

**PALAS 340 HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA**  
PROGRAM IN ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

**Course Syllabus**

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**Course Information**

Contact Hours: 120

4 weeks

**Course Description**

This course offers a comprehensive overview of Latin American history, spanning from the pre-colonial period to contemporary times. It emphasizes the socioeconomic, Cultural, and political structures and processes that have shaped and continue to influence life in Latin America. Critical examination will be given to broad comparative themes in Latin American history, such as colonialism, nationalism, struggles for economic development, within the frame of both authoritarian and democratic political experiences.

We will delve into the European conquest of the Americas and its profound impact on native populations, with a special focus in indigenous forced labor and the subsequent imposition of African slavery during the colonial era. The processes of independence and nation-building will be examined, followed by the impact of neocolonialism and the rise of nationalism. The course will also explore revolutionary attempts to transform society, the era of military dictatorships within the context of the Cold War, and the subsequent process of transition to democracy in the region. Contemporary issues such as the persistency of violence and inequality, as well as political and economic instability in recent history will also be addressed.

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the course incorporates materials from various disciplines, including primary sources, literature, and films, to offer a nuanced understanding of the region's complex and diverse history.

By the conclusion of this course, the students should be able to:

- Outline the fundamental aspects of Latin American history, culture, and society.
- Apply key historical concepts such as colonialism, imperialism, democracy, economic development and inequality for a comparative understanding of Latin American history.
- Engage with different genres and forms of historic representation and archives.
- Apply techniques different from disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to interpret historic sources.
- Communicate efficiently through discussions, presentations and written assignments.

**Course Requirements**

Attendance: A 75% attendance to classes is mandatory to keep the regular student

status. An electronic system keeps track of attendance. Students must slide an electronic card every class to comply with attendance policy.

Methodology & Participation: Classes will be structured as a seminar, beginning with a brief introduction of each class's topic by the Professor, followed by a collective discussion of each class's assigned materials. All students are expected to do close readings and actively participate in each class, making significant contribution to the classroom conversation. Individual students can also be assigned specific responsibilities for the following classes, such as preparing a brief oral presentation on a film or a historic document source.

Group Presentations: At the end of the course, students will deliver presentations in pairs or groups of three. In consultation with the instructor, each group will select two consecutive Latin American historical periods covered during the semester. The presentation should examine how the textbook addresses these periods and relate that analysis to the set of historical sources for the selected periods listed in the course syllabus. Each oral presentation must be supported by an audiovisual component featuring representative images of key historical figures, events, and processes.

Papers: Students will write two short essays (approximately 1,500 words each). For each essay, they must choose either two films that pertain to the same historical period or two films that relate to consecutive historical periods, drawing from the course's assigned filmography. In their analysis, students should engage with the topics and perspectives discussed in class, as well as the assigned readings, to critically interpret the films and situate them within the broader scholarly and historical contexts examined throughout the course.

The Mid-Term Exam will be held in class during the 7th week.

The Final Exam: The final exam will be held in class during the last week.

**Important note about oral presentations and response papers:** Students are strongly encouraged to consult additional reputable academic sources. Please note that Wikipedia is not considered an acceptable resource for research purposes. Any student found to have plagiarized from undeclared sources, or whose assignments show clear indications of having been generated with AI assistants, will receive a "no credit" grade for all courses taken during that semester.

## Grading Policy

Class Participation	10%
Response Papers	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Group Presentation	20%
Final Exam	20%

## Required Textbooks and Materials

- Chasteen, John Charles. Born in Blood and Fire. A Concise History of Latin America (4th Edition). W.W. Norton & Company Inc. New York, London: 2016.

