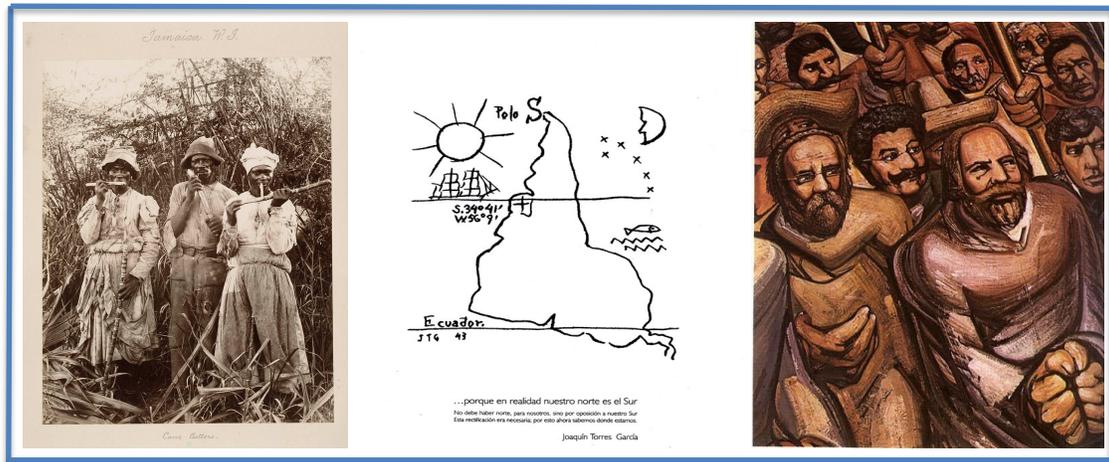


University of Wisconsin-Madison
LACIS 260

Introduction to Latin America: *Nuestra América Ladina* and *El Caribe*



Professor Jorell Meléndez-Badillo

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am – 10:45am

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:00 – 2:00pm

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Course Description

“I am. I am what they left behind, I am the leftovers of what they have stolen...I am Latin America, a country without legs but still walking,” sang the Puerto Rican rap group *Calle 13* in their track “Latinoamérica.” Like *Calle 13*, many scholars have used similar analogies to describe the region: “born in blood and fire,” “the empire’s backyard,” and a body with “open

veins,” among others. But the territories we understand as Latin America are also marked by histories of resistance, resilience, and revolution. Indigenous leaders like Tupac Amaru, the formerly-enslaved Toussaint L'Ouverture, and the anarcho-feminist Virginia Bolten have inspired generations of people, from revolutionaries to Hip Hop artists. Given these complexities, there is not *a history* of Latin America; there are many. In fact, it is difference and plurality what best defines the regions we identify today as Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, there are more than 600 hundred languages spoken by countless ethnic and cultural groups. Nonetheless, the region's imperial legacy made Spanish and Portuguese its main two languages.

This course intends to serve as an introduction to the histories of Latin American and Caribbean societies, peoples, and nations from pre-Colombian societies to the present day. The course focuses on the region's ever incomplete nation-building processes. Using an intersectional lens, we will not only look at events but to how different people interpreted them through their own gender, class, and racial identities. While students will use John Charles Chasteen's *Born in Blood and Fire* as their textbook and guide, it will be complemented with other readings and primary sources that allow a deeper analysis of the processes studied.

The course begins with the pre-Columbian societies and moves towards the post-independent moment, and the rise of nationalist ideologies. We will read about the ways women subverted the era's patriarchal ethos through subtle acts of resistance while paying attention to the ways non-whites were racialized. The course then moves to explore the ways populism developed in the mid-twentieth century to the more recent rise in neoliberal policies.

