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HIST 585.01: Latin American History

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History 585

Latin American History

This intensive reading seminar will explore new conceptual and methodological approaches to the study of economics, politics, and culture in Latin America. It is an inter-disciplinary course which attempts to bring together anthropological, theoretical, and historical perspectives in a manner that enriches all three.

The course opens with a discussion of the colonial origins of modern Latin America. During this opening phase, we will explore the debates swirling around Latin America's place in the global economy as well as evaluate the outcome of the "spiritual conquest." We will also dabble in the larger politics of representing the past. During the second part of the course, we will explore the new cultural history of the rise of the modern individual, reading Michel Foucault and Albert Hirschmann as theoretical tools for understanding Patricia Seed's work on late colonial New Spain. We will then move on to what Latin American historians do best: the late nineteenth-century phase of export-led growth associated with incorporation into world markets, and, loosely, oligarchic forms of government. Here our focus will be on the peasant radicals who challenged the dictators and landed oligarchs. James Scott will provide the theoretical background for our discussion of case studies drawn from Brazil, Mexico, and Columbia. We will then dig deeply into Guatemala's bloody twentieth century history, focusing on many of the issues previously raised: the world economy, peasant consciousness, and the politics of history writing. The course ends with an exploration of two hotly-debated late twentieth century religious movements: Evangelical Protestantism and Liberation Theology. As you can see, we have a heady, perhaps overly ambitious agenda, but that is what graduate courses are all about!!!

Student work: Each student will write four three page reviews (not more than 800 words) using the focus questions at the end of the syllabus. Answer two or three of the questions. Each student will also write three standard book reviews modeled on those found in scholarly journals. These reviews will be between 550 and 650 words. Each student will be responsible for introducing the historiography of their chosen book, using the focus questions as a guide. This is a roughly thirty minute presentation in which you will detail the historiography surrounding your book, but not the book itself. You should bring in a bibliography of the books you will discuss for every member of the class. Your presentation will culminate in a fifteen to twenty page final paper which places your book in its historiographical context.

Calendar

September 11: Course introduction.

**The Colonial Origins of Modern Latin America:
God and Mammon**

Recommended for this unit: Colonial Latin America, 3-162. On reserve in the library.

September 18: Read Inga Clendinnen, Ambivalent Conquests. You should write a book review modeled on those found in scholarly journals. Please bring a copy of an exemplary book review that you found in a journal for every member of the class, as well as a copy of your review of Clendinnen for peer editing. Read Writing With Style, chapters 1-3. The final copy of your review is due in my box by Weds. at 5p.m. Your rough draft must meet the length requirements!

September 25: Read Steve Stern, Peru's Indian Peoples. Also read Steve Stern, "Feudalism, Capitalism and the World System," which is on reserve in the library. David S. Landes, The Wealth and Poverty of Nations, short selections on reserve.

October 1: Read: Ramon Gutierrez, When Jesus Came, pp. 1-140. Read the Ramon Gutierrez press release on reserve in the library (these are his critics). Read Nancy Farriss, on reserve in the library. Please write a book review patterned after journal reviews. Read Writing with Style, chpts. 4-6. Bring a copy for peer editing. Due to me on Weds.

**The Bourbon Reforms: Economic Change and the Birth of the Modern
Individual**

Recommended for this unit: Colonial Latin America, pp. 234-290.

October 8: Read: Michel Foucault, selections from Discipline and Punish. Albert Hirschmann, The Passions and the Interests, which is on reserve (roughly 50 pages). No paper this week! Carefully prepare for discussion.

October 15: Read: Patricia Seed, To Love, Honor, and Obey. Write a book review using the focus questions. Bring a copy of your review for peer editing. Due Weds. WWS, chpts. 7-9.

Modernity and Its Discontents

Highly recommended for this unit: On reserve in the library. Modern Latin America, pp. 36-47, 226-233.

October 22: Read: James Scott, on reserve in the library (roughly 45 pages). Antonio Gramsci, on reserve in the library (roughly 45 pages). R.W. Connell, Masculinities, on reserve in the library (roughly 30 pages). Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," on reserve in the library. Be prepared!

October 29: Read Ana Alonso, Thread of Blood. Write a review using the focus questions. Bring a copy for peer review.

November 6: Read Micheal Taussig, The Devil and Commodity Fetishism. No paper. Give yourself plenty of time to read Taussig!

November 13: Read Todd Diacon, Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality. Write a paper using the focus questions.

Guatemala: Ethnicity and Nation Building

Highly recommended for this unit: Modern Latin America, pp. 321-334, 352-359. Steven Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Bitter Fruit, on reserve in the library.

Nov. 20: Read: Greg Grandin, The Blood of Guatemala. Write a review based on journal reviews. Bring a copy to class for peer review.

Nov. 27: Read: Rigoberta Menchu, I Rigoberta Menchu. David Stoll, Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans (selections to be decided upon). Write a review using the focus questions. Compare and contrast these two authors using the focus questions.

Liberation Theology and Evangelical Protestantism

Highly recommended: Modern Latin America, 340-345, 364-395. Malcolm Lowry, The War of the Gods, on reserve (roughly 40 pages).

Dec. 4: Read: Sheldon Ennis, God and Production

Dec. 11: Read: Roger Lancaster, Thanks to God and the Revolution, select pages. Max Weber, on reserve (roughly 40 pages).