



Study abroad.

## **SYLLABUS**

### **RACE, CLASS AND IDENTITY IN LATIN AMERICA**

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**Contact Hrs: 40**

**Language of Instruction: English**

### **MORELIA, MEXICO**

#### **Course Description**

This course surveys definitions of race, class and identity in the different regions of Latin America, with a focus on Mexico and the Spanish speaking Caribbean. We assess the history of the Indigenous people of the Americas, the impact of European colonization on the region-- systems of slavery, racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, and stories of human struggle, resistance, and creative identity-making. We highlight the cultural “creolization,” revolution and nation building, emblematic of Latin America, and assess contemporary social processes including immigration, globalization, regional politics and self expression.

#### **Course Objectives**

We approach this course from an anthropological perspective within an interdisciplinary framework of Latin American Studies. We will situate different interpretations of history and culture within their socio-historic context, and assess these interpretations from multiple perspectives. This means reading between the lines of European and Euro-American history, and finding the voices of the people of Indigenous, African, and Afro-Mestizo ancestry and culture as well. This inquiry demands critical thinking and the clear expression of ideas; students will be expected to demonstrate engagement in this mode of inquiry.

Students will leave this class with a basic understanding of the history and culture of Latin America, as well as an advanced understanding of group processes of cultural identification and the role of systems of race and class on the making of people’s identity in Latin America.

#### **Student Responsibilities**

Please note that this syllabus is a close approximation of what we will be doing in class, and students are responsible for understanding its contents. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as appropriate. It is the student’s responsibility to come to class to be aware of any changes in assignments, fieldtrips and deadlines. It is the student’s responsibility to contact instructor in case of emergencies or any questions related to class work, tardiness or absences.

Students are expected to attend class regularly and are strongly advised that they bear the sole responsibility for keeping current on readings, lectures, and notes. Attendance will be noted and students may get a lower grade with any more than three unexcused (3) absences/term.

Tardiness is defined as arriving to class after the scheduled start time. If students have a conflict, which prevents them from attending class or arriving on time, they are advised to speak directly with the instructor so they do not suffer grade reductions for tardiness.

### **Excursions**

We will be participating in group excursions as part of this class. A trip to the D.F. to visit sites of national patrimony and cultural identity will enhance our learning environment. We will also be traveling to see nearby events and activities, including the migrating monarch butterflies. We will also be taking shorter trips around Morelia, conducting informal ethnographic research at public sites including museums, squares, parks, and markets, and we will be sharing our observations in class.

### **Student Conduct and Participation in Class**

We must all work together to make this class the best learning environment for you and your fellow students. Coming to class on time and being prepared will assist in making our class a dynamic place of learning. Being prepared includes such behaviors as completing assignments on time, taking notes on assigned readings and bringing in pertinent questions for class discussion. Participation also means listening and encouraging others to speak—especially if you are a student who has no fears of speaking, or taking risks to speak up if you consider yourself a shy student in class discussion. Participation involves active listening—supporting opinions or challenging them in thoughtful non-confrontational ways. Class participation is as much about sharing your voice and ideas as it is about learning to listen and cooperate with others—your grade will reflect both these skills.

Students are expected to be critically engaged and respectful of varying opinions in the classroom. We will follow seminar guidelines to keep our classroom a safe place, including no interrupting when someone is talking, no name-calling or insulting commentaries, and asking clarifying questions as opposed to arguing. Students will be mindful that our different backgrounds, experiences, understandings, and positions in regards to various class topics make it imperative that we listen to each other. In the interest of openness, and in accordance with the right to free speech, students are encouraged to write and speak freely. However the value of judgments and analysis in this class is based on merit and not on any prejudicial practice. Ultimately, the safety of our learning environment is more important than any student's perceived right to free speech—we will caution on the side of no student ever feeling insulted in their place of learning. "*Strive to understand first, then to be understood.*"

All students are encouraged to speak with the instructor during office hours to ask questions, clarify or seek ways to more effectively communicate their point of view if they do not feel comfortable asking such questions in class.