Introduction, Goals, and Objectives

What constitutes Latin America and the Caribbean? And, how can we approach the region's diverse cultures, societies, and histories? These are some of the questions this course seeks to engage with throughout the semester. The course also emphasizes that Latin America and the Caribbean have played a crucial, albeit unrecognized role in global developments. The expansion of Western thought throughout the globe after the 1500s required the colonization of what is now considered “the Global South.” After the Latin American and Caribbean wars for independence, metropolitan powers still maintained economic and political control over some their former colonies. European powers re-defined themselves after, and through, the conquest of the Americas.

One of the goals of the course is to help students build their own historical toolbox. Using ideas discussed in lectures, students will produce historical knowledge through their analysis of primary and secondary sources from Latin America and the Caribbean. Students will get workshop and discuss these sources to question documents, preconceived ideas, and overarching narratives. Throughout the course, students will also have the chance to write a book review.

Ultimately, the course aspires to help students comprehend contemporary events through the study of the regions' past. To do so, throughout the semester we will look at global politics and events from within Latin America. Thus, the course seeks to position Latin America and the Caribbean at the center of our historical imagination and perception of the world. Doing so will

entail exploring the regions' relationship to its Northern neighbor, the United States, as well as Europe, Asia, and Africa.

By the end of this course students will:

1. Write an academic book review and develop an interactive map of Latin American and the Caribbean.
2. Recognize different nation-building moments as well as their importance in broader regional development.
3. Appreciate some of the similarities and differences between Latin American countries at moments of nation-building, revolution, and capitalist consolidation.
4. Situate the histories of Latin America and the Caribbean in the broader context of World History.
5. Integrate a historical analysis to their interpretations of the regions' contemporary events.

Textbook:

- Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (4th edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

Polishing Your Historian's Toolbox

Someone might look at this syllabus and ask: Why is it important to take a Latin America course that uses a historical lens? Do I have to *memorize* dates and historical figures? Why should I care about Latin America or the Caribbean if I want to become a [insert profession here]? While these are valid inquiries, they are rooted in misconceptions about what history as a discipline is.

For instance, this course will encourage *critical thinking* over memorization. The study of history can offer great tools to analyze multiple, and often contradictory, sources and arguments to *create* historical knowledge. Living in an era where information and data can be accessed immediately at the touch of our fingertips through the internet, this class will seek to disrupt the idea of history as the memorization of great Men's names [as women are mostly left out of narratives] and events.

Throughout the semester, we will use Latin America and the Caribbean to explore historical events and processes not only in those regions but also on a global scale. That is, the course

hopes to bring “Global South” to the center of our analyses to disrupt Western-centric conceptions of history.

While doing all that hard work of disrupting pre-conceived notions and ideas, you will also be managing and polishing a set of transferable skills. First, and foremost, you will use *critical thinking skills* to analyze the course’s content. You will also be able to *craft well informed arguments* based on the scrutiny and analysis of multiple types of sources (known in other fields as “data;” a fancier, more imposing word). By the end of the course, you will be able to develop *appreciation* to cultures, peoples, customs, and histories other than your own. Finally, while this class will encourage active engagement, you will do most of the thinking (which is what historians often do) by yourself, thus learning how to undertake *self-directed learning*.

Assignments

Midterm Exam	February 23, 2023	20 pts
Primary Source Analysis	March 23, 2023	20 pts
Podcast Written Text	April 12, 2023	10 pts
Podcast Submission	April 27, 2023	5 pts
Final Exam	May 7, 2023	25 pts
Class Participation	Ongoing	20 pts

Information on the Assignments:

- **Mid-term:** The test will consist of questions that will allow you to engage with the class readings and lectures critically.
- **Primary Source Analysis:** Find a primary source related to the Caribbean (you can consult Profe Meléndez-Badillo if you need help choosing one). Write a short reflection (500-900 words) after doing a critical reading of the text. Your reflection should take into consideration the following:
 - When was the text produced? Why was it produced?
 - How does the text allow you to contextualize the historical moment in which it was produced?
 - What questions did the text generate for you?
 - What was not said in the text?
 - What does this primary source add to your understanding of this week’s topics?

