

(PALAS 362) LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS

PROGRAM IN ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

Course Information

Instruction in English
Contact Hours: 60
Semester

Course description

Since its discovery until the present, Latin America has been imagined and conceived as the "New Continent", a place for utopia, but also as a space of uneven modernity and extreme forms of violence. The course explores distinctive cultural aspects of Latin America by looking at the ways it has been represented in readings spanning from the decipherment of Maya script to the diaries written by Christopher Columbus, from the XIX Century independence and European travelers, to texts of the Cuban Revolution, the iconography of Peronismo, or the recent debates on Neoliberalism, Globalization and Populism. Drawing on essays, but also on short- stories, paintings, photographs, and films, the course addresses a set of questions that lie at the heart of how one thinks about Latin America. What is expected from "Latin America"? What were the different "ideas" that Latin America embodied? What are the forms of "Latin American" culture? How are the different "cultures" connected? The purpose of the course is threefold: to introduce students to problems central to Latin America, to familiarize students with a variety of non-fictional writings in Spanish, such as essay, chronicle, journalism and documentary films, and to sharpen student's skills as analytical readers.

Course requirements

Following UB policies, students need a minimum of 75% of attendance to be in good standing for the final exam. Sliding the ID card is the only way to track attendance. Students are expected to do close readings, participate in class, and do one oral presentations in pairs or in groups of three. During the semester, students will take one exam and work on a research project that will count as final exam. In addition to this, each student will be expected to make a significant contribution to the classroom dialogue. As part of this, students will be asked to bring two specific comments regarding the required readings in order to discuss in class. Any student caught plagiarizing will be given a "no credit" for all courses taken in the semester. As part of the course requirements, the students will have to visit the Evita Museum in the assigned week (see academic calendar below).

Grading Policy

Participation	25 %
Oral Presentation	15 %
Midterm	25 %
Final Exam	35 %

Tabla de conversión de la escala numérica / Conversion table for the numerical scale					
10 diez	Sobresaliente	A+	10 ten	Outstanding	A+
9 nueve	Distinguido	A	9 nine	Very Good	A
8 ocho	Distinguido	A	8 eight	Very Good	A
7 siete	Bueno	B+	7 seven	Good	B+
6 seis	Bueno	B	6 six	Good	B
5 cinco	Aprobado	B-	5 five	Pass	B-
4 cuatro	Aprobado	C	4 four	Pass	C
3 tres	Reprobado	F	3 three	Fail	F
2 dos	Reprobado	F	2 two	Fail	F
1 uno	Reprobado	F	1 one	Fail	F

Academic Calendar

- Week 1** The "New World": Accounts of the Discovery and the Conquest: Christopher Columbus. "Letter to Luis de Santangel"
The ideas of America. Early Travelers & Discoverers
Amerigo Vespucci. Account of his first voyage. Enrique Dussel.
The invention of the Americas (selection). Tzvetan Todorov.
The Conquest of America (selection 14-33)
- Week 2** Hernan Cortés. "The Second Letter" (excerpts). Bernal Díaz del Castillo. The conquest of New Spain. (selection).
Cracking the Maya Code. Doc. The decoding of the maya script.
- Week 3** Colonial Encounters and its Consequences
Great pre-Columbian civilizations. Thomas Merton: The Sacred City. Cortés and Montezuma. "The Curse of Cortez" by Álar Enrique, NYRB, 18may 2018.
Hemming, "Atahualpa & Pizarro
- Week 4** Revisiting the Conquest
Werner Herzog. Aguirre, the wrath of God, viewing in class.
Werner Herzog. Aguirre, the wrath of God comment.
- Week 5** Guamán Poma de Ayala Nueva Crónica del Buen Gobierno
Yo, la peor de todas, film by María Luisa Bemberg, based on Octavio Paz' book on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.
- Week 6** Tuesday, September 2: Simón Bolívar. "Letter of Jamaica".
Thursday, September 4: Alejo Carpentier: The kingdom of this world.
- Week 7** Domingo F. Sarmiento. Facundo. Civilization or Barbarism (Selection). Lucio V. Mansilla "A Visit to the Ranquel Indians"

(146-153). Thursday, Carlos Fuentes. "Land and Freedom: The Mexican Revolution". Mexican Muralists. **Oral presentation.**

Week 8 "Far away & long ago, (Chapter 7) W.H. Hudson and The Voyage of the Beagle, Charles Darwin (Chapter 6)
From Rough notes taken during some rapid journeys across the Pampas, "The Pampas Indians" & "The Town of Buenos Aires" by Francis Bond Head and other European XIX Century travelers.

Week 9 Rulfo stories. "Tell Them Not to Kill me", & "No Dogs Bark". Oral presentations on Rulfo.

Midterm Exam

Week 10 Fidel Castro. "History will absolve me" (excerpts). Miguel Barnet. "Biography of a Runaway Slave" (58-64). Salut les cubains (Agnès Varda. 1963) (27min film)
Daniel Santoro, Manual del niño peronista

Week 11 Eva de la Argentina, (documentary) María Seoane. J.M. Taylor: "The Myth of the Myth Rodolfo Walsh, "That Woman". Visit to the Evita Museum. Oral presentation on Walsh
Evita and Peronism. Julio Cortázar, "House Taken Over".

Week 12 Funny Dirty Little War, film based on the novel No habrá más penas ni olvido, by Osvaldo Soriano.
Discussion of Funny Dirty Little War.

Week 13 Even the Rain, film by Iciar Bolain... about the arrival of Columbus and the Water War in Bolivia.
Discussion on the film. History and contemporary politics

Week 14 ""The Maquiladoras", William Langewiesche.
Film: Lourdes Portillo, Señorita extraviada. (Discussion). Finnegan: Silver or Lead: The drug cartel La Familia gives local officials a choice: Take a bribe or a bullet. Ejército Zapatista. "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle". O.P. on the Zapatistas & Maquiladoras.
Review in class. Each student should comment on a subject she/he feels strongly about from all the syllabus.

Week 15 **Final exam.**
"Final Grade Sheet and signing of Hoja de situación (attendance is mandatory)".

Bibliography

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