

US IN LATIN AMERICA

VIRGINIA TECH

FALL 2008 HIST 3264 RAND 316

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OFFICE HOURS: THURSDAY 9:30-11:30 AM

430 MAJOR WILLIAMS HALL

Description:

This course is about relationships, exchanges, and tensions among the people and nations of the Western Hemisphere. The focus is more specifically on the connecting points between the United States of America and the nations, dependencies and regions of what since the 19th Century have come to be known as Latin America. Latin America is not a nation, but an idea that has wrongly branded an entire region as a single cultural unit. As a concept it derives from European attempts to exercise economic control over the new American nations, which were former colonies of Spain and Portugal. Knowing this at the outset of the semester would help us understand that our US perception of the region is tinted with vague and often wrong ideas of what Latin Americans were and are. To complicate matters a bit more, in this course we will alter our gentilicious somewhat. Since all the people inhabiting the land between Tierra del Fuego and Canada are from the Americas, they are all *Americans* as those living exclusively in the US. Following the Baxter-Magolda model of learning, this course seeks to develop contextual learners who would understand that historical meaning is made in context, that everything is not simply relative, recognize that intellectual flexibility is essential, and have complex critical thinking and high-level problem-solving skills.

Rationale:

Since the decline of European domination in the Americas, about two hundred years ago, relations among Americans (people from the Americas) have been increasingly more significant than relations between Americans and people from other parts of the world. Indeed, immediately after independence, the largest US trading partner became the economies of Latin America, and as we will painfully learn in this course, the most powerful foreign influence (political and otherwise) in Latin America, has consistently been the US. But it goes both ways. If for any chance at any time within these last two centuries the Latin American economies would have reduced in half the consumption of US products, the US economy, for its part, would have suffered catastrophic impacts. And seen again from the other side, even US unintended pressure in Latin America has been so weighty on the Southern Hemisphere that as the saying goes, "if the United States sneezes, Latin America catches a cold." Currently the US is experiencing a demographic transformation with increasing numbers of immigrants from Latin America (thus the name "Latino"), which is a direct result of both our prior and current relations to the region. Thus, the history of the US and Latin American relations is perhaps our hemisphere's most important history of foreign relations.

Methodology:

Although often dubbed as a subtopic within Latin American or US History, the History of US in Latin America is not so much a distinct historical subject, but a style of inquiry with multiple points of entry. From this perspective we can examine freely the areas where two traditional historical studies (US and Latin American Histories) meet, and connect narratives and stories that would otherwise have been separated by conventional categories. This approach is what is known sometimes as *comparative history* and at other times as the study of *shared histories*. As the names imply, one emphasizes the comparison while the other looks at the common links between Latin

America and the US. Within these broad frameworks I expect students not to lose sight of what is important. They should seek at all times the positions of those traditionally without history, like the poor, the genderized, and the racialized and other relatively “invisible” individuals. In this way we will attempt to re-write history from below by recovering those protagonists that were lost in previous history books.

Coverage:

The period of study begins around 1750s to the present, but the accent will be given to the 19th Century, and to the Caribbean region's associations with the U.S., particularly to the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Analytical Focuses:

Lectures, readings, and exams will focus on four major themes: 1) the nature and deployment of power, 2) Resistance to oppression, 3) attempts to improve standards of living and to seek social justice, 4) ways in which race, gender, the poor, the nation, and modernity has been constructed (human interaction with the environment is also a reasonable line of inquiry).

First, students will learn to compare and contrast how distinct systems of thought, political rules and modes of exercising power evolved in the Americas during this period of study, and how these differences helped shape an asymmetrical relationship between *El Norte* and Latin America. Secondly, students will develop the critical skills necessary to discern the different forms in which individuals and cultures in the Western Hemisphere have adapted and/or resisted the weight of another expansive culture. Thirdly, we will analyze various patterns of cultural interaction, like those that happen in border zones, and including military encounters, religious missions, commercial trade, and human migrations in an effort to understand the distinctive ways that people have thought to improve their lives. Fourthly, the students will examine through the texts, discussion and lectures how the idea of gender and race difference was constructed, how the idea of nation came to emulate religion and permeate most aspects of society, and how modernity, in the forms of industrialization, technological development and increasing international commerce, with the perceived need to accumulate and concentrate wealth came to mean modernity in the Western Hemisphere.

