HIS-209. Topics in Modern World History:
Latin American History through Film

Fall 2019

Professor: Dr. Maikel Fariñas Borrego
Lectures: Bryan Building 104 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:00 to 12:50 pm.
Office: 2112 MHRA. Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
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Course Overview

This course examines the history and cultures of Latin America through film. We will analyze cinematic attempts to represent or recreate Latin American history and culture using various films that grapple with past and current events in the region. Through these films, we will both critically examine historical developments in Latin America as well as discuss the aesthetic conventions used by fictional films to convey meaning. We will watch movie clips, and occasionally full films, to discuss them along with the readings for the day.

The region is divided into over twenty nations, but we will trace a variety of themes to approach Latin America as a whole rather than try to provide individual national histories. Our readings and in-class discussions will cover a wide array of topics such as: the “encounter” of cultures, the colonial hierarchies, the forging of new nations, political alignments in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the rising of nationalisms, the revolutionary transformations, the Cold War confrontations in the region, and migration patterns to the United States.

The course counts for 3 credit-hours and is intended for undergraduates of all majors. It fulfills the following General Education (GEC) Requirements: GE core-GHP; GE marker-GN; College Additional Requirements-GMO.

General Education Council (GEC) Student Learning Goals and Outcomes

Learning Goal 1 (LG1). Foundational Skills: Think critically, communicate effectively, and develop appropriate fundamental skills in quantitative and information literacies.

Learning Goal 3 (LG3). Knowledge of Human Histories, Cultures, and the Self: Describe, interpret, and evaluate the ideas, events, and expressive traditions that have shaped collective and individual human experience through inquiry and analysis in the diverse disciplines of the humanities, religions, languages, histories, and the arts.

Learning Goal 5 (LG5). Personal, Civic, and Professional Development: Develop a capacity for active citizenship, ethics, social responsibility, personal growth, and skills for lifelong learning in a global society. In so doing, students will engage in free and open inquiry that fosters mutual respect across multiple cultures and perspectives.
As a General Historical Perspectives (GHP) course with a Global Non-western (GN) marker, this course emphasizes the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

**General Historical Perspectives (GHP)**
1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives. (LG1)
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing. (LG3)

**Global Non-western (GN)**
1. Interpret or evaluate information on diverse cultures. (LG1)
2. Describe interconnections among cultures, polities, and/or intellectual traditions of the world other than the dominant Euro-American ones. (LG3)
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues. (LG5)

**Course Requirements**

**Assignments:**

a) **Attendance** (10%): Students are expected to attend every class. Because there are always issues that arise, everyone is automatically granted two absences without penalty. If you should exceed this “grace” allowance, each additional absence will lower your grade 6 points on a 100-point scale (thus, an A- will go to a B). If you face special circumstances this semester—such as a major illness that requires repeated absences—let me know at the earliest opportunity, and we will work out a solution.

b) **Map Quiz** (15%): A basic understanding of Latin American contours, economic and political geography, and environmental aspects is essential for this course. A map quiz will be assigned in the third week of the semester.

c) **Discussion Questions** (15%): For every class session, prepare two discussion questions for the day’s readings. Your questions should reflect a careful reading of the day’s materials and encourage thoughtful discussion for both you and your peers. These are two examples of good questions: (1) How would you compare the patterns of conquest and colonization applied by the nascent Spanish Empire and the rival Portuguese Empire in the Americas. How were they similar? How were they different? (2) What ideas and political goals explain the rise of authoritarian forms of government in the last half of the 19th century? Draw on examples from more than one country. You must also provide a short tentative response to your questions, in no more than 2-3 sentences, so that you have a rough idea of what it is you are expecting to hear by posing each question. You have to print out your questions/answers and bring them to class to facilitate the discussion. I will collect those printouts at the end of class. Ojo: I will not accept handwritten questions/answers.

d) **In-Class Participation** (20%): **Readings Discussion**: We will use the discussion questions to initiate a debate and cover the material for the day. Every student is required to participate and make a substantive contribution to the discussion orally and respond to the questions prepared by your peers and the professor.

**Film Analysis**: In our classes, after discussing the readings for the week, we will watch together movie clips—and occasionally full films—to analyze them along with materials previously debated. This analysis will focus on cinematic attempts to represent or recreate Latin American history and culture. Through these films, we will both critically examine historical developments in Latin America as well as discuss the aesthetic conventions used by fictional films to convey meaning. The movie clips we will use for our analysis are available on YouTube, and full films will be borrowed from Jackson Library, and the Latin American Film Library in the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC Chapel Hill—your professor will provide access to those materials.

d) **Midterm Exam** (20%): The midterm examination will be given in week eight of the semester. The midterm examination questions will focus on the course content covered in class and the materials we discussed. The exam includes an essay about one of the films discussed in class.

e) **Final Exam** (20%): A final examination is required. The final exam is not cumulative and, just like the midterm, it will focus on the course content covered in class and the materials we discussed. The exam includes an essay about one of the films discussed in class.
Grade Breakdown: Your grade in HIS-209 will be the weighted average of your grades on the various course components: attendance: 10%, map quiz: 15%, discussion questions 15%, in-class participation 20%, midterm exam 20%, final exam 20%.