## Compiled Historical Sources from:

- Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared. *Nunca Más*. With and Introduction by Ronald Dworkin. Farrar Strauss Giroux & Index on Censorship. New York & London: 1986.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Selected Non-Fictions*. Viking [Penguin Group]. New York: 1999.
- Chomsky, Aviva; Carr, Barry & Smorkaloff, Pamela María. *The Cuba Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2003.
- Dawson, Alexander. *Latin America Since Independence. A History with Primary Sources*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. New York & London: 2011.
- De Gregori, Carlos Iván; Kirk, Robin & Starn, Orin. *The Peru Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2005.
- de la Torre, Carlos & Striffler, Steve. *The Ecuador Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2008.
- Farnsworth-Alvear, Ann; Palacios, Marco & Gómez López, Ana María. *The Colombia Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2017.
- Green, James M.; Langland, Victoria & Moritz Schwarcz, Lilia. *The Brazil Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2019.
- Joseph, Gilbert M. & Henderson, Timothy J. *The Mexico Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2022.
- Lambert Peter & Nickson, Andrew. *The Paraguay Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2013.
- Nouzeilles, Gabriela & Montaldo, Graciela. *The Argentina Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2002.
- Quay Hutchison, Elizabeth; Miller Kublok, Thomas; Milanich, Nara B. & Winn, Peter. *The Chile Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2014.
- Roorda, Eric Paul; Derby, Lauren & González, Raymundo. *The Dominican Republic Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2018.
- Skidmore, Thomas E.; Smith, Peter H.; Green, James N. *Modern Latin America* (8th edition). Oxford University Press. New York: 2014.
- Stavans, Ilan. *The Scroll and the Cross: 1,000 Years of Jewish-Hispanic Literature*. Routledge. New York & London: 2003.
- Thomson, Sinclair; Barragán, Rossana; Alvó, Xavier; Qayum, Semeen & Goodale, Mark. *The Bolivia Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press. Durham and London: 2018.

## Filmography

- *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (Werner Herzog, 1972)
- *The Mission* (Roland Joffé, 1986)
- *Yo, la peor de todas* (María Luisa Bemberg, 1990)
- *Zama* (Lucrecia Martel, 2017)
- *Revolución: el cruce de los Andes* (Leandro Ipiña, 2010)
- *Artigas, la redota* (Cesar Charlone, 2011)
- *Facundo, la sombra del tigre* (Nicolás Sarquís, 1995)
- *Camila* (María Luisa Bemberg, 1984)
- *Los colonos* (Felipe Gálvez, 2023)
- *La Patagonia rebelde* (Héctor Olivera, 1974)

- El abrazo de la serpiente (Ciro Guerra, 2015)
- Asesinato en el Senado de la nación (Juan José Jusid, 1985)
- ¡Qué viva México! (Sergéi Eisenstein, 1930)
- Diarios de motocicleta (Walter Salles, 2005)
- It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles (Richard Wilson, Bill Krohn and Myron Meisel, 1993)
- Gatica, el mono (Leonadro Favio, 1993)
- Eva Perón: la verdadera historia (Juan Carlos Desanzo, 1993)
- Memorias del subdesarrollo (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968)
- Soy Cuba (Mijail Kalátov, 1964)
- Machuca (Andrés Wood, 2004)
- La historia oficial (Luis Puenzo, 1985)
- Salvador (Oliver Stone, 1986)
- Sumas y restas (Víctor Gaviria, 2005)
- No (Pablo Larraín, 2012)
- Argentina, 1985 (Santiago Mitre, 2022)
- También la lluvia (Icíar Bollaín, 2011)

## **Historic Sources for Group presentations**

### **Encounters**

- Christopher Columbus: First Descriptions of the Land, First Violence against Its People (1492) [TDRR]
- Pedro Vaz Caminha: Letter to King Manuel I of Portugal (1500) [TBRR]
- Francisco Soares: Letter from a Portuguese Trader (1596) [TBRR]
- António Vieira: Excerpts from the Sermon on the Rosary (1633) [TBRR]
- Bartolomé de las Casas: A Voice in the Wilderness: Brother Antonio Montesinos (1511) [TDRR] & The Devastation of the Indies (1542/52) [TCUR]
- Bernal Díaz del Castillo and Hernán Cortés: The Spaniards' Entry into Tenochtitlan (1519) [TMR]
- Anonymous: The Battles of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco (1528) [TMR]

### **Colonial Crucible**

- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: On Men's Hypocrisy [TMR]
- Garcilaso de la Vega: The Origins of the Incas (1609) [TPR]
- Guamán Poma de Ayala: Officials and Messengers (1615) [TPR]
- Pedro de Valdivia: A Conqueror Pleads his Case to the King (1545) [TCHR]
- Ruy Díaz de Guzmán: Women Captives (1612) [TAR]
- Various authors: Two Documents in the War Against Palmares (1678/1693) [TBRR]
- José Manuel Peramás: The Republic of Plato and the Guaraní (1793) [TPAR]

### **Independence**

- Luiz Gonzaga das Virgens Veiga: The Taylors' Revolt (1798) [TBRR]
- Mariano Moreno: The Landowners' Petition (1809) [TAR]
- José María Morelos: Sentiments of the Nation, or points Outlined by Morelos for the Constitution (1813) [TMR]
- Simón Bolívar: War to Death (1813) [TCOR] & Letter from Jamaica (1815)

