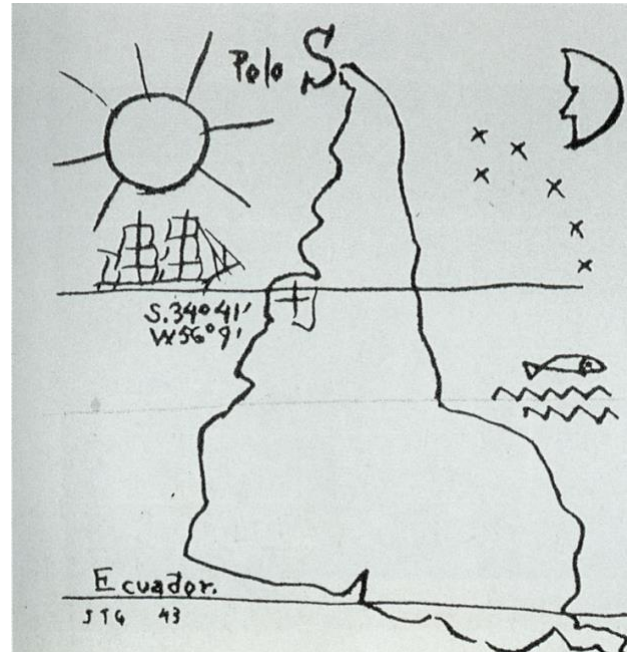


LACIS 260
LATIN AMERICA: AN INTRODUCTION

Professor Patrick Iber
Fall 2023 / TuTh 9:30-10:45AM / Humanities 1101
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Sections
301 Tuesday 11:00-11:50, 2625 Humanities
302 Tuesday 12:05-12:55, 2101 Humanities
303 Tuesday 2:25-3:15 2125 Humanities
304 Tuesday 5:40-6:30, 2251 Humanities
305 Wednesday 1:20-2:10, Humanities 2121 (Honors)



What does politics look like under conditions of economic inequality? What sort of culture does colonialism produce? When does democracy survive, and when does it break down? When do revolutions produce real improvements for ordinary people? These all sound like questions that many have been asking in the United States in the last few years. In Latin America, they have been asked for decades.

This course will offer a broad introduction to Latin American history and culture, with a close look at those big questions. We won't be bound by comparisons to the United States, but we will think critically and comparatively about Latin America's experience as part of the wider world. This course is an overview, from the pre-colonial era to the present day. We are going to explore the region in all its diversity, steering away from easy cliché or superficial analysis. The class will also be interdisciplinary in its approach: we will gather information from history, political science, economics, literature, and film. We will have guests and experts from across the university visit the class, so that if there are particular areas that interest you, you will have ideas about how you might pursue them further.

Art credit: Joaquín Torres García, *América invertida*

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/facstaffother/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/>

My goal is for this classroom to be a place in which every person feels welcome. Encountering people with different life experiences, backgrounds, and ideas, represents one of the most important learning opportunities in college. If I can do more to make your experience a good one, please let me know how.

COURSE TEXTS

John Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* (4th edition), New York: Norton, 2016. ISBN # 0393911543.

Charles F. Walker and Liz Clarke, *Witness to the Age of Revolution: The Odyssey of Juan Bautista Tupac Amaru*, Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN #9780190941154.

Other than the main texts, readings will be made available through canvas.

GRADING INFORMATION

Your grade will be based on the following:

20% section. 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. You can miss one day without arranging an absence with us. Your TA will provide you with a section syllabus laying out responsibilities and expectations.

20%: Class attendance and participation. The class will use Top Hat response software to log attendance and check for understanding. Typically, a question or two will check to see if you've done the reading, and the next questions will start a discussion that leads

into the day's topic. Depending on the type of question, points may be given for accuracy, participation, or both.

40%: There will be three in-class exams given during the semester. One midterm worth 20% of the grade will take up a whole class block, the others, worth 10% each, will be shorter and take up less time.

20%: Final paper. The last few weeks of class will be devoted to considering the problems of Latin America today. Instead of an in-class final, there will be a final written assignment, of approximately 8 pages for most students and 15 for those taking the class for honors credit. There are two primary options for this assignment.

Option 1 is to write a "country report." Choose a country that you wish to study in more depth, and use news sources to explain what the economic, political, and social conditions are today. You must address how these conditions are related to the country and the region's history by making reference to class readings.

