

Twentieth Century Latin America: Cycles of Popular Struggle, Democratic Change and Repression

HILA 102

Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:50

PCYNH 120

Professor Matthew Vitz

Office: H&SS 4063

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 or by appointment

This course explores the Latin American experience during the twentieth century, an era of rapid social change, political reform, right-wing reaction, and violent upheaval. Governments became more authoritarian and repressive in their responses to democratic and other left-wing challenges. We will study multiple histories across the region while focusing on key themes that have shaped contemporary Latin America. These include economic development and dependency, mass politics and democracy, Cold War violence and insurgency, the role of the United States in Latin America's history, urbanization, recent democratic transitions, drug wars, and racial, class, and gender politics. The primary course objectives are to familiarize you with the main themes of Latin American history; introduce you to various historical interpretations and perspectives; encourage you to think about change over time, power and hierarchy, and historical comparison; as well as improve your critical thinking and writing skills.

You will learn, to paraphrase a famous American writer, that Latin America's past is not dead; in fact, it's not even past. That is, history is what makes our present. History constrains our options; it teaches us the paths that were taken and the paths that were not taken and why; it teaches us why we organize governments and economies a certain way and not another; history is our window into the exercise of political power, social hierarchies, and economic inequality. History gives us meaning as well.

A Brief note on History

History is much, much more than the rote memorization of dates, names and facts. History is about grasping cause and effect; change over time; why and how people have rebelled, warred, and conflicted with each other; and why they have come to political agreements and/or sought common cultural and political bonds. History is about understanding the interaction of numerous social forces that produce an effect. It is about seeing connections across time and space while also discerning differences. History helps us understand power, social exclusion and inclusion, and shifting subjectivities. The study of history allows for a deeper understanding of the variety of ways in which humans have interacted with one another.

History is also about stories, people, and examples. We learn about interesting characters, we learn about the key decisions they took, we learn about

the lives of common people, and we learn about how even the poorest and most marginalized groups have shaped history. Moreover, History is about concrete examples. Historians crave evidence and use examples or cases to elaborate an argument.

History is not something that exists outside human interpretation. Politicians, writers, historians, journalists, and others “make” history in the sense that they produce interpretations of the past using primary documentation that itself was the product of earlier interpretive work. We (usually) know that certain events happened (e.g., World War II, the Cuban Revolution), but their interpretations shift depending on who is doing the interpreting, the historical moment, and the documents they use to write their histories.

A Brief Note on Note-Taking

Take good notes. Understand the key themes of each lecture, the key people involved, and the key terms. I will provide a list of key terms at the beginning of each class. In your exams, you will need to use evidence in the forms of historical examples and cases from the lectures and readings. This is how I know you are understanding the material. I will write key terms (people, events, and concepts) on the board. Use these terms as a guide for your note taking. If you are confused during lecture, raise your hand. No question is a bad question!

Structure

This is a lecture course, and while lecture will take up a majority of class time, I will integrate other activities as well: reading discussion, “one-minute papers” to review lecture material, the occasional film or other multimedia presentation, in-class primary source readings, and other activities. Discussions of the readings will take place the day the reading is due and will frequently address questions that I assign to you beforehand. Note that I will often have you discuss the readings in small groups first and then proceed to a full class discussion. Your participation grade, therefore, is important.

“There is no thought without words,” as Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure remarked, so much of this class will be dedicated to you thinking for yourself, developing your own informed arguments through writing, and making your own sense of history in order to come to grips with the world we live in. This requires your participation in class (I will offer you numerous opportunities in small and large groups, the “one-minute papers,” questions during lecture, etc.) as well as your ability to write critically, convincingly, and coherently about the past (see below).

Course Goals:

--Effective and critical thinking about the past to understand the myriad ways in which humans have related to and interacted with one another, the way inequalities

and social hierarchies are constructed and maintained over time, and the lives of individuals and groups within these structures of power

--Knowledge of the U.S.' role in the world, particularly Latin America, and the consequences of that role.

--Knowledge of the systems in which we live (capitalism, the nation-state, government forms, etc) not as natural or immutable, but as products of history and human decision-making.

--Grow knowledge of Latin American culture, history, and politics (Mexico is, after all, just 30 minutes down I-5!)

--Broaden your worldviews to become better, more informed global citizens

--Ability to write coherently and analytically about the past

--Effective public speaking skills

--The capacity to read primary source material and compare events across time and space

Course Requirements

In-class Reading Responses 20% (I will often test your comprehension and engagement with reading material. This will be done in class, and the days it will be done will be more or less random).