## **Post-Colonial Blues**

- Juan Manuel de Rosas: The Caudillo's Order (1843) [TAR]
- Domingo Faustino Sarmiento: Facundo (1845) [TAR]
- Euclides da Cunha: Excerpt from Rebellion in the Backlands (1902) [TBRR]
- Paulo José Vianna: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution in Brazil (1815) [TBRR]
- Joaquim Nabuco: Selection from Abolitionism (1883) [TBRR]

## **Progress**

- Juan Bautista Alberdi: Immigration as a Means of Progress (1852) [TAR]
- Benito Juárez: The Triumph of the Republic (1867) [TMR]
- Friedrich Hassaurek: Four Years Among the Ecuadorians (1868) [TER]
- Captain Francisco Seeber: The Triple Alliance (1866) [TAR]
- Members of the Republican Party: The Republican Manifesto (1870) [TBRR]
- Francisca Senhorinha da Motta Diniz: Early Brazilian Feminism (1873) [TBBR]

## **Neocolonialism**

- James Creelman: President Díaz, Hero of the Americas (1908) [TMR]
- Rafael Barret: What It is Like to Work in the Yerba Plantations (1911) [TPAR]
- José Eustasio Rivera: A Gaping Mouth Swallowing Men (1924) [TCOR]
- Augusto Céspedes: The Tin Baron (1946) [TBOR]
- José María Ramos Mejía: The Modern Crowd (1899) [TAR]
- Oreste Sola: Making It in America (1901) [TAR]
- Alberto Gerchunoff: A Jewish Gaucho (1910) [TSSSbJLAW]

## **Nationalism**

- Leopoldo Lugones: National Identity in a Cosmopolitan Society (1913) [TAR]
- José Martí: Our America (1891) [TCUR]
- Emiliano Zapata: Plan of Ayala (1911) [TMR]
- John Reed: Pancho Villa (1913) [TMR]
- Juan Carlos Mariátegui: Reflections (1925-1929) [TPER]
- María Cano: It's a Norm among Us to Believe that a Woman Cannot Act on Her Own Criteria (1930) [TCOR]
- Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre: The APRA (TPER)
- Getulio Vargas: Vargas and the Estado Novo (1938) [TBRR]
- Josephus Daniels: The Oil Expropriation (1938) [TMR]
- José María Velasco Ibarra: Heroic Pueblo of Guayaquil (1944) [TER]
- Jorge Élicer Gaitán: The "Silent Demonstration" of February 7, 1948 (1948) [TCOR]
- Fernando Benítez: The Agrarian Reform in La Laguna (1977) [TMR]

## **Revolution**

- Juan Domingo Perón: What is Peronism? (1948) & The Twenty Truths of the Peronist Justicialism (1950) [MLA]
- Eva Perón: Speech to the Descamisados on October 17, 1951 (1951) [marxism.org]
- Julio Cortazar: House Taken Over (1942) [TAR]
- Jorge Luis Borges: L'Illusion Comique (1955) [SNF] & The Mountebank (1960) [bibliklept.org]
- Leopoldo Marechal & Raúl Sclabrini Ortiz: On October 17, 1945 (1968/1973)

- Fidel Castro: History Will Absolve Me (1953) [TCUR]
- Ernesto "Che" Guevara: Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War (1959/61) & Man and Socialism (1965) [TCUR]
- Elena Poniatowska: The Student's Movement (1971) [TMR]
- Salvador Allende Gossens: The Chilean Revolution One Year In (1971) [TCHR]

## Reaction

- Declassified U.S. Government Documents: The Election of Salvador Allende (1973) [TCHR]
- The Church Committee: United States Policy and Covert Action against Allende
- Salvador Allende Gossens: These are my Final Words
- Rodolfo Walsh: Open Letter to the Military Junta (1976)
- Hebe de Bonafini & Matilde Sánchez: The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo (1985) [TAR]
- Gustavo Álvarez Gardeazábal: Dead Bodies Appear in the Streets (1962) [TCOR]
- Los extraditables: We Prefer a Grave in Colombia to a Cell in the United States (1979) [TCOR]
- El Espectador, J. Fabry, J. Mollison, R. Romero Ospina, D. Jiménez, and R. Mazalán: Turning points in the Colombian Conflict 1960s-1990s [TCOR, Photographs]

