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INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICA

LAST 101 – Summer 2005

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the region of Latin America and its historical context. Based on interdisciplinary themes and perspectives, the course will familiarize students with the physical, political, and cultural boundaries of the region. The discussions are organized around four key concepts:

Encounter. We begin with the encounters of indigenous, Iberian and African peoples and cultures that have characterized the process of colonization of the region. Such encounter has created both a diverse background and an exploitive and violent pattern that has left deep marks in the region's history.

Nation. The course will discuss the processes of nation-building of the newly independent states that emerged with the end of colonial rule. The course highlights some aspects of this complex historical development, stressing in particular the conflicts and exchanges between political movements and ideas (nationalism, liberalism, *caudillismo*, populism, and revolution).

Peoples. Students will be introduced to the struggles and dilemmas of some of the peoples that have actively participated in development of the region's identity, despite processes of marginalization and exclusion, especially women, indigenous peoples, blacks, and other ethnic groups.

Identity. The course also discusses and problematizes the idea of a Latin American identity by investigating the complex, dynamic, and hybrid cultural formations that have emerged in the region. Among the broad and diverse set of cultural practices that can be found in Latin America, the course focuses on a musical genre (samba), a ritual (carnival), the most popular product of the region's cultural industries (*telenovela*), and the shifting religious identities of its inhabitants. By discussing the notions of globalization and postmodernism, we will also investigate more recent changes in the region's cultural identity

The course concludes with a discussion of contemporary topics in the Latin American context. We start with drug trafficking and related violent conflicts, then move to the changes brought by neoliberal reforms, and conclude by discussing the prospects for democracy in the region.

Course Texts:

John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Paul Goodwin Jr, *Global Studies: Latin America*. 11th edition. Dubuque: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Both books will be available through Tulane Bookstore.

Required texts:

Besides the textbooks, we will work with several articles and book chapters which will be available online at *Electronic Reserves* (E-Res: <<http://eres.library.tulane.edu/>>) and as a packet at the Department of Communication.

Blackboard:

Blackboard will be used for this course for posting announcements, assignments, grades and other information. The system can be accessed at: <<http://blackboard.tulane.edu/>>. If you have problems using the system, you can call the help desk: 862.8888.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is required and attendance will be taken in every class meeting. You can miss two class sessions without penalty in your participation grade. Five unexcused absences will result in the final grade recommendation of a “WF”.

Evaluation:

Your final evaluation will be based on the following:

- 1) Midterm exam: Students will take an in-class midterm exam which covers the first two weeks of the course. A list of possible questions will be delivered to students in advance and two of the questions will be on the exam. The midterm is a closed book exam. Students should bring a pen and a blank blue book on the scheduled date for the exam;
- 2) Final exam: Students will take an in-class final exam in the end of the last week. The final exam follows the same format of the midterm;
- 3) Thematic essays: Students will write three short thematic essays. The topics, questions and readings for these essays will be posted on the course Blackboard page. In order to be considered for a grade, the papers must:
 - be submitted in a hard copy no later than the beginning of class on the due date;
 - be typed, with font size 12, and double-spaced. It should be at least 2 but no more than 3 pages in length.
- 4) Map quiz: Students will be given a blank map of Latin America and asked to indicate the position on the map of a series of features, including countries, capitals, major cities, and bodies of water. Students will have one opportunity to re-take the quiz as part of the midterm. Because knowledge of physical features of the region is critical to the course, students who do not achieve at least 90 points (A-) will be assigned a 0 in this category;
- 5) Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the classes for which they are listed in the syllabus and students should bring the texts and their notes to class to enhance their participation in the discussions. Attendance will also be considered when assessing participation.

Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm Exam -	25%
Final Exam -	30%
Thematic essays -	25%
Map quiz -	10%
Participation -	10%

Grading scale:

A	94.0 to 100.0	B	84.0 to 86.9	C	74.0 to 76.9	D	64.0 to 66.9
A-	90.0 to 93.9	B-	80.0 to 83.9	C-	70.0 to 73.9	D-	60.0 to 63.9
B+	87.0 to 89.9	C+	77.0 to 79.9	D+	67.0 to 69.9	F	00.0 to 59.9

Academic dishonesty:

Remember that plagiarism is a form of cheating. Do not present someone else's ideas as yours, without citing the source. Buying or finding papers on similar topics of the course on the Internet is a form of plagiarism. Also remember that turning in the same paper for credit in two courses is a violation of scholarly ethics. This course adheres strictly to the Tulane Honor Code, available at: <<http://www.tulane.edu/~uc/honorcode.htm>>

Course Schedule:

WEEK I – ENCOUNTER

July 5, Tue – Introduction to the procedures and contents of the course.

