
HIS 240. (Dis)order and Progress: Latin America since 1810

Spring 2020

Online Instruction

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Course Overview: ¡Bienvenidos! This course studies modern Latin American history since the period of independence to the present day. Latin America is divided into over twenty nations, but we will trace a variety of themes to approach the region as a whole rather than try to provide individual national histories. Our readings and online forum discussions will cover a wide array of topics. First, we will discuss the Iberian conquest and the colonial hierarchies to understand the antecedents of modern Latin America. Then we will focus on the period after independence, including the legacies from previous centuries, 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, migration patterns, and a brief incursion into the history of Latinos in the United States.



Diego Rivera. “Sueño de una tarde dominical en la Alameda Central [Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park]” (1947). This is a segment of the famous mural painting that is part of the permanent exhibition at the Museo Mural Diego Rivera in Mexico City.

This course will help you to learn more or further familiarize you with the work of doing history. You will be asked to think historically and critically in the process of analyzing primary and secondary sources. We will use online discussion forums and essay assignments throughout the semester to provide you significant practice using evidence and making historical arguments.

This course is particularly interactive, and you must log in to Canvas multiple times a week to participate in the two discussion forums. The engagement with my questions and assignments is essential, but the same applies to the interaction with your colleagues in the discussion forums. My weekly posts and assignments will require preparation and a careful reading of the materials, be sure to leave time to produce an elaborate response. Your posts and comments should be based on what you have learned from primary and secondary sources. In the discussion forums, you will test your analytical perspectives, a second student might challenge your views, and a third could find another piece of evidence that supports your previous comment. The goal is not to “win” a debate, but to participate and learn from each other. In the end, this process helps you to refine your critical thinking skills, analyze evidence and develop your interpretations, and learn how to interact with others in a globalized world.

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 and Exams

In the Canvas website for HIS-240, you will find that the course is centered on our weekly discussions. In addition to the reading assignments, you will find every week two forum discussion assignments—one focused on secondary literature and the second on primary sources. You must keep up with our lesson schedule (see the Lesson Schedule at the end of the syllabus). In addition to the map quiz and the two discussion forums, you will write two essay exams this semester. For the midterm essay assignment, you will choose between two options available (see Essay Assignment Options below). For the final essay assignment, there is only one option, but every student has to write a final paper at the end of the semester.

Reading and Forum Participation

Every week, I will post weekly questions/activities to both the Textbook Discussion Forum (secondary literature) and the Argument Discussion Forum (mainly primary sources). I recommend reading *Born in Blood and Fire* once through in its entirety before re-reading individual chapters as assigned in the discussion forums. Our textbook contains so much information that anyone—from novice to expert—would find it difficult to digest in one reading, whether a single sitting or rationed out in small portions over several weeks. Second readings and careful review can only help!

Attendance (5 percent of your final grade)

The attendance requirement for His-240 will be fulfilled with your weekly forum participation. The expectation is that the students participate on every forum and submit all assignments. If a student develops a record of missed weekly forum postings, it shows that they have not done the readings and failed to contribute to our course discussions. Therefore, I reserve the right to drop students who missed more than six forum postings in the semester (no matter if the forums missed were TDFs or ADFs). If you fail to

participate online for three weeks in a row, you will be dropped. If you face exceptional 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.

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

- John C. Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (New York: W. W. Norton Company: 2016) 4th edition. ISBN 9780393283051. [**Textbook**]
- John C. Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: Latin American Voices* (New York: W. W. Norton Company: 2016) 2nd edition. ISBN 9780393283068. [**Reader**]
- Machado de Assis, *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1997) ISBN 9780195101706 [available in digital format via UNCG Library]
- José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica. A bilingual edition* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University: 1997). ISBN 9780801856556
- Grandin, Greg. *The Last Colonial Massacre. Latin America in the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. ISBN 9780226306902 [available in digital format via UNCG Library]

Library Services and Course Reserves

Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America will serve as our main textbook and provide the historical narrative we will follow and learn. *Born in Blood and Fire: Latin American Voices* is a compilation of primary sources relevant to the study of the Latin American past that will allow us to practice the work of doing history. In addition to these texts, we will use other materials such as film clips, academic papers, and book chapters from prestigious scholars who study the region. The remaining three books will serve as the primary texts on which you will write your essay exams. You are responsible for purchasing the correct edition and materials for this course.