Option 2 is to read a work of literature (most likely a novel) or watch a film from Latin America. Explain the major themes of the work, and how they reflect the historical circumstances of the work's production. As with option 1, you should refer to the ways that the work of art describes events explored during the class by referring to class readings.

The use of AI writing tools has already become pervasive. I am not going to prohibit their use, but I may ask you follow-up questions about your research to verify that it was done by a human being. You should ask yourself if you are using AI to enhance your learning, or to substitute for it. If it is the latter, you shouldn't do it.

Week 1: Introduction

Thursday, Sep. 7: Introduction to the course

Chasteen, Chapter 1, "Introduction"

Questions to guide your reading this week:

What defines Latin America? What common features are there in this very diverse region?

Week 2: First Peoples of the Americas

Tuesday, Sep. 12:

Charles Mann, "1491," *The Atlantic*, March 2002,
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/2445/>

Nahuatl Poetry: <https://mesoamericanstudiesonline.com/2022/01/30/nahuatl-poetry/>

Thursday, Sep. 14:

Chasteen, Chapter 2, "Encounter"

Honors only: Bartolomé de las Casas, *Short History of the Destruction of the Indies*, 5-30.

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What was life like for those in the major indigenous empires?
- 2) What do cultural products, like Nahuatl poetry, tell us about the cultures that produced them?
- 3) How did people on each "side" understand the encounter with new people?
- 4) What impact did the encounter between Europe and the Americas have on the ecology of the Americas, including its people?

Week 3: Making a Colonial Society

Tuesday, Sep. 19: Economics and Politics

Chasteen, Chapter 3, “Colonial Crucible”

Honors only: Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle and Good Government*, [excerpts]
<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/davidfrye/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2015/07/guaman.pdf>

Thursday, Sep. 21: Culture and Society

Karen Spalding, “The Shrinking Web,” from *Huaro chirí*, pp. 168-208

Poetry of Sor Juana: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/sor-juana-inés-de-la-cruz>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What were the purposes of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism? How did they function economically and politically?
- 2) What was the role of the Catholic church in these colonial systems?
- 3) Could you draw a diagram representing the “social pyramid” of colonial society? Who is at the top and who is at the bottom?

Week 4:

Tuesday, Sep. 26: Challenging the Colonial Order

Charles Walker and Liz Clarke, *Witness to the Age of Revolution: The Odyssey of Juan Bautista Tupac Amaru*, pp. 5-107

Thursday, Sep. 28: Independence

Chasteen, Chapter 4, "Independence"

Honors only: 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) How did the process of Spanish American independence fit in to broader changes taking place around the globe?
- 2) What reasons did people have for fighting for independence? What reasons did people have for fighting against it?

Week 5: Post-independence

Tuesday, October 3: Building a New Society

Chasteen, Chapter 5, Postcolonial Blues

Thursday, October 5: The Brazilian Empire

Joaquim Nabuco anti-slavery speech,

<https://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/slatta/hi216/documents/slavery/nabuco.htm>

Affirmative Action reading, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/05/brazils-new-problem-with-blackness-affirmative-action/>

Xuxu reading, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/15/world/americas/brazil-barbie-xuxa.html>

Quiz #1 will take place this week on Thursday, covering the material from weeks 1-4. It will include a map quiz.

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) How did conditions of life change as a result of independence? In what ways did they stay the same?
- 2) What similarities and differences do you see between the former slave societies of the United States and Brazil?

Week 6: Latin America and the World Economy

Tuesday, October 10: The Problem of Development

Chasteen, Chapter 6, Progress

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

Thursday, October 12: Nineteenth-Century Globalization

Chapter 7, Neocolonialism

Rubén Darío, "To Roosevelt": <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/roosevelt> [contains both English and the original Spanish]

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What are reasons given to explain Latin American "underdevelopment"? What kind of evidence is used to support those theories?
- 2) What is the relationship between new forms of nationalism and the neocolonialism?

Week 7: Mexico and Its Revolution

Tuesday, October 17: The Popular Revolution

Chasteen, Chapter 8, "Nationalism," 233-265

Look at the art gallery from Castillo de Chapultepec:
<https://mnh.inah.gob.mx/murales>

Thursday, October 19: The Institutional Revolution

Gilbert Joseph and Jurgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, 37-54; 117-139

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) Injustice is common throughout history but revolutions are rare. Why did one occur in Mexico at this time?
- 2) What things changed as a result of the Mexican Revolution? What did not change so much?
- 3) What stories do the murals at the Castillo de Chapultepec tell about the history of the Mexican nation? How do they tell the story of the Revolution?