Grade Scale: This is the grade scale for the course: 100-93 A, 92-90 A-, 89-87 B+, 86-83 B, 82-80 B-, 79-77 C+, 76-73 C, 72-70 C-, 69-67 D+, 66-60 D, 59-Below F. Please note: No Make-Up Examination will be given. Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented emergencies or with prior permission and with good cause (illness, family loss, etc.) registered with the Dean of Students.

Required Texts: All course texts are on reserve at the Undergraduate Library and can be purchased at UNC Student Stores.


Course Policies

Policy on Late Assignments:
In fairness to the students who submit assignments on time, sometimes sacrificing recreational opportunities to do so, a letter grade per day will be subtracted from late assignments, beginning at class time on the due date. For example, an A paper handed in after class will receive a B, and so on. Individual extensions may be granted under extraordinary circumstances when approved before the due date.

Policy on Courtesy:
a) It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or to leave early. If you must do it (which I discourage), please try to be unobtrusive.
b) Disagreement is an essential part of intellectual discussion and arguing out issues is critical to university education. Therefore, you should expect to disagree with the ideas or opinions of others, especially in our discussions of the readings and film analysis debates. Please always disagree respectfully. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Cell phone & Laptop Policy
Technology and the problem of Divided Attention: In recent years, the saturation of cell phones, text messaging, and laptops in the classroom has produced something called the problem of divided attention. Research has found that after responding to email or text messages, it took people more than 15 minutes to re-focus on the “serious mental tasks” they had been performing before the interruption. When people attempt to perform two tasks at once (e.g., following what’s happening in class while checking text messages), the brain literally cannot do it. The brain has to abandon one of the tasks to effectively accomplish the other. Hidden behind all the hype about multi-tasking, then, is this sad truth: it can actually make you slower and dumber. For this reason alone, you should seek to avoid the problem of divided attention when you are in class. But there’s another equally important reason: we technology-users often lose our senses when it comes to norms of polite behavior, and the result is that perfectly lovely people become unbelievably rude.

For these reasons, please turn off your cellphones or set them on silent mode when you come to class; it is unacceptable for our activities to be interrupted by a ringing cellphone. Similarly, text messaging will not be tolerated in class; any student found to be sending or checking text messages during class will be invited to make a choice either to cease the texting or leave the classroom. You are welcome to bring your laptop to class and use it to take notes. You are not welcome to do social networking, check email, or otherwise
perform non-class-related activities during our encounters. Here’s my best advice: If you are not using your laptop to perform a task specifically related to what we are doing in the LTAM-101 lecture class at that very moment, put it away. Please note: I will make a note of each laptop user when we take the attendance. If you use your laptop in class, then you are required to email your course notes to me immediately after class. Failure to do so will result in a mark of course absence.

**Pledge of Academic Integrity:**
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has a pledge of academic integrity (please refer to the [https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/the-pledge/](https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/the-pledge/)). If you have questions about your responsibility under the student code of conduct ([https://osrr.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/12/Student-Code-of-Conduct-12-3-18.pdf](https://osrr.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/12/Student-Code-of-Conduct-12-3-18.pdf)), please consult with the Office of the Dean of Students. This document contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the Student Code of Conduct. Your full participation and observance of the code are expected.

**Academic Support Services:**
The College of Arts and Sciences has developed several support programs to assist students.

- The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) provides individual support to students with diagnosed learning disabilities ([https://ods.uncg.edu/](https://ods.uncg.edu/)) Telephone 336.334.5440, Email oars@uncg.edu
- The Tutoring and Academic Skills Programs (TASP) offers free instruction in a variety of academic learning strategies ([https://studentsuccess.uncg.edu/tasp/](https://studentsuccess.uncg.edu/tasp/)) Telephone 336.334.3878, Email tasp@uncg.edu

The Writing Center provides free tutorial services ([https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/](https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/)) Phone 336.334.3125, Email askthewc@uncg.edu. Also, consider the Online Writing Center if you prefer online access [https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/services/online-writing-center/](https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/services/online-writing-center/)

**Schedule of Meetings and Readings**

**Week 1**

Wednesday, August 21. **Lesson 1: Introduction to the Course**

Readings: none

Friday, August 23. **Lesson 2: Introduction to Film Analysis**

Readings: Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* (Textbook), and *Born in Blood and Fire* (Reader)

**Week 2**

Monday, August 26. **Lesson 3: Encounter**


Wednesday, August 28. **Lesson 4: Chronicles of the Encounter**


Friday, August 30. **Lesson 5: Film Discussion “1492 Conquest of Paradise”**

Films: “1492 Conquest of Paradise” directed by Ridley Scott (1992) 2h 34min

**Week 3**

(Labor Day holiday - Classes Dismissed on Sep/2)
Monday, September 2. Labor Day holiday
Readings: none

