

CUBA: REVOLUTION AND REFORM

Professor Richard E. Feinberg
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Poli Sci 134J
Fall 2018
Classroom WLH 2113
TTh 2:00 – 3:20 pm
Office Hours: Tu 4:00 – 6:00 pm

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The following required readings are available in the UCSD Bookstore

Peter Eisner and Philip Brenner, *Cuba Libre: A 500-Year Quest for Independence*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2017.

Richard Feinberg, *Open for Business: Building the New Cuban Economy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2016.

Jorge I. Domínguez et al.(eds.), *Social Policies and Decentralization in Cuba*. Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2017.

Course Scope and Learning Objectives

The course scope will encompass an exploration of the roots of the 1959 Cuban revolution; a multivariate assessment of Fidel Castro as a national leader; a deep dive into the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary Cuban socialist economy, including state-owned enterprises, foreign investment and the domestic private sector, with attention to international tourism; the acclaimed social accomplishments of the Cuban revolution; and Cuban's diplomatic and commercial relations with the world, with special attention to U.S.-Cuban relations.

The students will gain an appreciation of utopian socialist thought in the mid-20th century, and the impact of revolutionary upheavals on social structures and individual lives; of the strengths and weaknesses of socialist economics and vanguard party politics; and of the role of great figures and social forces in the making of modern history. Viewing the Cuban experience through the lens of comparative politics, students will gain new insights into their own national political cultures and identities. Throughout, students will be encouraged to exercise their analytical capacities and to assess critically assigned readings and class discussions.

Materials

Written materials include assigned books and essays, as well as audio-visual materials. Students are encouraged to follow Cuba-related web sites and blogs (in English and Spanish), and to stay abreast of events in Cuba and in U.S.-Cuban relations. As schedules allow, visiting speakers may include Cubans studying at UCSD. The professor's power point presentations will be posted on TritonEd.

Course Procedures and Requirements

Because of the large size of the class, the lecture format will predominate. However, students will be encouraged to voice their opinions, and must come well prepared to discuss the assigned readings. **Attendance and participation in class discussions are mandatory; unavoidable absences should be accompanied by explanatory e-mails to the Professor.**

Participation

Students will earn their participation points by contributing to discussions in class. The students will be called upon at random from the roster to answer questions about the reading material of that day and/or discuss recent news articles about Cuba. On cold calls, you will be called by the name that is on the official University roster. If the student prefers to be called by a middle name or nickname, please notify the TA, who will amend our records accordingly. If the student is not present at the time of the cold call, and no notification was made to the Professor or TA about their absence, points will be deducted from their final participation grade.

Additionally, there will be two pop quizzes throughout the quarter. Students will be expected to answer one question in roughly 250 words in class on the pop quiz. The question will address the assigned reading materials. The participation grade will account for 20% of the student's total grade.

Papers

Students will submit four short written essays (typed, double-spaced), according to the timetable indicated on the syllabus. Each paper will be worth 20% of the student's grade. Papers must be turned in online to TritonEd AND hard copy by the start of the class. In the case of a C+ grade or lower, students will be allowed one rewrite of their paper on the first two assignments only.

Academic Integrity

Incidents of plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the UCSD Office of Academic Integrity. Suspected plagiarism or cheating will be first addressed with the student. Please contact the TA if you have concerns or questions about properly citing sources and avoiding plagiarism.

Office Hours

The professor will hold regular office hours and students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to raise critical questions and exchange viewpoints.

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GPS Office 1424
Office Hours: Tu 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Electronics

Laptops and phones will not be permitted in class. Please take notes by hand or speak to the TA if an arrangement is necessary.

Excursion

The class may experience Cuban cuisine at a local restaurant, in which case attendance will be encouraged but ultimately will be voluntary.

Grading

The final course grade will reflect performance on the four essays as well as class participation. Each essay and total participation is worth 20%.

Week 1 (October 2, 4): Backg round to the Cuban Revolution

Readings:

Peter Eisner and Philip Brenner, *Cuba Libre: A 500-Year Quest for Independence*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2017, chapters 7 – 10.

Topics for class discussion:

- 1) Introductory slides: “Havana”
- 2) How did the Cuban revolution succeed, against all odds?
- 3) Why did the Cuban revolution radicalize?
- 4) If you had been Cuban in 1959, what would you have done?
- 5) Students to begin to familiarize themselves with Cuban media and internet sites (see list at end of the syllabus)

Week 2 (October 9, 11): Fidel Castro: How Will History Judge Him?