Please note that these questions serve as a guide, and you do not necessarily need to address them one by one in your reflection. Ultimately, this exercise is for you to think as a historian and critically question the document. As we have discussed in our classes,

history is about power relations. Think about how you can unearth those power relations within the primary source you have selected.

- **Podcast:** In the spirit of experimenting with knowledge production in the classroom, students will be creating a podcast where they present original research related to the class. This will be a group project.

Profe will divide the class into thematic groups (i.e., The Mexican Revolution, Pre-Columbian Societies, or The Pink Tide), and students in that group will each select their topic according to the group's theme. This is also a two-part assignment. Students need to submit the podcast's written narrative of about 750-to-1,000 words on April 13, 2023, at noon. More information about the assignment will be shared during the semester.

The date for the final podcast submission is April 27, 2023.

- **Final Exam:** Sunday, May 7, 2023.

Credit Hours and Student Workload:

This four-credit class carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, among others) for about 4 hours out of the classroom for every class period (8 hours total). Below you will find more information about expectations for undergraduate and graduate student work.

Grades:

Grades on assignments and exams are recorded as numerical scores out of a total of 100 points (these scores are later weighted to arrive at a final composite course grade). The table for converting your final composite (weighted) numerical grade into final letter grades is as follows:

Points	<60	60-68.9	69-74.9	75-80.9	81-86.9	87-92.9	93 and above
Grade	F	D	C	BC	B	AB	A

- Students must submit all assignments and complete all essays to pass this course.
- Students may **not** elect to opt out of an assignment and receive an F on it.
- Any non-emergency extensions must be requested prior to the due date.

Course Website and Digital Instructional Tools

This course will use Canvas. You can find all the readings that are not part of the required books in the Canvas page.

General Information About the Course

1. Use office hours if you have any questions, comments, or doubts about the readings, lectures, assignments, or discussions. If you cannot attend office hours, you can contact me to schedule an appointment.
2. If you have any other question that can be answered with a few sentences and that is not answered in this syllabus, feel free to email me. If I have not replied within two (2) weekdays, please follow up with me.
3. Students are expected to read all the assigned material. Regular attendance to class and active, engaging participation is also expected from every student.
4. If, for some reason, you cannot meet a major assignment deadline, please contact me **before the assignment is due**. If you have not contacted me and you have to miss a deadline, you have **one** opportunity to hand it in **the NEXT DAY** (not the next class). There will be a 10% tardiness reduction to your grade for each day that goes by (except for those students that present a valid medical excuse). The second time you cannot submit your assignment late except with a valid medical excuse.
5. Check your email and Canvas periodically to check for any announcement, posting, changes in the readings, or any other information pertaining the class.

Course Policies:

Teaching and Learning Data Transparency Statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully reviews and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full teaching and learning [data transparency statement](#).

Privacy of Student Records and the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in courses may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, students are not authorized to record lectures without permission unless they are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability who has an approved accommodation that includes recording. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities, with the exception of sharing copies of personal notes as a notetaker through the McBurney disability resource center. Students are otherwise prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UW's chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct. View [more information about ferpa](#).

Campus Resources for Academic Success

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising And Career Services](#)
- [Office Of The Registrar](#)
- [Office Of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean Of Students Office](#)
- [Graduate Student Services](#)

Course Evaluations

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate their enrolled courses and their learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of course development, and confidential feedback is important to the institution. UW-Madison strongly encourages student participation in course evaluations.

Digital Course Evaluation

UW-Madison uses a [digital course evaluation](#) survey tool. In most instances, students receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying them that course evaluations are available. Students receive an email with a link to log into the course evaluation with their netid. Evaluations are anonymous. Student participation is an integral component of course development, and feedback is important. UW-Madison strongly encourages student participation in course evaluations.

Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities

[Rights & Responsibilities](#)

Diversity & inclusion statement

[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.

