ANSC 142: The Anthropology of Latin America
Winter 2018
Professor Nancy Postero

Office SSB 264  
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Class Times: Tues/Thurs, 9:30-10:50am
Office hours: Thurs. 1-3pm

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Description of Course:
Latin America is a huge, heterogeneous, and complex place. Its peoples demonstrate an enormous diversity in ethnicity, language, religion, and political organization, yet they have faced some common challenges: colonialism, resource extractivism, racialization of its peoples, liberalism, modernization, and, more recently, neoliberalism. Moreover, the region has undergone enormous changes over the last few decades, revealing new social movements, new engagements with global capitalism, and new political relations between peoples and the state. This survey class will approach this variation through the lens of anthropological accounts, focusing on how anthropologists have seen and represented the region’s peoples and cultures. What is included and excluded in such a gaze?

Course Requirements:
1. Students should be prepared to READ a substantial amount. If you are not going to do the reading, please do not take the class. I am NOT assigning a long research paper in this class because I know there is a lot of reading. So, the contract is if you take the class, you agree to do the reading.

“How do I read all this????” Much of the reading comes from ethnographies, which often include descriptions of people’s behavior, customs, and values. It is not necessary to capture all the details of such readings, but rather to get a “feel” for what the author is describing. Always read for the arguments and ideas rather than the “facts”.

2. There will be a take-home midterm (due February 14, 2017) and an in-class final exam (week of March 20, 2017). Both will be primarily essays.

3. Students will also have two short writing exercises. First, each week a small group of students will make a 10-15 minute presentation of the readings to the class. This will require the students to meet outside of class to decide what is important about the reading and how to present it to the class. The presentation should briefly explain the ethnographic context, the main argument, and the significance of the work for the class. Then, each student will write a two-page critical response paper analyzing the reading. It should also include a “critical”
reaction to the piece, meaning your assessment of its contributions and limitations. This will be due the week after the class presentation in TA’s mailbox.

Second, during the second half of the class, each student will choose a current event in Latin America that relates to the issues we have talked about in class, and write a four page report about it. The report should take up something that has happened in the last year and discuss the context and history of the event, and the meanings it might have for the participants or other actors. How do the readings and discussions in the class help you think about the issue? Each report should include citations to at least three different news or media sources about that event and should analyze it in relation to the theoretical framework or argument from one scholarly book or article (this can be something from the syllabus or something else you find in your research). The TA must approve your topic in advance. The report will be due Monday, March 12, 2017, by 4pm in TA’s mailbox.

4. The grades will be calculated as follows:
Presentation and Critical Response Paper: 20%
Midterm: 30%
Current Event Paper: 20%
Final: 30%

5. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. The class will be much more enjoyable for all of us if we have collective discussions and dialogues. There will also be an optional discussion section run by the TA.

Readings: All readings will be available as pdfs on the class TritonED site.

Class/Readings Schedule:

****NOTE: No Class on Tuesday January 9, 2018****

Lecture 1: January 11, 2018: Introduction
No readings

Part One: Colonial Beginnings

Lecture 2: January 16, 2018: Invasion and Colonization
Lecture 3: January 18, 2018: Legacies of the Conquest: Race Domination and Mestizaje


Part Two: Poverty, Class, and Inequality

Lecture 4: January 23, 2018: Early Theories about Poverty

a. Lewis, Oscar, 1966. Introduction, In La Vida; a Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty – San Juan and New York, pp. xi-lii (41 pp)

Lecture 5: January 25, 2018 Structural Violence


Lecture 6: January 30, 2018: Labor and Exploitation

FILM: Mined to Death

Lecture 7: February 1, 2018: Contemporary Class Relations


Part Three: Race, Gender, and Citizenship

Lecture 8: February 6, 2018: The 1990s: New Social Movements and Indigenous Rights


MIDTERM PROMPT OUT THIS WEEK

Lecture 9: February 8, 2018: Gendering Race

Lecture 10: February 13, 2018: Sex and Violence

TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE: FEBRUARY 14, 2018, by 4pm in TAs mailbox and to turnitin.com.

Part Four: State Violence and Human Rights

Lecture 11: February 15, 2018: Suffering and State Violence
FILM: Discovering Dominga

Lecture 12: February 20, 2018: Transitional Justice

Part Five: Late Capitalism in Latin America

Part Lecture 13: February 22, 2018: Neoliberal Multiculturalism

**Lecture 14: February 27, 2018: Transborder Lives**

**Lecture 15: March 1, 2018: Enduring Late Capitalism**

**Lecture 16: March 6, 2018: Extractivism and Justice 1: Case Study from Ecuador**
**FILM:** Trinkets and Beads, about the Huaorani Indigenous People of Ecuador

**Lecture 17: March 8, 2018: Extractivism and Justice 2: Case Study from Bolivia**

**CURRENT EVENT REPORT DUE MONDAY, March 12, 4PM**

**Lecture 18: March 13, 2018: The Move to Decolonization**
b. Postero, Nancy, 2017. Chapter Three: Wedding the Nation: Spectacle and Political Performance, in *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia*. University of California Press. (Book available open access at: [https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.31](https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.31))

**Lecture 19: March 15, 2018: Conclusions: Activist Anthropology?**
FINAL EXAM: WEEK OF MARCH 20, 2018