Readings:

Fidel Castro, “History Will Absolve Me.” October 16, 1953.

http://college.cengage.com/history/world/keen/latin_america/8e/assets/students/sources/pdfs/87_fidel_castro.pdf

Obituaries: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/26/fidel-castro-obituary> ;
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/26/world/americas/fidel-castro-dies.html?_r=0

Topics for class discussion:

- 1) Fidel Castro: Hero or Villain?
- 2) Slides on Fidel’s birthplace: Santiago and El Oriente
- 3) How to structure a short essay

Essay #1: (750 words, double-spaced), Due Oct. 16 in class, hard copy. Your opinion of Fidel Castro. Include references to the Eisner/Brenner book, Fidel’s “History...”, and at least one obituary.

Week 3 (October 16, 18): The Cuban Economy Today (1): Background, Foreign Investment

Readings:

Richard Feinberg, *Open for Business: Building the New Cuban Economy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2016), chapters 2, 4.

Week 4 (October 23, 25): The Cuban Economy Today (2): Private Business, Future Challenges

Readings:

Richard Feinberg, *Open for Business: Building the New Cuban Economy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2016), chapter 6.

Richard Feinberg, "The Cuban Economy After Raul Castro: A Tale of Three Worlds," <https://www.brookings.edu/research/cubas-economy-after-raul-castro-a-tale-of-three-worlds/>

Week 5 (Oct. 30, Nov. 1): International Tourism, Regionalism and El Oriente

Readings:

Richard Feinberg and Richard Newfarmer, "Tourism in Cuba: Riding the Wave Toward Sustainable Prosperity," <https://www.brookings.edu/research/tourism-in-cuba/>

Essay #2 (750 words, double-spaced) (due in class on Nov. 1): If you were to visit Cuba, what questions would you seek to answer with regard to the nation's present economy and future prospects? Include references to the assigned readings.

Week 6 (November 6, 8): Cuban Cinema and Cuisine (Possible visit to a local Cuban restaurant.)

Students to watch "Four Seasons in Havana" (crime thrillers based on the novels by Leonardo Padura), available on Netflix. Or read one of the four novels.

Review of "Four Seasons in Havana": <http://wlrn.org/post/condes-cuba-crisis-paduras-maverick-havana-sleuth-comes-us-tv>

Week 7 (November 13, 15): Social Issues: education (K-12, university), health, environment, women, Afro-Cubans, religions, Cuban culture (Possible guest lecture by Cuban student at GPS).

Readings:

Jorge I. Dominguez et al.(eds.), *Social Policies and Decentralization in Cuba*. Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2017. Chapters 1 (Introduction), 6 (education), 7 (health care), 8 (environment), 9 (remittances).

Student activity: student teams will make 5-7 minute class presentations on these social topics.

Essay #3 (750 words, double-spaced) (due in class on Nov. 20): Your opinion of the Cuban educational OR health systems.

Week 8 (November 20, Thanksgiving): Cuban Foreign Policy

Readings:

Richard Feinberg, *Open for Business*, chapter 3.

Week 9 (November 27, 29): U.S.-Cuban Relations

Readings:

Eisner and Brenner, *Cuba Libre*, chapters 11 - 13, 23 - 26.

Richard Feinberg, *Open for Business*, chapter 1.

Week 10 (December 4, 6): Social Media; Cuban millennials

Readings:

R. Feinberg, *Open for Business*, chapter 7.

Class activities: 1) Students' assessments of social media sites (pro-government, anti-government), the authors, apparent goals, points of view, target audiences, content scope, quality, revenue sources if any; 2) Students to roll-play the millennials featured in *Open for Business* and consider how they might fare should they emigrate.

Essay #4 (750 words, double-spaced), due in class on Dec. 6: If you were living in Cuba, would you plan to stay or emigrate?

Suggested Cuban Media and Web Sites (Students to add others)

Cubahora; Progreso Seminal; OnCuba; Negolution; El Toque; Cuba Contemporanea; Tremenda Nota.

CubaDebate; 14yMedio; Periodismo de Barrio; El Estornudo de Madrugada; La Joven Cuba; Siro Cuartel

Cuba Standard (business news, subscription required)

Cuba Trade Journal (Miami-based economic news)

La Mesa Redonda (Cuban TV)

Granma International Edition (English); Juventud Rebelde

ONEI (Oficina Nacional de Estadística y Información) – Official Statistics