Academic integrity statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary [sanctions](#) include, but are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

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 ([uw-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (see: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Academic calendar & religious observances

[Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – Introduction

1. Tuesday, January 24, 2023:

- a. Introduction to the course
 - i. Building a Safe Space
- b. Required video:
 - i. “Latinoamerica” by Calle 13

2. Thursday, January 26, 2023:

Thinking Against the Archival Grain: Power and History Making

- i. Readings:
 1. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “The Power of the Story,” in *Silencing the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 1-30. (Canvas)
 2. Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe* 26 (June 2008), 1-14. (Canvas) **Content Warning: Explicit Violence**

Week 2 – Rethinking Latin America and the Caribbean

3. Tuesday, January 31, 2023:

Abya Ayala, Latin America, or Améfrica Ladina? The Allure of an Idea

- i. Readings:
 1. *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Welcome to Latin America” (pp.1-11)
 2. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, “The Connotations of an Idea: On the basic connotations of the term Latin America, though said connotations are further elucidated as the essay unfolds and are only stated badly here,” in *Latin America: The Allure and Power of an Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 34-40. (Canvas)

4. Thursday, February 2, 2023:

- i. Readings:
 1. *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Encounter.” 17-33.
 2. “The Ancestors of the People Called Indians: A View from Huarochirí, Peru (ca. 1598-1608),” in *Colonial Latin America; A Documentary History*, Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Grahams, eds. (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2004), 3-13.

Week 3 – Encounter and Colonial Life

5. Tuesday, February 7, 2023:

i. Readings:

1. *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Encounter,” 34-54.
2. “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s Letter to Sor Filotea (1691),” in *Colonial Latin America*, 207-214.
3. “Nicolás Nenguirú’s Letter to the Governor of Buenos Aires (1753),” in *Colonial Latin America*, 309-315.

6. Thursday, February 9, 2023:

Colonial Crucible

Readings:

- i. *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Colonial Crucible,” Chapter 3, pp. 55-94
- ii. Bartolome de las Casas, *Short History of the Destruction of the Indies*, 5-30.

Week 4 – Making a Colonial Society

7. Tuesday, February 14, 2023:

The Creation of a Colonial Society:

Readings:

- i. Jorell Meléndez-Badillo, “Consolidating the Colonial Project,” in *Puerto Rico: A National History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Forthcoming), 27-40.
- ii. Álvaro de Castro, “The Slave Problem in Santo Domingo,” in *The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Eric Paul Roorda, Lauren Derby, and Raymundo González, eds., (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 65.
- iii. Alonso López de Cerrato, “Lemba and the Maroons of Hispaniola,” in *The Dominican Republic Reader*, 66-67.
- iv. Alexander O. Exquemelin, “The Buccaneers of Hispaniola,” in *The Dominican Republic Reader*, 81-83.

8. Thursday, February 16, 2023:

Storming Heaven: The Haitian Revolution

Readings:

- Laurent Dubois, “Why Haiti Should Be at the Center of the Age of Revolutions,” *Aeon*, November 7, 2016 (Canvas).
- Jean-Jacques Dessalines, “The Declaration of Independence” in *The Haiti Reader*, 23-26.
- “Haitian Hymn,” in *The Haiti Reader*, 27-28.

- Jean-Jacques Dessalines, “Writings,” in *The Haiti Reader*, 29-30.
- Marie Melie, “A Woman’s Quest for Freedom in a Land of Re-enslavement,” in *The Haiti Reader*, 31-32.
- Alexandre Pétion and Simón Bolívar, “An Exchange of Letters,” in *The Haiti Reader*, 33-35.

Week 5 – Latin America’s First Age of Revolutions

9. Tuesday, February 21, 2023:

Crisis in the Iberian Peninsula

Readings:

- i. *Born in Blood and Fire*, “Independence,” Chapter 4, pp. 95-126.
- ii. Simón Bolívar, “The Letter from Jamaica, September 6, 1815,” in *Latin American Since Independence*, 22-24. (Canvas)

10. Thursday, February 23, 2023:

MIDTERM

Week 6 – Building States, Imagining Nations

11. Tuesday, February 28, 2023:

Rupture and Imagined Nations

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Postcolonial Blues,” Chapter 5 (pp.127-160).
- Simón Bolívar, “Message to the Congress of Angostura,” 1819 (Canvas)

12. Thursday, March 2, 2023:

¿Progreso?