Class participation/attendance 10% (There will be other in-class activities such as one-minute papers, reading discussions, and lecture Q&A to allow you to receive full credit for class attendance and participation)

Map quiz 10% (quiz during week 2 on countries and capitals)

Midterm essay 25% (a 5 page essay where you answer one of two prompt questions. In answering this question you will need to integrate at least one relevant outside source into your essay)

Final exam essay 35% (a 6 page essay. Same format as above, but without the outside source)

Office Hours and Availability

If you cannot see me during office hours, please send me an email to arrange an alternative time. I want you to do well in this class, so please stay in touch with me

throughout the quarter. If you are confused about the material or if you're having trouble keeping up in class, do not hesitate to see me.

Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. You may work in groups or consult with other classmates for assignments, but all work in the end must be your own.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. There are two kinds of plagiarism: copying the work of another person word for word (a sentence, part of a sentence or more) and the use of idea(s) that you do not attribute to its author with a citation). If I catch an act of plagiarism, I will consult with university authorities (The Academic Integrity Office). This could result in automatic failure of the class or the assignment, depending on the severity of the case, as well as additional administrative sanctions.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities enrolled in the course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, unless university assistance is needed to implement a requested accommodation.

Reading Requirements

Available at the bookstore and on reserve:

Teresa Meade, *A History of Modern Latin America from 1800 to the Present* (Wiley Blackwell, 2010)

HILA 102 Course Reader

Course schedule (Subject to change)

Tuesday, April 4: Course Introduction, Key Concepts to Know, and Trials of 19th Century Nation-State Formation

Nations, States, and Modernization

Thursday, April 6: Latin America in the World Economy

Readings (to discuss today): Meade, chapter 5; Robert Buffington, *Keen's Latin American Civilization*, 118-22, 125-6, 129-33; and Thomas Hollaway, "Latin America: What's in a name" *A companion to Latin American History*, Blackwell, 2008. (available on Ted)

Turn-of-the-Century Revolutions and the Role of the United States

Tuesday, April 11: Cuban Independence and U.S. Occupation

Readings: *Keen's* 145-50; and Aviva Chomsky and Barry Carr, *The Cuban Reader* (Durham: Duke Univ Press) 147-153

Thursday, April 13: The Mexican Revolution

-In-class reading assignment

Readings: Meade chapter 7; Joseph and Henderson, *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture and Politics* (Duke Univ. Press) 335-343 and 357-63 and 364-71.

Map Quiz in class

Latin American Populism and Mass Politics

Tuesday, April 18: A Revolution Fulfilled?

Readings: None

I will pass out mid-term essay prompt

Thursday, April 20: Perón, Vargas, and Populism in South America

Readings: Meade, chapter 8 and 9; and *Keen's* 167-76; 182-4; 187-93; and Gabriela Nouzeilles ed., *The Argentina Reader* "Saint Evita" 296-303.

The Latin American Cold War

Tuesday, April 25: Post-WWII Democratic Tide and the Bolivian Revolution

Readings: None

Thursday, April 27: The Guatemalan Revolution and 1954 Coup

-Mid-term Prep

Readings: Meade, Ch. 10.

Tuesday, May 2: The Cuban Revolution and its Consequences

Readings: Meade, Ch 11; and Fidel Castro, "History will absolve me" (on Ted)

Thursday, May 4: No class (work on midterm essay)

Tuesday, May 9: Latin America's 1968 and the Rise of Military Regimes

Readings: Meade, ch 12.

****Midterm due in class and on Ted**

Thursday, May 11: Chile's Road to Socialism and Neoliberal counter-revolution
Readings: Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico* 1-34 of chapter 1; and 169-227.

Tuesday, May 16: In class film: "The Battle of Chile"
Readings: *Keen's* 221-24 "The Death of Victor Jarra."

Thursday, May 18: The Sandinistas Come to Power, The U.S. and Contra War
-In-class reading assignment
Readings: Meade, ch. 13; and Zolov and Holden, *Latin America and the United States*, 289-302.

Tuesday, May 23: Liberation Theology, Revolution and Reaction
Readings: Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 72-82; and 121-142; and 162-174

Thursday, May 25: Film: "Pictures from a Revolution"
Readings: Digital National Security Archive Documents. These are available online---please wait for my instructions to access documents.

Contemporary Latin America

Tuesday, May 30: The Cold War and the Rise of Neoliberalism
Readings: Short readings to be posted ahead of time

Thursday, June 1: Latin America's Left Turn
-In-class reading assignment
Readings: Meade, ch. 14; and *Keen's* 281-86; and 291-302

Tuesday, June 6: Drug Wars, Migration, Poverty: An irresolvable Dilemma?
Readings: *Keen's*, 302-13; and other short readings to be made available

Thursday, June 8: Final essay Review
No readings

Final Essay due Tuesday June 13 by 12noon.