Some of our readings are online. If the website links no longer work, please let me know. If you have any trouble finding the resource that you need or logging in to a resource, you can contact the library through the contact information at Jackson Library. You can chat live about your problem or send an email to request assistance.

Two Discussion Forums (40 percent of your final grade)

The online format for this course offers different benefits than a traditional class in the classroom. The lack of face-to-face interaction is one significant drawback. Yet our format offers clear advantages. In many ways, it forces us to be more engaged. I cannot drone through a boring lecture; you cannot hide in the back of the classroom, silent. You should read the texts carefully and be prepared with questions, answers, and thoughtful commentary to make the discussion forums, the engine of our course, run. In all lessons, you will participate in two different discussion forums: A Textbook Discussion Forum and an Argument Discussion Forum.

a) Textbook Discussion Forum: **TDF** (39 points maximum)

The TDF will address and discuss all the historical material that you will be responsible for learning—the textbook readings, any assigned scholarly articles. I will post open-ended questions (usually two) for your consideration. You are responsible for providing a substantive response to at least one of the questions. This forum will also offer you the opportunity to pose new questions for our consideration and further discussion. Here is also the place to ask basic questions of fact or clear up any confusion over the readings. I will be contributing to this forum regularly, providing commentary to guide the discussions, answering your questions, and posing new ones. Keep in mind that this is your forum to both learn and demonstrate your understanding of the required course material. You should follow the development of our discussion closely—log in several times each week.

b) Argument Discussion Forum: ADF (39 points maximum)

The argument discussion forum will be your opportunity to practice making historical arguments using evidence mainly from primary sources, but also some secondary sources. For each lesson, I will post two questions/or instructions for your consideration based on assigned primary text readings and other materials. You will be responsible for providing an argumentative response to one of the two forum questions. You are also required to provide at least one substantive response to another classmate's thread. You must substantiate your arguments with evidence cited from the primary source texts. I will be exercising less of an authoritative hand in this forum, anxious to see where your discussions take you. Return to this forum regularly throughout the week to make further contributions and commentary. Your participation in the argument forums will serve as a necessary practice for analyzing evidence and formulating arguments, skills you will need for your essay exams.

Forum Participation

On the marked day on our weekly calendar, I will post the discussion questions for each forum. You will be required to contribute to a weekly minimum of three forum posts (one in the textbook forum and two in the argument forum) over the course of each lesson. By all means, feel free to post more than three times per lesson. Ultimately, be sure to participate in both forums. Please remember that you must make your contribution to the forums by the deadline listed on your course schedule.

Forum Grading

I will assess the quality of your participation in the discussion forums every week. For each forum, I will assign you a weekly score (0–3). Keep in mind that the weekly argument forum score will also turn on your ability to assess critically textual evidence and produce an argument with it. This is the Score Rating:

3 points: Excellent. Demonstrated enthusiastic participation and good knowledge of reading materials

2 points: Acceptable. Met the requirement to participate in the forum.

1 point: Deficient or lacking in substance.

0 point: Failed to participate as required.

A final score of 36–39 is “A” range work, 31–35 is “B” range work, 25–30 is “C”-range work, and so on. Anything less than 20 puts a student in danger of receiving a failing grade.

About one week after each lesson, I will post your point totals for each forum in the gradebook. That way, you can follow the progress of your performance and make adjustments if necessary.

Film Discussion (10 percent of your final grade)

For our film discussion, the analysis will focus on cinematic attempts to represent or recreate Latin American history and culture. Through the selected film(s), 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 online, and your professor will provide access to those materials.