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Progress,” Chapter 6 (pp. 161-191).
- Friederich Hassaurek, “How to Conduct a Latin American Revolution,” 1865 (Canvas)

Week 7 – Race, Gender, and Economic Change in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

13. Tuesday, March 7, 2023:

Becoming (Legitimate) Citizens

Readings:

- Brodwyn Fischer, Keila Grinbreg, and Hebe Mattos, “Law, Silence, and Racialized Inequalities in the History of Afro-Brazil,” in *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, edited by Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 130-178. (Canvas)
- Moret Law, 1870 (Canvas)

14. Thursday, March 9, 2023:

The Struggle for Independence in Cuba and Puerto Rico: From 1868 to 1898

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Neocolonialism,” Chapter 7 (pp. 233-266).
- José Martí, “Our America,” *El Partido Liberal*, 1892 (Canvas).

Week 8 – Spring Break

Week 9 – *¡Patria o Muerte!* Revolutionary Struggles and U.S. Imperialism in the Caribbean at the Turn of the Century

15. Tuesday, March 21, 2023:

The Spanish-Cuban-American-Puerto Rican-Filipino-Guam War of 1898

Readings:

- Greg Grandin, “The Pact of 1898,” in *The End of Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 132-147. (Canvas)
- Cartoons as Primary Sources (Canvas).

16. Tuesday, March 23, 2023:

Nationalism Redux

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Nationalism,” Chapter (pp. 233-266).
- “Land and Liberty,” Ricardo Flores Magón (Canvas)
- “Plan de Ayala,” Emiliano Zapata and others (Canvas)

*****Primary Source Analysis Due*****

Week 10 – Re-Building Nations: The Rise of Nationalism

17. Tuesday, March 28, 2023:

The War on Blackness

Readings:

- George Reid Andrews, “‘A Transfusion of New Blood:’ Whitening, 1880-1920,” *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 117-152 (Canvas).
- Paul Ortiz, “Anti-Imperialism as a Way of Life: Emancipatory Internationalism and the Black Radical Tradition in the Americas,” in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (New York: Verso, 2017), 123-147.

18. Thursday, March 30, 2023:

The Post-World War II Moment in Latin America

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Revolution,” Chapter 9 (pp. 267-296).

Week 11 – From Populism to Revolution

19. Tuesday, April 4, 2023:

The Cuban Revolution

Readings:

- Rachel A. May, Alejandro Schneider, and Roberto González Arana, “Cuban Revolutionaries and the Caribbean Basin: An Introduction,” in *Caribbean Revolutions: Cold War Armed Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018: pp. 1-21 (Canvas).
- Ernesto “Che” Guevara, “Letter from Major Ernesto Che Guevara to Carlos Quijano, editor of the Montevideo weekly magazine *Marcha*, March, 1965” in *Latin American Since Independence*, pp. 259-272.

20. Thursday, April 6, 2023:

Guerrillas, Marxism, and Revolution in Latin America

Readings:

- Alfredo Marchesi, “Revolution without the Sierra Maestra: The Tupamaros and the Development of a Repertoire of Dissent for Urbanized Countries. Montevideo, 1962-1968,” in *Latin America’s Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global 1960s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 23-68.
- Alexander Aviña, “An Archive of Counterinsurgency: State Anxieties and Peasant Guerillas in Cold War Mexico,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* vol. 19, no. 1 (July 2013): 41-48 (Canvas)

Week 12 – Somber Days in Latin America

21. Tuesday, April 11, 2023:

Somber Days in Latin America

Reading:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Reaction,” Chapter 10 (pp. 297-328).