No cell phones in disruptive ring mode allowed in class

### **Instructional Methodology and Assignments**

Note that late assignments, except in the case of legitimate emergencies, will be penalized by a grade reduction of 25% per day.

We will be using readings from various academic disciplines in our approach to the class topic. It is expected that students will do reading before class and be prepared for discussion. We will have two individual research assignments, based on class readings and lectures, two written exams, and one final group project.

We will also be making use of our learning environment in Mexico and Morelia, specifically, and will participate in class excursions which will be relevant to our class focus. Students will learn ethnographic methods and “ways of seeing” which will assist them in engaging deeply with these opportunities.

**Evaluation and Approximate Assignment of Grades**

- 20 % Attendance, check-offs\* and active participation in class sessions
- 20 % Individual research assignments
- 15 % The MFQ (Mid Final Quiz)
- 25 % The BFQ (Big Final Quiz)
- 20% Group Project

\* Students are required to visit with professor for a short conference to check-in after the MFQ.

**Required Readings and Texts \*\*\***

Chavez, Alicia Hernandez  
 2006 *Mexico: A Brief History*. Translated by Andy Klatt. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Galeano, Eduardo  
 1998 *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York University Press, New York.

Howard, David  
 1999 *Dominican Republic in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture*. Latin American Bureau, London.

Marti, Jose  
 2002 *Selected Writings*. Penguin Books, New York, 2002.

Martinez, Ruben  
 2002 *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Immigrant Trail*. Henry Holt, New York.

Williams, Gareth  
 2002 *The Other Side of the Popular: Neoliberalism and Subalternity in Latin America*. Duke University Press, Durham.

\*\*\* Note that chapters from these books will be available in an electronic format; only Chavez’s *Mexico* and the Galeano’s *Open Veins* will be purchased as books.

**TENTATIVE CALENDAR ONLY**

Topic	Activity	Assignments Due
Intros, overview of class; Anthropology; Basic terms of history, race, class and culture; Latin American geography and identity	Defining the dynamics of our human selves; map exercise	

Human migrations into the Americas; focus on the Dominican Republic and Mexico	Topical discussion.	Read over syllabus carefully-- bring questions; AAA Statement on Race
The Indigenous People of the Americas—pre-Columbus	Topical slides Hand out Assignment 1	Read assigned selections of Mexico and Open Veins
Spanish colonization, Indigenous survival and creolization	Topical slides	Cont. Mexico and Open Veins
Afro-Caribbean culture, Afro-Mexican culture	Images from El Cobre, Cuba	Assignment 1  Cont. Mexico and Open Veins
“Race and Identity in Latin America— <i>Abajo Colon-ialismo</i> ”		Cont. Mexico and Open Veins
Dominican Republic—Intro and overview	Video—Race and Culture, D.R. and Haiti Hand out Assignment 2	Read: <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u> ; “Race, Color, and Class in the Caribbean” by A. Maingot
D.R.	Movie—“Nuebo Yol”	Keep reading <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u>
D.R.	Movie—“Our American Girls”	Finish <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u>
Cuba, Jose Marti and Latin America	Connections, loose ends, launchings	Assignment 2 Read: <u>Jose Marti</u> : Introduction pp. ix-xxxii;
Cuba—the revolution	Movie—“Yo Soy Cuba” Hand out MFQ study guide	Read: <u>Jose Marti</u> Montecristi pp. 337-345; War Diaries pp. 350-379
Ethnographic Research methods		Read: <u>Jose Marti</u> “My Race”
Midterm	The MFQ! Hand out Assignment 3	Study for MFQ
Mexico: History and culture		Read:
Field trip to D.F.		
Mexico: continued	Group Projects assigned	
Local field trip: ethnographic research		
Mexico: politics and identity		
Local field trip: ethnographic research		

Summaries and conclusions	Peer review of rough research projects	Presentation of research
Final Class	Presentations of research	Final research papers/ products
The BFQ	Final Exam	Study