Week 8: What is populism?

Tuesday, October 24: The Populist Strategy

Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History*, "Little Eva," 3-17

Selections from *Perón mediante*

Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard: Author of the Quixote", from *Ficciones*

Thursday, October 26: Midterm

This will be a comprehensive exam covering weeks 1-8.

Questions to guide your reading this week:

- 1) What is populism? How does it differ from other strategies for governing?
- 2) After reading the sections from *Perón mediante* and the story by Jorge Luis Borges, I want you to ask yourself whether Borges would have been a Perón supporter or not. Why do you think so?

Week 9: The Early Cold War

Tuesday, October 31: Guatemala

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

Look at this primary document—from the U.S. government in 1948—as it thinks about its security priorities for the region in the post-WWII period.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v09/d161>

Thursday, November 2: Cuba's Revolution

Chasteen, Chapter 9, "Revolution," 267-295

Honors only: Roberto Fernández Retamar, "Caliban," [excerpts]

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) The Cold War was nominally a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. What does it mean to talk about a "Cold War" in Latin America?
- 2) Why did Guatemala and Cuba have different outcomes? In what ways were their movements related or informed by each other?

Week 10: Socialism(s)

Tuesday, November 7: Cuban Socialism

Deborah Shnookal, “Alfabetemos! Let’s Teach Literacy!” from *Operation Pedro Pan and the Exodus of Cuba’s Children*, 63-104

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

Thursday, November 9: Chilean Socialism

Look at this web page and listen to the podcast on “Project Cybersyn,”
<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/project-cybersyn/>

Honors only: Peter Winn, “The Furies of the Andes” from *A Century of Revolution*, pp. 239-275

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) Why would people support revolutionary government? What sort of people would want them? What sort of hopes did they have for them?
- 2) What sort of consequences did the existence of socialist governments have in the region, including in places that did not have them?

Week 11: Reaction

Tuesday, November 14: Chile's Dictatorship

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

Thursday, November 16: Democratic Transitions

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

Honors only: Watch these videos from the 1988 plebiscite in Chile, in which Chileans voted on whether to continue the dictatorship or not. (You can turn on subtitles and auto-translate if you like.)

This was the government's strategy to encourage the country to continue the current arrangement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7HhdbW4gHo>

This was the opposition's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfE94ZVuJm8>

Questions to consider this week:

- 1) What was responsible for the wave of dictatorships that took power in Latin America?
- 2) Beyond repression, what other strategies did dictatorships use to maintain power?
- 3) What sources of independent power remained, even under dictatorships? Which were limited or disappeared?

Week 12: Democratic Transitions, II

Tuesday, November 21: Mexico's "Perfect Dictatorship"

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

Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico*, pp. 477-501

Thursday, November 23: THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

Questions to consider this week:

1) How did Mexico's transition to democracy differ from those of the military dictatorships of the Southern Cone?

Week 13: Latin America Today I

Tuesday, November 28: The Pink Tide

Chasteen, Chapter 11, “Neoliberalism and Beyond”

Thursday, November 30: Consequences

Jon Lee Anderson, “Slumlord,” *New Yorker*, 28 January 2013, pp. 40-51.

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

The last quiz will take place this week, covering material from weeks 9-13.

Questions to consider:

- 1) What does “neoliberalism” mean? How was it experienced in Latin America?
- 2) Why did the “Pink Tide” governments emerge at the same time?
- 3) What were some of the political strengths and weaknesses of the “pink tide”?

Week 14: Latin America Today II

Tuesday, December 5: Security and Democracy

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

Fernanda Melchor, “Veracruz with a Zee for Zeta,” in *This is not Miami*

Thursday, December 7: Migration

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How it Ends*, in Freeman’s (2016), pp. 141-183.

Questions to consider:

- 1) In the last years, the most violent places outside of war zones have been in the Americas (including in the United States). Why?
- 2) How are security problems and the phenomenon of migration connected? How do they affect democracy in the Americas?

Week 15: Latin America Today III

Tuesday, December 12: Roundtable of Current Issues

Readings, if any, will be light and will be determined later. Work on your final papers.

Thursday, December 14: Countercurrents: Costa Rica and Uruguay

Readings, if any, will be light and will be determined later. Work on your final papers.