In-Class Viewing:

- Movie: *La noche de doce años*

22. Thursday, April 12, 2023:

Somber Days in Latin America

In-Class Viewing:

- Movie: *La noche de doce años*

*****PODCAST NARRATIVE DUE*****

Week 13 – From Dictatorships to Neoliberalism

23. Tuesday, April 18, 2023:

Somber Days in Latin America

Readings:

- Argentina’s National Commission on Disappeared People, *Nunca Más, Never Again: A Report*, 1986 (Excerpts) (Canvas)
- Carlos Gardeazábal Bravo, “Democracies Don’t Just Bounce Back After Dictatorships,” *The Conversation*, January 20, 2023. (Canvas)

In-Class Viewing:

- Argentina, 1985 (Movie excerpts in class)

24. Thursday, April 20, 2023:

The Rise of Neoliberalism

Readings:

- *Born in Blood and Fire*: “Neoliberalism and Beyond,” Chapter 11 (pp. 329-356).

Week 14 – From the Pink Tide to the Feminist Wave

25. Tuesday, April 25, 2023:

Readings:

- Alejandro Velasco, “Looking for the Left Turn,” *NACLA*, February 20, 2015: <https://nacla.org/article/looking-left-turn>
- Karin Monasterios P., “Bolivian Women’s Organizations in the MAS Era,” *NACLA*, April 10, 2008, <https://nacla.org/article/bolivian-women%E2%80%99s-organizations-mas-era>.

26. Thursday, April 27, 2023:

Readings:

- Verónica Gago, Ni Una Menos, Ramsey McGlazer, Verónica Carchedi, and Liz Mason-Deese, “The Earth Trembles,” *Critical Times* vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 158-177.
- Aurora Santiago-Ortiz, “La Colectiva Feminista en Construcción Are Leading the Puerto Rican Resistance,” *Open Democracy*, January 14, 2020, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/la-colectiva-feminista-en-construccion-are-leading-the-puerto-rican-resistance/>

PODCAST DUE

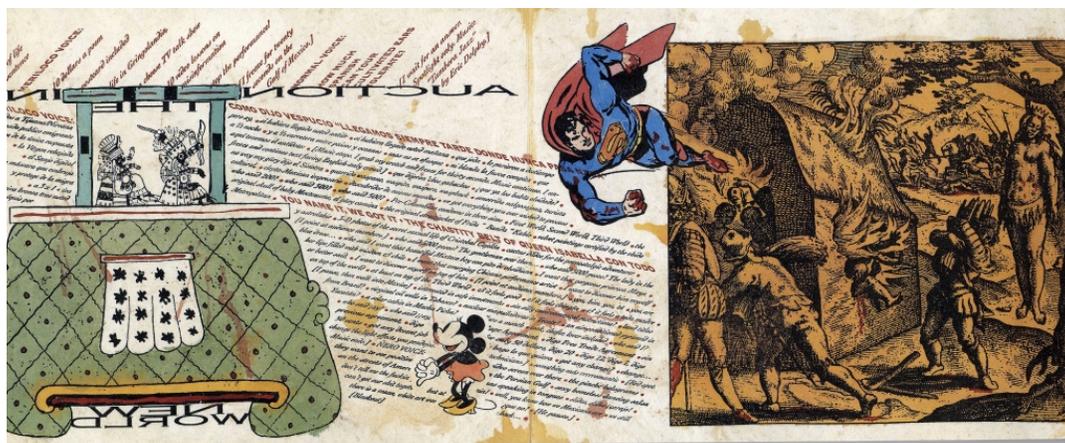
Week 15 – Contemporary Latin America(s): Back to the Past?

27. Tuesday, May 2, 2023:

Readings t.b.a.

28. Thursday, May 4, 2023:

Classroom discussion



From: Rice, Felicia, Guillermo Gómez Peña, and Enrique Chagoya, *Codex Espangliensis: From Columbus to the Border Patrol*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2001