HIST 228 Modern Latin America

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Course Description.

This survey course provides a multi-disciplinary framework for understanding contemporary Latin America. In particular, we will analyze contemporary Latin American politics, economics, and forms of cultural and social change. We also address the role of gender, race, social movements, transitions to democracy, relations with the United States, and the impact of globalization in the Latin American context. In essence, students examine a range of contemporary social issues in the region within historical context.

Latin American Studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the myriad issues that define the region. Latin Americanist scholars consider a variety of perspectives and employ diverse analytical tools in their work; generally, Latin American Studies incorporates the methodologies and theoretical frameworks from: development studies, economics, geography, history, sociology, political science, geography, gender studies, international relations, public policy, and social anthropology. Latin American Studies can also incorporate films studies and literary studies as well. Generally, and by its most common definition, Latin American Studies is considered a social science.

At UNR, HIST 228 is an introduction to the main issues of the region and focuses primarily on the social sciences (and related theories) associated with Latin American Studies. In addition, the vast majority of the course focuses on events of the 20th and 21st centuries. In addition, the faculty teaching the course has a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies. The readings are all from social science journals and the textbook of the course focuses on political science, development economics, and cultural anthropology and is written by two prominent political scientists in the field.

CO 6: Social Science

Courses satisfying CO6 examine human behavior or societies and introduce students to systematic methods of inquiry for understanding individuals and communities. They may focus on topics such as political and economic systems, laws, ideologies, religious beliefs, customs, social structures, or personal experiences that influence ideas, actions, and decisions. Information may be collected and analyzed through empirical or qualitative research methods as appropriate to the disciplines.

Students in HIST 228 will be introduced to a number of theoretical models (in economics and political science particular to Latin America). In addition, they will utilize these
approaches to analyze (in writing and via discussion) major economic and political issues in Latin America: authoritarianism and human rights activism, US Latin American relations, and economic development. Students also research a contemporary issue providing theoretical insights and utilizing a variety of primary sources.

CO 1 Students will be able to effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes. In HIST 228, students will write two essays, participate in class and group discussions, and will write/present a multi-media project to the class.

CO 3 Students will be critical consumers of information, able to engage in systematic research processes, frame questions, read critically, and apply observational and experimental approaches to obtain information. In HIST 228, students will critically assess testimonial literature, film, data, and other primary sources, as well as construct an argument in their final project.

Student Learning Outcomes.

1. Contextualize current events in Latin America in relation to historical and current global contexts internationally and within the region.

2. Analyze major political, economic and social issues and trends in contemporary Latin America.

3. Define concepts and terms associated with social science research in the field of Latin American Studies and selected areas of economics and political science as they relate to Latin America.

4. Utilize a variety of proposed social science theories and primary source evidence to analyze a variety of issues and texts.

Required Readings.


Articles provided on WebCampus and listed in the schedule below.

Grade Distribution

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Short Essays</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
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The Plus/Minus system of grading applies in this course.

93-100 A  80-82 B-  67-69 D+
92-90 A-  77-79 C+  63-66 D
87-89 B+  73-76 C  62-60 D-
83-86 B  70-72 C-  59-0 F

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION.

Our common goal in this class should be to create a friendly atmosphere that is conducive to discussion and questions. Regular attendance is important to this goal. In addition, please note that the examinations are based on classroom lectures, discussions, handouts, and all discussed primary sources, cultural texts, and films. Lectures are also designed to facilitate the analysis of the required texts and the written assignments associated with them. Consequently, excessive absences will seriously hinder your ability to do well on the exams and the assignments and therefore the class.

****Please arrive ON TIME to class. ****

CELLPHONES AND COMPUTERS.

Please remember to turn off your cell phones during class and stow them. You are welcome to utilize a computer to take notes during lectures; however, it should not be utilized to check your email, your Facebook account, or play games, etc. while in class. Please be courteous and wait until our class is over to engage in such activities.

PACKING UP.

Please refrain from packing books and other items until the instructor formally ends the class.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE.

Please make sure that you identify yourself when you send a message to the professor, as well as use proper salutations. For example, “Dear Dr./Prof. Curcio: this is Robert/Sally and I was wondering when you planned to teach that fabulous course on the Mexicas?”

Also please note that I send out messages, assignment instructions, study guides, and even primary sources, etc. via email. Consequently, please make sure that I have your most up-to-date email address and do check your email regularly.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to equal opportunity in education for all
students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. If you have a documented disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY.**

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student’s enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. Please note that in History 228 academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in a grade of F for the course.

**TAPING CLASS.**

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class might be recorded.

**WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS.**

Two examinations assess your knowledge of the material presented in lectures, handouts, power point presentations, visual images, the film, the primary sources and (secondary sources) books discussed in class.

Examinations generally incorporate a variety of question types such as identification, multiple choice, short answer, and short essay. A study guide will be provided for each exam approximately one week before the date of an exam. To do well on the two examinations, attend class regularly, watch the film, and read the primary source documents and the required articles/essays carefully.

Take copious notes during lectures and discussions.

**QUIZZES.**

This course includes seven quizzes. Six (6) are unannounced Pop Quizzes on lecture material and readings. One quiz is announced, the map quiz, and is listed in the class schedule. At the end of the semester, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS.**
Please read the required texts before the date stipulated in the syllabus and bring it to class on the day it is being discussed.