Exam Essays

In addition to the discussion forums, you are required to write two essays over the course of the term. See the schedule for due dates. The essays will be a minimum of five full pages and no more than six full pages. In these papers, you must demonstrate adequate knowledge of course themes and material while also making a compelling argument using evidence from an assigned text. You shall make an argument of your choosing – no specific prompt for the essay will be posted. It will be up to you to construct an argument based on the assigned text that is pertinent to course themes and shows that you understand the lessons being taught. You will get plenty of practice formulating arguments in our argument forum before the first essay is due.

Midterm Essay Assignment (20 percent of your final grade)

For the Midterm Essay Assignment, you can choose either

Option (a) responding to *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* or

Option (b) responding to *The Cosmic Race*.

Before the corresponding essay is due, one argument forum will be devoted to the assigned text; which will allow you to discuss the book and advance arguments you may want to use in your paper. We have two options to give you more flexibility and to manage your time accordingly. Please note that you can only write one of the two essay options. If you submit an essay for option (a) you cannot submit a second midterm essay for option (b). These essays have different deadlines. However, I strongly encourage you to write the first essay option because you will have significantly less time to write the second essay option.

Final Essay Assignment (25 percent of your final grade)

The final exam essay will be a response to the assigned text: *The Last Colonial Massacre*, and this is the only option.

Submitting Your Essays

You must submit each essay exam by 10 am on the day that it is due (see the schedule for dates). Submit your essay in Microsoft Word file format. Submit the essay in the "Assignments" section of Canvas. Keep in mind that papers submitted after the deadline are subject to a penalty, usually one full letter grade per day late.

Essays Grading Criteria

- A (-) Excellent work: shows a full understanding of concepts and readings, extensive reflection, and produces original ideas when applied to current events.
- B (+/-) Good work: shows a full understanding of concepts and reading, and adequate reflection to apply concepts to current events.
- C (+/-) Adequate work: shows knowledge of the definition of concepts and attempts application of concepts to current events.
- D (+/-) Unsatisfactory work: shows limited or incorrect knowledge of concepts and little to no application to current events.
- F Failing: carelessly uses concepts with no regard for readings or definitions and no application to current events.

Grade Breakdown: Your grade in Hist-240 will be the weighted average of your grades on the various course components: Attendance 5%, Textbook Discussion Forum (TDF) 20%, Argument Discussion Forum (ADF) 20%, Midterm Essay Assignment 20%, Film Discussion 10%, Final Exam Essay assignment 25%.

Grade Scale: This is the grade scale for the course: A) 93-100, A-) 90-92, B+) 87-89, B) 83-86, B-) 80-82, C+) 77-79, C) 73-76, C-) 70-72, D+) 69-67, D) 60-66, F) Below 59

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.

Note: This syllabus followed a model developed by John Chasteen and used at UNC Chapel Hill.

Course Policies**Policy on Late Assignments:**

In fairness to the students who submit assignments on time, sometimes sacrificing recreational opportunities to do so, a third of a letter grade will be subtracted from late assignments when they are 10 minutes late. This initial grade reduction will be converted to a letter grade after the first 24 hours from the time of submission. Then an additional letter grade will be subtracted per day. For example, an A paper/assignment submitted 10 min after due time will receive an A-. Then, if the paper is not submitted by the next day, that initial A- will

be converted into a B grade. Individual extensions may be granted under extraordinary circumstances when approved by your instructor before the due date.

If you have any special concerns, questions, or issues that are not appropriate for our discussion forums, please do not hesitate to email me. I should respond promptly within 24-48 hours. To make sure that your message does not get overlooked, please include “HIST 240” in the email subject line.

I realize that many of you are working full-time or have other obligations in addition to taking this course. There may be times when circumstances prevent you from meeting a course obligation by the due date. It is crucial that you let me know about such circumstances right away. We will most likely be able to resolve matters, especially if your enthusiasm and participation up to that point in the course warrant favorable consideration.

