

MODERN LATIN AMERICA, 1810 to the Present

History 0234
(SPRING 2024)

Location TBA

Prof. Daniel A. Rodriguez
Peter Green 301
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10AM-12PM, on
Zoom: <https://brown.zoom.us/j/407969220>

TA: TBA

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the history of post-independence Latin America. Through lectures, discussions and shared readings, we will explore major themes in the past two hundred years of Latin American history, from the early nineteenth-century independence movements to the recent “Left Turn” in Latin American politics. Some of the topics we will examine include the racial politics of state-formation; the fraught history of U.S.-Latin American relations; the cultural politics of nationalism; how modernity was defined in relation to gender and sexuality; and the emergence of authoritarian regimes and revolutionary mobilizations, and the role of religion in shaping these processes. While we will examine the role of economic and political elites in shaping this history, we will pay particular attention to the actions and thinking of “subaltern actors” such as workers, peasants, students, indigenous communities, women, and people of color. In exploring this broader historical period, we will pay particular attention to the debates and shifting politics that have influenced historical research, and through a close examination of various primary source documents, we will also engage in our own historical analyses.

Goals of the Course:

This is officially a lecture course, but I do not expect students to sit back and quietly absorb cold historical “facts.” Rather, the course is designed to combine some lecturing--where I do provide historical context, broad overview of major themes, conflicts, and debates--with a significant amount of in-class engagement with historical primary sources such as photographs, paintings, songs, speeches, court transcripts, etc. The goal is for us to use the sources and tools available to us to *interpret* the past, and to understand (and critique) the interpretations of professional historians that have come before us. I certainly encourage students to ask questions during class, but we will also be meeting weekly (beginning in the third week or so) for small-group discussion sections.

The fundamental goal of this course is to provide a sound basis in the major themes of modern Latin American history in order to better understand the historical roots of contemporary issues in Latin American politics, society, and culture. The other main goal is to help students to sharpen their critical reading and writing skills and develop a stronger understanding of historical methodologies. All of these goals require the active participation of students in classroom discussion and group exercises. Please come to class having carefully read the assigned texts and be prepared to share your thoughts on the relevant readings.

Course Requirements:

I expect everyone to attend class, complete readings, participate in discussion, and turn in papers/responses on time. Unexcused absences will affect the participation grade. Students are expected to comply with the Brown

University guidelines regarding academic integrity. (Please see http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/curriculum/documents/academic-code.pdf if you aren't sure what these are.)

Course Time Allotment:

The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for all full credit courses at Brown is approximately 180 hours over the length of a semester. Over 14 weeks, students in this class will spend 3 hours per week in the classroom (42 hours total), plus one hour per week in discussion sections (10 hours). Course reading, short quizzes and other out-of-class work is estimated at around 6.5 hours per week (91 hours). Students are required to attend three Latin America related events over the course of the semester, and write short reports on the events (9 hours), and are expected to spend 5 hours studying and reviewing for the in-class midterm exam, and an additional 9 hours studying for and writing the take-home essays (15 hours). Finally, students are expected to spend 5 hours studying and reviewing for the in-class final, and 9 hours studying for and writing the take-home essays (15 hours). Actual times will, of course, vary for each student, and final grades are determined by the quality of writing and participation, not by the actual amount of time spent on the course.

Assignments and Grading:

-**Short Writing Assignment/Quiz** (worth 5% of final grade)

-**Three (2 page) reports on Latin America-related events/exhibits/documentaries** (each worth 5% of final grade). See description of these papers below.

-**Midterm Take-home Exam** (25% of final grade, date TBA)

-**Final Exercises** (worth 35% of the final grade): Students have three options.

Option A) Final Take-Home Exam, consisting of short take-home essays

Option B) A 8-12 page research paper, on a topic developed in consultation with the professor.

Option C) A final project, such as an oral history project, podcast, short film, etc., that engages with the Latin American past. Students wishing to do a final project must meet with the professor and submit a proposal **by March 20.**

-**Participation** (20% of final grade), an includes attendance, active participation in sections, and posting weekly discussion questions on Canvas (once discussion sections begin).

Note on “2-page reports on Latin America-related events/exhibits/documentaries”: Over the course of the semester, students are required to attend, or watch, three Brown University-sponsored events (films, lectures, teach-ins, panels, etc.) that deal with any issue related to Latin American history, politics, arts, etc., OR watch documentaries or visit online museum exhibits that speak to Latin American history. (A list of recommended films/documentaries/exhibits will be posted onto the course Canvas site.) To receive course credit, students will write up short 2-page double-spaced essays describing the event/film/exhibit, and how it fits into some of the themes of our course.

REQUIRED BOOKS, available at the Brown University Bookstore, and one copy of each is on reserve at the Library:

1) Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*

2) Mark Danner *The Massacre at El Mozote*

3) James A. Wood and Anna Rose Alexander, *Problems in Modern Latin American History: Sources and Interpretations*, 5th edition.

PART I: 19th Century Independence, Race, and Nation-Building

I: Introductions and Overview

Jan 24: Overview of the course: Why study the history of Modern Latin America?

II: Latin American Independence: Perspectives from Above and from Below

January 26: Latin America on the Eve of Independence:

Required Reading:

1) Lester D. Langley, "Iberoamerica on the Eve of Revolution," 147-165, from *The Americas in the Age of Revolution* [Canvas]

January 29, 30 and February 2: The Independence Struggles: Elite Project or Subaltern Revolution?