- * Chasteen, chapter 1, pp. 15-27
- * Goodwin, pp. 2-6.
- Film: *The Gringo in Mañana-Land* (excerpts).

July 6, Wed – Conquest and slavery. Convergence of Indigenous, African, and Iberian cultures.

- * Chasteen, chapter 2, pp. 29-57.
- * Esteban Montejo, “A Cuban’s slave testimony”. In Darién David (ed.), *Slavery and Beyond*. Milmmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1995, pp. 11-28.

July 7, Thu - Colonial empires.

- * Chasteen, chapter 3, pp. 63-87.
- * E. Bradford Burns, *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990 (chapter 2, “The institutions of empire”, pp. 28-53).

WEEK II – NATION

July 11, Mon - Independence wars.

- * Chasteen, chapter 4, pp. 93-113.
- * Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992 (Chapter 12, “Simón Bolívar and Jose de San Martín”, pp. 249-259).

First thematic essay due!

July 12, Tue - Nation building: liberal ideas, traditional oligarchies.

* Chasteen, chapters 5 and 6, pp. 119-211.

Film: *The Buried Mirror* (Program IV, *The Price of Freedom*).

July 13, Wed – Nation building: modernization and nationalism.

* Chasteen, chapters 7 and 8, pp. 149-211.

Map quiz!

July 14, Thu – Populism, revolution and military rule.

* Chasteen, chapters 9 and 10, pp. 245-305.

July 18, Mon – MIDTERM EXAM.

WEEK III – PEOPLES

July 19, Tue – The excluded: marginalization and violence.

Film: *Bus 174*.

July 20, Wed – Indigenous peoples.

* Elizabeth Burgos-Debray (ed.), *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. London: Verso, 1992 (selections).

* Donna Lee Van Cott, “Broadening democracy: Latin America’s indigenous peoples’ movements”, *Current History*, February 2004, pp. 80-85.

* Goodwin, pp. 219-220.

July 21, Thu – Women and ethnic groups.

* Susan Tiano, “The role of women”, pp. 263-296; and

* Kevin Yelvington, “Patterns of ‘race’, ethnicity, class, and nationalism”. Both in R. Hillman (ed.), *Understanding Contemporary Latin America*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp. 229-261.

WEEK IV – IDENTITY

July 25, Mon – Cultural hybridism.

* Néstor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995 (“Entrance”, pp. 1-11; chapter 2, pp. 41-65; chapter 5, pp. 145-183).

Second thematic essay due!

July 26, Tue – Culture and national identities: samba, carnival and telenovelas.

* Alma Guillermoprieto, *Samba*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990, pp. 15-36.

* Roberto da Matta, “Carnival in Rio and Mardi Gras in New Orleans: a contrastive study”. In R. Matta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991, pp. 116-136.

* Ana Lopez, “Our welcomed guests: telenovelas in Latin America”. In Robert Allen (ed.), *To be Continued ... Soap Operas Around the World*. London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 256-275.

July 27, Wed - Shifting religious identities in Latin America.

* Michael Fleet, "Religion in Latin America". In R. Hillman (ed.), *Understanding Contemporary Latin America*, pp. 323-349.

* Patricia Birman and David Lehmann, "Religion and the media in a battle for ideological hegemony: the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil". *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. Vol. 18, n. 2, 1999, pp 145-164.

Film: *Televangelism in Brazil*.

July 28, Thu – Globalization and cultural identity.

* Jorge Larrain, "The neoliberal state: 1990 onwards", in J. Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

* Silvio Waisbord, "The ties that still blind: media and national cultures in Latin America", *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 23, n. 3, 1998.

* Victor Armony and Paul Lamy, "Latin American Culture and the challenge of globalization", *Ciencia Ergo Sum*, Vol. 6, n. 3, 1999, pp. 243-252.

WEEK V – CONTEMPORARY DILEMMAS

August 1, Mon – Drug trafficking and war.

* Goodwin, pp. 169-175.

* Alma Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History: Dispatches from Latin America*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2001, pp. 19-54.

Third thematic essay due!

August 2, Tue - Neoliberalism and its discontents.

* Chasteen, chapter 11, pp. 307-321.

* Alma Guillermoprieto, *Looking for History*, pp. 185-223.

August 3, Wed - The prospects for democracy in Latin America.

* Peter Smith, *Democracy in Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 (Introduction, pp. 1-15; chapter 9, pp. 237-262; and Epilogue, pp. 327-345).

* Goodwin, p. 168; and pp. 206-210.

August 4, Thu - Conclusions. Course evaluation.**August 5, Fri: FINAL EXAM.**