

HILA 269/169

Historiography of 20th century Latin America

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Wednesdays 9-11:50 in HSS 4025

This seminar is an introduction to some of the major trends in 20th century Latin American historiography. You will read a classic in labor history and a slew of recent monographs on diverse themes including violence and state formation; race, city, and nation; science and society; race and revolution; gender and transnational history; and the politics of the middle classes. This is far from a complete representation of the major developments in the field of Latin American history, but these excellent monographs touch on a wide range of themes and topics, which we will also explore. While none of the works listed are heavy on theory, there are certain texts that have informed the writing of modern Latin American history. I will alert you of especially relevant theoretical texts where appropriate.

You will need to submit at least 4 response papers (2-3 pages) that critically engage with the books. I have specific instructions for these response papers:

1. Try to identify (as best you can) the chief historiographic interventions the author is making. Ask yourself: Who is she/he in dialogue with? Where does she/he situate herself in the field? What is new here in terms of method, approach, and/or content? How might the author answer the “so what” question?

2. What are the principal arguments of the book?

3. What is your critique? This does not, of course, have to be negative, but consider, among other things: What might be missing? Is the source base rich and varied? Is it used effectively or might it be skewing the findings in some way? What do you think are the major advantages of the approach and method adopted by the author? You may also decide to compare approaches and methods, as well as arguments, with other books you’ve read in this seminar or others.

Our discussions will revolve around these kinds of questions, so even when you do not write a response paper, be sure to take notes and engage critically with the texts as if you were going to write one.

You will also write a 15-page literature review of a topic of your choice. Your topic does not need to be among the ones listed below.

In week 5, I will ask to see a short description of the topic you have chosen, along with a bibliography of 6-8 sources (articles, collections, and monographs).

In week 9 you will each give a presentation on the progress of your final papers. Here is what I expect from these presentations (15 minutes each):

1. A clear description of your topic and the debates that surround it. Pretend that you are teaching a class and introducing us to your topic for the first time. In other words, don't assume anything but the bare minimum of knowledge.
2. Which interpretations and approaches you connect with the most and why
3. Where your research and reading is taking you as you prepare to complete the essay assignment.

The final paper will be due by the end of exam week.

The final essay should do the following:

1. Explain the main questions and debates on the particular topic
2. Analyze the arguments of the interlocutors in those debates
3. Discuss how the approaches and arguments have shifted over time
4. Situate yourself in these debates. Is one approach or argument more convincing than another? Are there future directions in which researchers should take? Are you perhaps conducting research that will contribute to scholarship on your topic in some way?

Grading Rubric:

Participation 30%

Response Papers 20%

Presentation 10%

Final paper 40%

Week 1. Wednesday, April 5: Introduction

Week 2. April 12: A Classic in Labor history

Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge, 1988).

Week 3. April 19: Populism, Reaction and Violence

Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-53* (Duke, 2002).

Week 4. April 26: Race, Nation and City

Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: Sao Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Duke, 2015).

Week 5. May 3: Science Meets Social history

Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects and the Making of the Pill* (Duke, 2009).

Paper Description and Bibliography Due

Week 6. May 10: Race and Revolution

Devyn Spence Benson, *Anti-Racism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution* (UNC, 2015)

Week 7. May 17: Engendering Transnational history

Heidi Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime: Grapes and Consumption in Cold War Chile and the United States* (Duke, 2014)

Week 8. May 24: Urban and middle-class history

Louise Walker, *Waking from the Dream: Mexico's Middle Classes After 1968*
(Stanford, 2013)

Week 9. May 31: Individual project assignment

Week 10. June 7: New Directions in Cold War and Post-Cold War History

Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*
(Duke, 2014).