Email Etiquette

Email is the preferred method communications for our course, and you are required to observe the following email etiquette: (a) In your emails, please include a clear subject line. Be sure to mention our class number: His-240. (b) Address your emails to your professor by name. I usually teach more than one class every semester, and, as you can imagine, I receive many emails from students, colleagues, and a copious administrative correspondence. It is helpful to see that the email was addressed to me. I will likely respond sooner. (c) Use professional salutations to close your emails. Please remember little details like this one show your good manners; (d) End your emails with a signature (type your name and last name, your PID number is not necessary). (e) An email address is not enough to determine the identity of the student who sent the email, and thus it forces me to check the entire roster—in several classes—to find out who you are. (f) A final note: I encourage you to use these are courtesy norms in all your correspondence via email. A correct email etiquette will always show your professionalism, and it says how well educated you are.

Policy on Courtesy:

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 forum discussions of the readings and debates. Please always disagree respectfully. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

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/>). 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>), 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.

Plagiarism

You must take special care not to plagiarize the work of others. Plagiarism: “Representing the words, thoughts, or ideas of another, as one’s own in any academic exercise,” the “failure to properly cite references and/or sources,” and “submitting, as one’s own, work done by or copied from another including work done by a fellow student, work done by a previous student, or work done by anyone other than the student responsible for the assignment.” (<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/violations-and-sanctions/plagiarism/>) I will fail any student who commits plagiarism on any assignment.

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/>) 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/>) Telephone 336.334.3878, Email tasp@uncg.edu
- The Writing Center provides free tutorial services (<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/>

Lesson Schedule (see next page)

Dates	Lesson	Topic	Due Dates always at 10:00 p.m.
Jan 13-16	Intro	Student introductions, the Syllabus, and the Schedule	Final Post: Jan 16
Jan 13-17	Lesson 1	Introduction to Latin American History	Final Post: Jan 17
Jan 20	Holiday	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. Classes dismissed	
Jan 17-23	Lesson 2	The Colonial World	Final Post: Jan 23
Jan 24-30	Lesson 3	Independence	Final Post: Jan 30
Jan 31-Feb 6	Lesson 4	Postcolonial Blues	Final Post: Feb 6
Feb 7-13	Lesson 5	Liberalism and Modernity in Postcolonial Latin America	Final Post: Feb 13
Feb 14-20	Lesson 6	The Paraguayan War	Final Post: Feb 20
Feb 21-27	Lesson 7	The Export Booms and Political Stability Post-1870	Final Post: Feb 27
Essay Option 1	Essay Option 1	Midterm Essay Option 1: <i>The Posthumous Memoirs</i> Recommend start reading by Feb 14 and start writing by Feb 21	Due on Friday, Feb 28
Feb 29-Mar 9		Spring Break: Feb 29 (Fr, 1 p.m.) – Mar 9 (Mo, 8 a.m.)	
Mar 9-13	Lesson 8	The Rise of the United States as a Neo-Colonial Power	Final Post: Mar 13
Mar 13-19	Lesson 9	The Mexican Revolution	Final Post: Mar 19
Mar 20-26	Lesson 10	The Rise of Latin American Nationalism in the Twentieth Century	Final Post: Mar 26
Mar 27-Apr 2	Lesson 11	The <i>Estado Novo</i> of Gétulio Vargas in Brazil	Final Post: Apr 2
Essay Option 2	Essay Option 2	Midterm Essay Option 2: <i>The Cosmic Race</i> Recommend start reading by Mar 20 and start writing by Mar 27	Due on Friday, Apr 3
Apr 3-9	Lesson 12	The Cuban Revolution	Final Post: Apr 9
Apr 10	Holiday	Spring Holiday. Classes dismissed	
Apr 13-17	Film Disc	Film Discussion	Final Post: Apr 17
Apr 17-Apr 27	Lesson 13	Reaction, State Terror, and the Neoliberal Interregnum	Final Post: Apr 27
Final Exam Essay	Final Essay	Final Exam Essay: <i>The Last Colonial Massacre</i> Recommend reading start by Apr 13 and writing by Apr 17	Due on Friday, May 1