All assignments are due in class on the date designated in the class schedule. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

***You must cite the exact page numbers from the required text in your essays or answers, even though it is the only work being analyzed and included in any given written assignment.***

**Required Parenthetical Citational Style:** (author’s last name, space, date of publication of work, colon, two spaces, page number(s). For example: information taken from page 8 of Jim Smith, *Vegetarian Living* (New York: Dunlap, 1929) would be written as (Smith 1929: 8).

**Essay Assignments.**

**Essay #1  “Authoritarianism and Human Rights”**

Carefully read *I Remember Julia* and consider the variety of viewpoints represented about the Dirty War and the Disappeared in Argentina. Using the articles regarding this tragic era in Argentine history read and discussed in class (see theoretical considerations in the schedule below), write a 4-page essay answering the question: How does the book problematize the plight of the Disappeared and illustrate or comment on the approaches presented in the articles?

**Essay #2  “Modernization and its Challenges”**

Carefully view the film, “Central Station.” Using class discussions regarding the film and readings regarding development and various economic models (See theoretical considerations in schedule below), answer the following question: How does the film critique modernization and its impact in Brazil (and by extension Latin America)?

**Issues Analysis Project**

In a small group, select a contemporary issue in a particular Latin American nation. Research this topic and prepare a 20-minute power point presentation to the class. Your Issue Analysis should include the following:

1. Explication of the issue as it stands right now;
2. Historical context for the issue;
3. Theoretical Considerations: how have scholars and policy makers studied and analyzed the issue? What models or frameworks have they utilized? (you must present specific works)
4. What recommendations do you suggest?
5. Bibliography.

**NOTE:** Your project must include the analysis of at least two primary sources.
**Class Schedule**

**Jan. 27**  What is Latin American Studies?


**Jan. 29**  Colonial Legacy: Issues and Institutions
- Economiendas, haciendas and Native peasant economies
- plantation complex and connections between capital and labor flows
- Connecting race/ethnicity, gender, and agency/revolt

**Liberal Economic and Political Model during the 19th Century**

**Feb. 3**  The State in the 19th century
- What political models and patterns developed in the 19th century?
- What are the social origins of dictatorship and democracy?

**Map Quiz in class today**
Read: *Latin America*, pp. 217-236.

**Feb. 5:**  The 19th-century Economic Models
- What was the Liberal economic model and who benefitted from it?
- What is the historical role of land in Latin America?

**Modern Challenges and Issues**

**Feb. 10**  U.S. Latin American Relations: An Overview of Policy
Read: *Latin America*, pp. 316-338.

**Feb. 12**  Theories and Policies that define US-Latin American Relations today

Required Readings for Group Discussions:


**Feb. 17**  The Revolutionary Option
The Socialist State model in Latin America
Exportation of Revolution


Feb. 19 Theories of Economic Development in Latin America
Read: Latin America, pp. 186-216.

Recommended Readings.


Feb. 24 Economic Development Case Studies

Required Readings Group Discussions:

Selections from: Raimundo Soto and Felipe Zurita, eds., “Two Centuries of Economic Growth: Latin America and its Bicentennial Celebration,” Latin American Journal of Economics, 48.2 (2011): 113-132. [volume with essays about Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Chile. Each group will examine the economic policies and trajectory for one of the countries highlighted. Each article reviews economic models/policies and their efficacy chronologically.]

Feb. 26 Bureaucratic Authoritarianism 1960s-1980s

Mar. 3 Models of Human Rights/Civil Society Activism

Required Readings For Group Discussion:


F. Aguero, “Institutions, Transitions, and Bargaining: Civilians and the Military in Shaping Postauthoritarian Regimes,” in David Pion-Berlin, ed., Civil Military Relations


Mar. 5 Discussion of I Remember Julia

Mar. 10 Globalization and Neoliberalism and the contemporary State
Local and global challenges to the state

Recommended Readings.


Mar. 12 Midterm

Mar. 17 Spring Break

Mar. 19 Spring Break

Mar. 24 Indigeneity and the Indigenous rights movements: Focus on Ecuador
Essay on “Authoritarianism and Human Rights” due in class


Mar. 26 Issue Analysis Theme and Bibliography due in class
Natural Resources/Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

Ecological and natural resource diversity in Latin America
The dilemma of population and development
The politics of natural resources, renewable and non-renewable


Mar. 31 Film: Central Station
Apr. 2  **Film: Central Station**

Apr. 7  Race in Latin America: Focus on Brazil

Read:


Apr. 9  Religion: Liberation Theology and its legacy: Focus on El Salvador

Read: *Latin America*, pp. 141-159.

Apr. 14  Religion: Protestantism: Focus on Guatemala

***Modernization and its Challenges Essay due in class***

Apr. 16  Gender: Women’s Movement in Latin America

Read: *Latin America*, pp. 113-138.

Apr. 21  Gender, Sexuality, and Identity: Focus on Argentina


Apr. 23  The War on Drugs: A Transnational Issue


Apr. 28  Issue Analysis Projects due

Apr. 30  Issue Analysis Projects due

May 4  Issue Analysis Projects due

May 11  **Final Exam**