Wednesday, September 4. **Lesson 6: Colonial Crucible**
Films: “Yo, la peor de todas” [I, the Worst of All] directed by María Luisa Bemberg (1990) 1h 45min

Friday, September 6. **Lesson 7: Colonial Transculturation**

Week 4

Monday, September 9. **Lesson 8: Independence**

Wednesday, September 11. **Lesson 9: A Taste of Independence**

Friday, September 13. **Lesson 10: Film Discussion “La última cena”**
Film: “La última cena” [The Last Supper] directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (1976) 2h
Week 5

Monday, September 16. **Lesson 11: Postcolonial Blues**

Wednesday, September 18. **Lesson 12: Creating National Identities**

Friday, September 20. **Lesson 13: Film Discussion “La última cena” (Continued)**
Film: “La última cena” [The Last Supper] directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (1976) 2h
Week 6

Monday, September 23. **Lesson 14: Progress**

Wednesday, September 25. **Lesson 15: The Perils of Progress**

Friday, September 27. **Lesson 16: Film Discussion “Camila”**
Film: “Camila,” directed by María Luisa Bemberg (1984) 1h 45min
Week 7

Monday, September 30. **Lesson 17: Brazil in the Nineteenth Century**
Readings: Machado de Assis, *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* (entire novel)

Wednesday, October 2. **Lesson 18: The Trans-Atlantic Slave into Latin America**
Readings: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database http://www.slavevoyages.org/

Friday, October 4. **Lesson 19: Latin America in the U.S. Imagination**


Week 8

Monday, October 7. **Lesson 20: Neocolonialism**


Wednesday, October 9. **Lesson 21: Reactions Against Neocolonialism**

Readings: Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire (Reader)* Chapter 6. Reactions Against Neocolonialism

Friday, October 11. **Midterm Exam**

(Fall Break begins at 6 pm on Oct/11)

Week 9

Monday, October 14: Fall Break

Readings: none

(Classes resume after Fall Break at 8 am on Oct/16)

Wednesday, October 16. **Lesson 22: Nationalism**


Friday, October 18. **Lesson 23: Cultivating Non-European Roots**

Readings: Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire (Reader)* Chapter 7. Cultivating Non-European Roots

Week 10

Monday, October 21. **Lesson 24: The Mexican Revolution**

Readings: Susan M. Deeds. *The course of Mexican History.* Chapter 8

Wednesday, October 23. **Lesson 25: Reed, Insurgent Mexico**

Readings: John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico* (entire reportage)

Friday, October 25. **Lesson 27: Film Discussion “Reed: México insurgente”**

Film: “Reed: México insurgente” [Reed: Insurgent Mexico] directed by Paul Leduc (1973) 2h 4min

Week 11

Monday, October 28. **Lesson 28: Cuba under the Platt Amendment**

Readings: Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (selected fragments)

Wednesday, October 30. **Lesson 29: Domesticity, Corruption, and Violence in Latinoamérica**

Friday, November 1. **Lesson 30: Film Discussion “La ley de Herodes,” “Cidade de Deus” and more**


Week 12

Monday, November 4. **Lesson 31: Revolution in Latin America**


Wednesday, November 6. **Lesson 32: Cold War Visions**


Friday, November 8. **Lesson 33: Film Discussion “Lucía” and “Memorias del subdesarrollo”**


Week 13

Monday, November 11. **Lesson 34: Reaction**


Wednesday, November 13. **Lesson 35: Guerrilla Warfare**


Friday, November 15. **Lesson 36: Film Discussion “Romero”**

Film: “Romero” directed by John Duigan (1989) 1h 42min

Week 14

Monday, November 18. **Lesson 37: Shining Path in Peru**


Wednesday, November 20. **Lesson 38: Film Discussion “Madeinusa”**

Film: “Madeinusa,” directed by Claudia Llosa (2006) 1h 40min

Friday, November 22. **Lesson 39: Film Discussion “Madeinusa” (Continued)**

Film: “Madeinusa,” directed by Claudia Llosa (2006) 1h 40min

Week 15

Monday, November 25. **Lesson 40: Neoliberalism**

Readings: Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire (Textbook)* Chapter 11. Neoliberalism and Beyond

Film: “También la lluvia” [Even the Rain] directed by Icíar Bollaín (2010) 1h 43min
(Thanksgiving Holiday from 10 pm on Nov/26)

Wednesday, November 27. Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, November 29. Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 16

(Classes resume after Thanksgiving Holiday at 8 am on Dec 2)

Monday, December 2. **Lesson 41: Speaking for Themselves**

Readings: Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire (Reader)* Chapter 10. Speaking for Themselves

Wednesday, December 4. **Lesson 42: Latinos in the United States**