## Neoliberalism and Beyond

- Ernesto Sábato: Prologue to the Report by the National Commission on the Disappeared (1984) [NM]
- Patricio Aylwin Azóca: Justice "To the Degree Possible": The retting Report (1991) [TCHR]
- Tomás Moulián: The Credit-Card Citizen (1997) [TCHR]
- Javier Auyero: We Are All Cursed (2002) [TAR]
- Oscar Olivera: Even the Rain (2000) [TBOR]
- Neighborhood Council of Villa Santiago II, El Alto: The Gas War (2003) [TBOR]
- Bolivian Constitution of 2009: A New Social Contract (2009) [TBOR]
- Mark Weisbrot & Vicente Fox: Assessing NAFTA Before and After (2007/2014) [TMR]
- David Bacon: The Maquiladora Workers of Juarez Find their Voice (2015) [TMR]

## Academic Calendar

<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction to the course. Course Presentation Welcome to Latin America (JCC: 1-16)
<b>Week 2</b>	Encounters. Patterns of Indigenous Life; origins of a Crusading Mentality; The Brazilian Counterexample; Africa and the Slave Trade (JCC: 17-37)
<b>Week 3</b>	Colonial Crucible. Colonial Crucible; Colonial Economics; A Power Called Hegemony; A Process Called Transculturation (JCC: 55-74)
<b>Week 4</b>	Independence. Colonial Independence; Revolution and War in Europe; The Spanish

American Rebellions Begin; The Patriots Winning Strategy: Nativism (JCC: 95-111)

*Film: Revolución: el cruce de los Andes (Leonardo Ipiña, 2010)*

Patriot Victories in Spanish America; Unfinished Revolutions;

Countercurrents: The Gaze of Outsiders (JCC: 112-126)

*Film: Artigas, la derrota (Cesar Charlone, 2011)*

**Week 5**

Postcolonial Blues.

Postcolonial Blues; Liberal Disappointment; Patronage Politics and Caudillo Leadership (JCC: 127-138)

*Film: Facundo, la sombra del tigre (Nicolás Sarquís, 1995)*

Brazil's Different Path; Continuities in Daily Life; Countercurrents: The Power of Outsiders (JCC: 139-160)

*Film: Camila (María Luisa Bemberg, 1984)*

**Week 6**

Progress.

The Limits of Progress for Women; Models of Progress;

Countercurrents: International Wars (JCC: 174-191)

*Film: Los colonos (Felipe Gálvez, 2023)*

**Week 7**

**MID-TERM**

**Week 8**

Neocolonialism.

Neocolonialism; The Great Export Boom; Authoritarian Rule: Oligarchies and Dictatorships (JCC: 193-212)

*Film: La Patagonia rebelde (Héctor Olivera, 1974); or El abrazo de la serpiente (Ciro Guerra, 2015)*

**FIRST PAPER DUE**

Links with the Outside World; Countercurrents: New Immigration in Latin América (JCC: 213-323)

*Film: Asesinato en el Senado de la nación (Juan José Jusid, 1985)*

**Week 9**

Nationalism.

Nationalism; Nationalists take power (JCC: 233-248)

*Film: ¡Qué viva México! (Sergéi Eisenstein, 1930)*

**Week 10**

Nationalism.

ISI and Activist Governments of the 1930s; Countercurrents: Populist Leaders of the 20th Century (JCC: 249-266)

*Film: Diarios de motocicleta (Walter Salles, 2005)*

**Week 11**

Revolution; Post World II Populism (JCC: 267-274)

*Film: Gatica, el mono (Leonadro Favio, 1993) or Eva Perón: la verdadera historia (Juan Carlos Desanzo, 1993)*

Onset of the Cold War; The Cuban Revolution; Countercurrents: Theology of Liberation (JCC: 275-296)

*Film: Memorias del subdesarrollo (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968), or Soy Cuba (Mijail Kalátozov, 1964)*

**Week 12**

Reaction; National Security Doctrine; Dictatorships Almost Everywhere (JCC: 297-313)

*Film: La historia oficial (Luis Puenzo, 1985) or Machuca (Andrés Wood, 2004).*

The Last Cold War Battles: Central America; Countercurrents: La violencia, Pablo Escobar and Colombia's Long Torment

**Week 13** Neoliberalism and Beyond.  
Neoliberalism and Beyond (JCC: 329-355)  
*Films: No (Pablo Larraín, 2012); or Argentina, 1985 (Santiago Mitre, 2022); or También la lluvia (Icíar Bollaín, 2011)*

**GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

**SECOND PAPER DUE**

**Week 14** **FINAL EXAM**

**Week 15** Final Remarks  
Final Grade and signature of "Hoja de situación" (Attendance is mandatory)