary Latin America and do an independent research project to learn more about it. A rubric will be provided to help you guide your work. The final project will be presented in a class exposition. The depth and quality of your research will determine the number of points. You can choose to do an extra research option for 6 points (15 pages or equivalent), a full option for 4 points (10 pages or equivalent), and a short option for 2 points (5 pages or equivalent).

Weekly reading journal: 2 total points, one for each half of the semester. Each week, you will pick a reading and respond with at least 250 words. The journal entry can be relatively informal, but should be serious: raising questions, describing what you are

learning, and exploring what the readings are making you think about. Twice—once for each half of the semester—bring to discussion section a question about something you found interesting or would like clarified, from either readings or lecture. These can be questions from your reading journal or new questions. You will submit these journals in the middle and at the end of the semester.

Section attendance and participation: Active participation in class is essential; our learning will be richest as more of you become involved in the conversation and debate. Therefore, all readings must be completed before you meet in section, and you should attend every week. Not everyone participates in the same way, but you should find a way to contribute to section. There are four total points available for section.

> 85% attendance: 3 points

> 75% attendance: 2 points

> 60% attendance: 1 point

Active, thoughtful & respectful participation when present: 1 point

Class attendance and participation. The class will use Top Hat response software to log attendance, check for understanding, and generate conversations during lecture. Points are awarded daily, for a combination of participation and accuracy. If you are doing the reading, you will do well.

> 90% Top Hat: 4 points

> 80% Top Hat: 3 points

> 70% Top Hat: 2 points

> 60% Top Hat: 1 point

In any of these categories, if you narrowly miss a cutoff you may have an opportunity to do a make-up assignment to earn the point. This will be at the instructor's (or TA's) discretion. There are 30 total points available: ten from exams, ten from the essay and project, and ten from class and section activities.

Letter grades will be given as follows

29-30 points A outstanding work, above and beyond course expectations

28-26 points AB very good work, meeting all course expectations

24-25 points B good work, or inconsistent work, meeting most course expectations

22-23 points BC work meets some course expectations

20-21 points C work meets few course expectations

You need to earn at least 20 points to get a passing grade for the class.

Week 1: Introduction

Tuesday, January 21: Introduction to the course

Thursday, January 23: Life in the Americas before the “Americas”

Readings:

Chasteen, “Introduction,” 1-14

Charles Mann, “1491,” *The Atlantic*, March 2002,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/2445/>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What defines Latin America? Does it even exist?
- 2) What was life like for those in the major indigenous empires? How did this differ from those who lived outside of the empires?
- 3) What impact did the encounter between Europe and the Americas have on the ecology of the Americas, including its people?

Week 2: Society and Culture of the First Peoples of the Americas

T, Jan 28: The Mexica and Inca Empires (*with visit of Prof. Sarah Clayton*)

“Men of Maize,” by Miguel León-Portilla and Alan Kolata “In the Realm of the Four Quarters,” in Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., ed. *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples Before the Arrival of Columbus* (Knopf, 1992), pp. 147-176, 215-247. [Two separate PDFs on Canvas]

R, Jan 30: Spain, Portugal, and the Encounter with Indigenous America

Chasteen, Chapter 1, “Encounter,” 17-53

Christopher Heaney, “The Racism Behind Mummy Hoaxes,”

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/how-to-fake-an-alien-mummy/535251/>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) How did the major indigenous empires use and exercise power?
- 2) How did people on each “side” understand the encounter with new people?

Week 3: Making a Colonial Society

T, Feb 4: Forging the Colonial Order

Chasteen, Chapter 2, "Colonial Crucible," 55-93

Bartolomé de las Casas, *Short history of the Destruction of the Indies*, 5-30.

R, Feb 6: Race and Class in the Colonial Americas

Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*, Chapters 4-5, "The Political Economy of Colonialism" and "The Indians and Spanish Justice," pp. 80-137

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) Why did Bartolomé de las Casas write his text? How should that affect how we think about its reliability?
- 2) What were the purposes of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism? How did they function? How did people use what it created to defend their interests?

Week 4: Independence

T, Feb 11: Challenging the Colonial Order

Charles Walker, "When Fear Rather than Reason Dominates': Priests Behind the Lines in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion," in Michael Laffan and Max Weiss, eds., *Fears Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 54-73.

"Up from Slavery: Touissant L'Ouverture, 1743-1803" from *Liberators of Latin America*, 18-44

R, Feb 13: Independence (*with visit of Prof. Pablo Gómez*)

Chasteen, Chapter 3, "Independence," 95-125

Simón Bolívar, "Letter from Jamaica":

<https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-2-the-colonial-foundations/primary-documents-with-accompanying-discussion-questions/document-2-simon-bolivar-letter-from-jamaica-september-6-1815/>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What different experiences brought independence to the countries of Latin America?
- 2) What reasons did people have for fighting for independence?

Week 5: Labor, Slavery, and Race

T, Feb 18: African Legacies

Katia Mattoso, *To be a Slave in Brazil*, 125-149

Zephyr Frank, *Dutra's World*, 96-121

R, Feb 20: Midterm #1

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) How are ideas about race different in Brazil and the United States?
- 2) How appropriate are the methods that have been used in the United States for addressing a history of discrimination on the basis of race for a place like Brazil?

