

Anthropology 4500

Latin America: Society and Development in Ethnographic Perspective

Summer 1 2019—1:30 pm - 5:00 pm
Hastings Suite 204

Professor: Dr. Ryan H. Collins
Office: Renaissance Park; Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:00 to 6:00 pm
E-mail: rhcollins@northeastern.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we'll examine complex issues of indigeneity, race, human rights, heritage, and politics in contemporary Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean from the perspective of ethnography, history, and archaeology. Doing so will be based primarily on books and articles drawing on long-term ethnographic and ethno-historic research. We'll use in-depth descriptions to learn about all aspects of life in this fascinating region. The latter half of the course will focus on an extended research and writing project on a topic of the student's choosing.

This class is meant, at a basic level, to provide a broad background in Latin America. More importantly, this course seeks to showcase the rich cultural diversity of Latin America, an area with many languages, cultures, and religions that are both familiar and strange. Beyond learning any specific information about Latin America, it is expected that you will build on your ability to synthesize, summarize, critically assess and compare the information in the assigned readings. Proper preparation and engaged class participation are therefore required. Readings should be completed before class on the day for which they are assigned.

Each week a group of two students will be assigned to lead discussion of the readings. Participation, including discussions, accounts for 20% of the final course grade. Any more than two unexcused absences during the course of the semester will result in the loss of a letter grade from class participation for each additional absence.

There is no final exam in this class. The final assignment (your term paper) is due during finals week (to be submitted via email).

BOOKS: (OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED)

Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella "Thunder Shaman"

Beyer, Stephan V. "Singing to the Plants"

Blaser, Mario "Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond"

de Leon, Jason "The Land of Open Graves"

Green, Linda "Fear as a Way of Life"

Jusionyte, Ieva "Savage Frontier: Making News and Security on the Argentine Border"

All readings are available online

- if there is a change in readings, all members of the class will be notified by e-mail and an updated syllabus will be posted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation – 20%
4 to 5-page topic paper – 20%
Proposed research question – 5%
Annotated bibliography – 10%
Short presentation – 15%
10 to 12-page final research paper – 30%

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE BEFORE THE SECOND WEEK OF COURSES.

GRADING

It is important that you understand the meaning of the grades in this class. A grade in the “A” range means that you have done *outstanding* work of originality, sophistication, and high analytic acuity relative to other undergraduate work. A grade in the “B” range means that you have aimed high and performed well. Work in the “B” range is *solid* but not as deeply insightful, as skillfully argued, or as consistently attentive to the texts as work in the “A” range. A grade in the “C” range means that your work is fair but lacking in a key area.

- 1. Attendance** - Attendance is a vital part of this class and is essential to succeeding in this course. Should you fail to attend class, you will receive a zero-participation grade for the day; however, you may write a one-page analysis of the week's assigned readings as partial make-up, which should be turned in during the next class (a two time limit on such make-ups). Should a student exceed four absences, he/she will be penalized a letter grade in participation for each absence that follows. In rare instances, excused absences may be granted, but you should not expect this to be the case.
- 2. Participation** - Thorough preparation and participation in class discussions are vital to your and everyone's learning. We value diverse, thoughtful comments and insights from all class members.
- 3. Punctuality** - Classes will begin on time and being regularly late will also affect your participation grade.
- 4. Professional Conduct** - This class may engender active dialogue. Be passionate, but please also be respectful of your fellow students. Open debate is expected and welcomed, but let's together to create a positive, professional – and challenging – atmosphere.
- 5. The Written and Spoken Word** - Please use specific examples to back up your points whenever possible, and do not hesitate to make use of the University Writing Center if you would like extra support during the writing process.

- 6. Communication** - Please feel free to ask any questions you might have, and to share any concerns regarding the course with during the semester. Take advantage of my office hours, set up appointments, or communicate by e-mail if you have any questions or open issues.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university.

DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Northeastern University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

CLASS ORGANIZATION

Each class will be composed of mixed mode lecture, open discussion of directed readings and digital media, group exercises, and an overview of current affairs. Classes are designed to approach significant social phenomena from broad perspectives through an exploration of ethnographic examples. We will also look at ongoing media coverage and relevant supplemental readings on human rights, indigeneity, or activism in relation to pressing current affairs. Doing so is intended to foster your critical engagement with ongoing issues or developments throughout Latin America. Past focuses have looked at political movements and unrest in Venezuela, the death of former and controversial Guatemalan President Rios Montt (who was directly implicated in genocide), the construction of a border wall between the US and Mexico, and pan indigenous movements.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1: HISTORY, CULTURE, AUTONOMY AND NATIONHOOD

Class 1 (5/6/2019)

1. Readings: None Assigned. Introductions

Class 2 (5/8/2019)

1. (*Selections*) Leon Portilla, “The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico”
2. John Rowe, “The Inca civil war and the establishment of Spanish power in Peru”
3. Grant D. Jones, “The Conquest of the Last Maya Kingdom”
4. Setha Low, “The Cultural Meaning of the Plaza”

Unit 2: RACE, INDIGENEITY AND ‘GLOBALIZATION’

Class 3 (5/13/2019)

1. Mario Blaser, "Storytelling Globalization from the Chaco and Beyond," Chapters 1 (*I recommend skimming the Introduction*).
2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Culture on the Edges: Creolization in a Plantation Context."
3. Rebecca Scott, "Race, Labor and Citizenship in Cuba"
4. **Writing Workshop**

Class 4 (5/15/2019)

1. Linda Green, "Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala" Chapter 1, 3, and 4.
2. **Carlota McCallister, "Authenticity and Guatemala's Maya Queen"**
3. **Documentary: When the Mountains Tremble/ Granito: How to Nail a Dictator**
4. **Group 1 Discussion**

Unit 3 : INDIGENOUS PRACTICE IN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

Class 5 (5/20/2019)

1. Stephan V. Beyer, "Singing to the Plants: A Guide to Mestizo Shamanism in the Upper Amazon" Chapters (Chapters 1, 3, 31, 23)
2. Miguel Angel Astor-Aguilera, "Mesoamerican Communicating Objects"
3. Beth Conklin, "Thus are our Bodies, Thus was our Custom"

Class 6 (5/22/2019)

1. Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, "Thunder Shaman: Making History with Mapuche Spirits in Chile and Patagonia" (Chapters 1, 6, and 7)
2. **Group 2 Discussion**
3. **Paper #1 Due**

NO CLASS 5/27/2019: Memorial Day

Unit 4 AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION AND ART IN LATIN AMERICA

Class 7 (5/29/2019)

1. Meet at the Museum of Fine Arts; Frida Kahlo Exhibit
2. TBD Readings
3. **Research Questions Due**

Unit 5 MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND CULTURAL BORDERS

Class 8 (6/3/2019)

1. Ieva Jusionyte, "Savage Frontier: Making News and Security on the Argentine Border" (Introduction and Chapter 1, 3, and 6)
2. (Selections) When I Where my Alligator Boots

Class 9 (6/5/2019)

1. Jason de Leon, Introduction to "The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail" (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 7)
2. **Group 3 Discussion**
3. **Annotated Bibliography Due**

NO CLASS 6/10/2019

TBD Documentary to be watched outside of class with guided questions for discussion.

Unit 6: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND APPROPRIATION

Class 10 (6/12/2019)

1. Elizabeth Emma Ferry, “If the Miners had been Mexican;”
2. Ana Lopez, “Telenovelas in Latin America”
3. Stanley Brandes, “The Day of the Dead, Halloween and the Quest for Mexican National Identity”

Class 11 (6/17/2019)

1. Ana M. Juarez, Ongoing Struggles: Mayas and Immigrants in Tourist Era Tulum
2. Gary H. Gossen “Maya Zapatistas Move to an Open Future” From Tzotzil Identities in Modern Mexico
3. Richard Wilk, Miss Universe, the Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca
4. **Group 4 Discussion**

Unit 7: Presentations

Class 12 – 6/19/19 – Presentation Day

Final Papers Due: MONDAY 6/24/2019 at 11:59pm