Required Readings:

1) Lester D. Langley, "The Feared Revolution" and "The Price of Victory," 166-213 [Canvas]

2) Marcela Echeverri, "Popular Royalists, Empire, and Politics in Southwestern New Granada, 1809-1819" *Hispanic American Historical Review* (2011), pp.237-269. [Canvas]

3) Marixa Lasso, "Revisiting Independence Day: Afro-Colombian Politics and Creole Patriot Narratives, Cartagena, 1809-1815" [Canvas]

Feb 2: In-class discussion of Echeverri, Lasso, and Langley readings

III: Liberalism, Race, and State Formation

Feb: 5, 7, 9: Caudillos and the Reconstitution of Political Order

Required Readings:

1) Wood, *Problems in Modern Latin American History*, Chapter 3, "Caudillos," pp.43-64.

2) Langley, "Bolivar's America" [Canvas]

First Short Writing Assignment Due February 11, by midnight

Feb 12, 14, 16: Race, Gender, and Liberalism in 19th Century Latin America

Required Readings:

1) Brooke Larson, "Andean Highland Peasants and the Trials of Nation Making During the Nineteenth Century," in *Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, pps. 558-594, 658-688 [Canvas]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: Feb 16: -In-class discussion of Domingo F. Sarmiento, "Civilization vs. Barbarism."

February 19: NO CLASS (President's Day)

IV: Slavery and Independence in Cuba and Brazil

February, 21, 23: Slavery, Antislavery, and Freedom in Cuba and Brazil

Required Readings:

1) Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, pages 1-89.

2) Documents on Slavery and Freedom in 19th-century Cuba [Canvas]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: Feb 26: Court testimonies of the enslaved in 19th-century Cuba.

February Feb 26, 28, March 1: "Raceless Nationalism" and Cuban Independence

Required Readings:

1) Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, pp 90-202.

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: In class discussion of José Martí's "Mi Raza" and "Nuestra América"

PART II: Empire, Nationalism, and Violence in the 20th Century

I: American Empire and Latin American Nationalism

March 4, 6, 8: Latin America and the United States: Culture, Politics, and Empire

Required Readings:

1) William Appelmann Williams, "Imperial Anticolonialism," in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, pp.18-57.

[Canvas]

2) Daniel A. Rodríguez, "A Blessed Formula for Progress: Medical Nationalism, U.S. Empire, and the Development of Public Health, 1899-1909" in *The Right to Live in Health: Medical Politics in Postindependence Havana* [Canvas]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: In class discussion of selection of newspaper articles from 1898-1899.

March 11, 13, 15: Mexico: Popular Mobilization and Nationalism

Required Readings:

1) Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution*, pp 41-126, 327-339 [Canvas]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: In class discussion of Emiliano Zapata's "Plan de Ayala"

March 18, 20, 22: El Salvador and Nicaragua: Revolutionary Nationalism and Communist Organizing

Required Readings:

1) Roque Dalton and Miguel Marmol, *Miguel Marmol* (selection) [Canvas]

2) Articles on Sandinista uprising in 1920s Nicaragua [Canvas]

SPRING BREAK--HAVE FUN!

II: Modernity, Science, and Gender

April 1, 3, 5: Science, Sexuality, and Modernity in Brazil

Required Readings:

1) James N. Green, "Doctoring the National Body: Gender, Race, Eugenics, and the "Invert" in Urban Brazil" in Katherine Bliss and William French, eds., *Gender, Sexuality, and Power in Latin America Since Independence* [Canvas]

2) Barbara Weinstein, "Unskilled Worker, Skilled Houswife: Constructing the Working-Class Woman in São Paulo, Brazil" in *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers*, pp.72-95 [Canvas]

3) Teresa Meade, "Civilizing Rio de Janeiro: The Public Health Campaign and the Riot of 1904," *Journal of Social History* 20, no. 2 (1986):301-22; [Canvas]

III: Reform, Revolution, and Cold-War Violence

April 8, 10, 12: Populist Reform and Revolution in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina

Required Readings:

- 1) Joel Wolfe, “‘Father of the Poor’ or ‘Mother of the Rich’?: Getúlio Vargas, Industrial Workers, and Constructions of Class, Gender, and Populism in São Paulo, 1930-1954” [**Canvas**]
- 2) Primary sources on populism in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil [**Canvas**]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: In Class discussion of "Five Lives Affected by Vargas Era Reforms"

April 15, 17, 19: Cold War and State Terror in Latin America

Required Readings:

- 1) Mark Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote*
- 2) Wood, *Problems in Modern Latin American History*, Chapter 10 “The Cold War”

Recommended:

- 1) 2018 documentary on women in the Sandinista struggle: ¡*Las Sandinistas!* [link on **Canvas**]

READING PRIMARY SOURCES: In class discussion of Oscar Romero, “The Last Sermon” (<http://www.haverford.edu/relg/faculty/amcguire/romero.html>)

IV: Final Thoughts: Grappling with the Past in Post-Cold War Latin America

April 22, 24, 26: Neoliberalism, Resistance, and Historical Memory

Required Readings:

- 1) Greg Grandin, "The Cold War as Revolution and Counterrevolution", from *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* [**Canvas**]
- 2) Wood, *Problems in Modern Latin American History*, Chapters 11 and 12, “The Global Economy” and “Historical Memory.”
- 3) Readings on NAFTA and Zapatistas [**Canvas**]

FINAL Take-home EXAM Due May 15