Week 6: The Nineteenth Century

T, Feb 25: Ideologies of Development: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Positivism

Chasteen, Chapter 5, "Postcolonial Blues," 127-159

John Coatsworth, "Inequality, Institutions and Economic Growth in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40, no. 3 (August 2008), pp. 545-569.

R, Feb 27: Nineteenth-Century Globalization and Neocolonialism

Chasteen 6 and 7, "Progress", and "Neocolonialism," 161-231

José Martí, "Our America" (1892),

<http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/marti/America.htm>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What are some of the traditional reasons given to explain Latin American underdevelopment?
- 2) What kind of evidence contradicts and supports those theories?
- 3) What is the relationship between new forms of nationalism and the neocolonialism?

Week 7: Mexico and Its Revolution

T, Mar 3: The Popular Revolution

Azuela, *The Underdogs* [introductions and part 1]

R, Mar 5: The Institutional Revolution

Azuela, *The Underdogs* [parts 2 and 3]

MID-POINT ESSAY DISTRIBUTED.

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What contending groups and visions contributed to the Mexican Revolution? How does this diversity affect how we think about the “legacy” on the Revolution?
- 2) Why did ordinary people join the Revolution?
- 3) What limitations do novels have as ways to understand the past? What do they offer that other sources don't?

Week 8: Nationalism and Populism

T, Mar 10: The Great Depression & Populist Strategies: Lázaro Cárdenas

Chasteen, “Nationalism,” 233-265

Alan Knight, “Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy?” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 (February 1994): 73-107.

R, Mar 12: Nationalism, Populism and the International System: Juan Domingo Perón and Jacobo Arbenz (*with visit of Prof. Marla Ramírez*)

Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History*, “Little Eva,” 3-17

Stephen Kinzer, chapter on Guatemala from *Overthrow*, pp. 129-147.

MID-POINT ESSAY DUE.

- 1) What is populism? How does it differ from other strategies for governing?
- 2) How was gender (including ideas of both masculinity and femininity) used as part of Perón's populist strategy?

March 14-March 22: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Cuba and Its Revolution

T, Mar 24: The Achievements of the Revolution

Chasteen, "Revolutions," 267-295
Selections from *The Cuba Reader*

R, Mar 26: The Costs of the Revolution

Che Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinental,"
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm>

Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History*, "The Harsh Angel," 73-86

Listen: audio documentary, Elizabeth Dore, "Cuban Voices,"
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p06xfy81>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What were the principal causes of the Cuban Revolution?
- 2) Were the sacrifices imposed on ordinary people necessary to achieve the gains of the Revolution? Could the Cuban Revolution have survived without repression?

Week 10: The Rise of Reaction

T, Mar 31: Democratic Breakdowns: Brazil, Chile, and Argentina

Chasteen, Chapter 10, "Reaction," 297-327

Steve Stern, "Heroic Memory: Ruin into Salvation," from *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 7-34

R, Apr 2: Dictatorships in Power: Brazil, Chile, and Argentina

Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*, pp. 1-79

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) How did Latin American dictatorships justify their actions? Who did they consider to be their enemies?
- 2) Why do ordinary people support dictatorships?

Week 11: Transitions to Democracy, Week I

T, Apr 7: Resisting Dictatorship, with Film: *No*

Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe*, 83-246 [get started]

R, Apr 9: Legacies of Dictatorship (*with visit of Prof. Alexandra Huneus*)

Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe*, pp. 83-246 [finish]

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) Why do people who had supported dictatorships turn against them?
- 2) How did the process of achieving democracy differ across various countries?

Week 12: Transitions to Democracy, Week II

T, Apr 14: The "Perfect Dictatorship": Mexico

Guillermoprieto, "Letter from Mexico City," *New Yorker*, September 17, 1990

Chasteen, Chapter 11, "Neoliberalism and Beyond," 329-356

R, Apr 16: Midterm #2

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) Is there a relationship between neoliberal economics and political democracy?
- 2) What elements of dictatorship did transitions to democracy leave in place? What changed?

Week 13: The Recent Past

T, Apr 21: The Pink Tide

Watch: The Hugo Chávez Show, <https://www.pbs.org/video/frontline-the-hugo-chavez-show/>

Jon Lee Anderson, “Venezuela’s Two Presidents Collide,” June 3, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/06/10/venezuelas-two-presidents-collide>

R, Apr 23: Problems of Security and Justice

Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History*, “Our New War in Colombia,” 19-39

Ginger Thompson, “How the U.S. Triggered a Massacre in Mexico,” <https://www.propublica.org/article/allende-zetas-cartel-massacre-and-the-us-dea>

Nelson Rauda, “Her Family Survived the El Mozote Massacre. Now She’s Fleeing El Salvador’s Gangs,” <https://www.thedailybeast.com/her-family-survived-the-el-mozote-massacre-now-shes-fleeing-el-salvadors-gangs?ref=scroll>

Readings:

Questions to consider:

- 1) How do we explain the strength of the left in the first decade of the twenty-first century? How is this left different from that of the twentieth century?
- 2) What problems were “pink tide” governments not able to solve? What problems did they create?
- 3) What factors have contributed to the rise of organized transnational crime in certain parts of Latin America?

Week 14: Latin America Today

T, April 28: Latin America Today (*with visit of Prof. Hernando Rojas*)

Watch: Petra Costa, *The Edge of Democracy* [Netflix]

R, April 30: Latin America Today

Readings: TBA

Final projects due May 7, and in part by April 30 to participate in the class expo.