Required reading:

- 1- *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History* by Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov. Oxford University Press, USA (2000) ISBN: 0195129946
- 2- *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*, by Greg Grandin. Metropolitan Books; (2006). ISBN: 0805077383
- 3- *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope*, by Leon D. Pamphile University Press of Florida; First edition (2001) ISBN: 0813026903
- 4- *Global Studies: Latin America* by Paul B Goodwin. McGraw-Hill/Dushkin; 12 edition (2006). ISBN: 0073404063
- 5- *Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* M. Wiener Pub.; 2006 Ed edition (2006) ISBN: 1558763864

Suggested Reading:

- 1- *Beneath the United States*, by Lars Schoultz Harvard University Press (1998)
- 2- *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*, by Peter H. Smith Oxford 3 edition (2007)
- 3- *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire*, by Gretchen Murphy. Duke University Press (2005)
- 4- *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, by Gilbert M. Joseph. Duke University Press (1998)
- 5- *A World Safe for Capitalism*, by Cyrus Veaser, Columbia University Press (2002)

The Sources:

As you probably have noticed, most of the readings come from secondary sources. These are mostly broad surveys or theme-based studies which are meant to give students an idea of what historians have produced, and about the current status of scholarship. Poring over these books usually provides students with an excellent understanding of these specific histories, and also shows the way to develop their own historical narratives. In other words, carefully reading these monographs will help students write history on their own at the highest level. Careful reading, of course, means to read these works with a critical mindset and with a close attention to the details—details not simply in the form of facts and arguments, but in the form of style, wording, and selectivity of information.

Primary sources are windows to the past from where we can take a peek into previous human experiences, and obtain invaluable historical insights. Because of their incontestable value I have included in the list of reading a collection of primary sources (Holden and Zolov). This addition will help bring us closer to the historical past by given us a more legitimate taste of history. Keep in mind that you are not reading history if you are just reading somebody's else narrative; it is only through the reading of primary sources that we all get to read the history from the standpoint of the protagonists and witnesses, which still needs to be analyzed as critically and as meticulously as when reading any historian's writing. The editors in this collection of primary sources provided students with a superb general introduction to the topic (US and Latin America) and with additional brief explanations for each source. By studying these primary sources students will begin learning about the importance of doing history directly from the source; it will allow students to make their own evaluations and assess the meanings and significance of the past on their own. Do not take me wrongly, however. I am not advocating for a completely independent work because that is simply impossible, but for a wholly independent judgment instead. We always work in collaboration with others; our feet stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and this means that previous historians have helped us by collecting data from which we could build on a bit more, and by making mistakes that we could then avoid making. With this collection of sources, then, students will have a taste of the US and Latin American relations from a closer position, while still acknowledging and assessing the contribution of established historians

There is one primary source in particular that will be the zenith of the students' research projects. This one is not in any collection and despite its importance, it has been seriously understudied: *The Report of the commission of inquiry to Santo Domingo with the introductory message of the president, special reports made to the commission*. Both research essays (more info ahead) are to be based on this source. The source is quite big, but it is in a PDF file in Blackboard for your convenience. I suggest that you quickly reflect on the articles related to this source (Hidalgo, Martinez-Fernandez, Calder and Pitre) with the purpose of establishing a knowledge-base and familiarity with the subject that will help you write a research essay from this source (more later in regards to essay writing).

Participation:

The activities for each week consist of assigned **readings**, short and brisk **lectures**, lots of classroom and Blackboard **discussions and** weekly in-classroom written **responses**. Students will also write two **exams** (midterm and final) **and two research essays** (of 1500 words at least and based on the *Report Commission*), the first one **due** a week before the midterm and the other a few days before the final exam. For those with an untamable spirit I propose a special research project that would substitute both; it is an **encyclopedia**-entry of 5,000 words prepared for wikipedia.

- ✓ **Attendance** in class is mandatory, and will be excused only with a legitimate medical receipt. Each unexcused absence will affect the student's final grade; three will lower a complete letter-grade.
- ✓ Students will do the reading *prior* to *each* class-time. But on Monday and Wednesday they will write at least a paragraph of informed and Critical Reaction in **Blackboard**, on the designated forum of discussion. These Critical Reactions provide an opportunity to think critically about the readings and to come to terms with its significance and meaning. Neither uncomplicated summations of the readings, nor emotional or gut-level responses will suffice. At some times during the end of the semester, in-class film-watching will replace readings. In such occasions I will expect the Critical Reaction in Blackboard on the film a few hours after class-time.
- ✓ **While there will be no discussion forum for Friday's reading, every Friday students will respond in writing** (good handwriting) to a question I will give in class about that week's topic. Bring, then, a 4x6 index card each Friday in which you could write your answer. These answers will be evaluated simply in three categories: **Excellent (3), good (2)** and **unsatisfactory (1)**. Note, also, that since on Fridays you will be doing this assignment in-classroom, you should make everything possible to be always present this day of the week.
- ✓ Every class will have opportunities for scholarly *gives and takes*, and contributing to class discussions is a reasonable expectation. Thus, students will make at least one **spoken** and **meaningful contribution** a week, germane, of course, to the subject being studied that week.
- ✓ The **Midterm** and **Final** exam is almost self-explanatory. They will both be partially *take-home* with a portion given in the classroom (matching, true and false, and map sections).
- ✓ Further along this syllabus you will find more detailed explanations about how to write research essays for this class. Here I will point out that the essays will be due a week or so before the exams. This will clear the space for you to focus on the exam after completing the essays, and avoiding the classical error of having two projects for the same class due on the same day.
- ✓ The Encyclopedia-entry alternative means that instead of writing two research projects on the *Commission's Report*, the brave student could write an encyclopedia entry for Wikipedia of at least 5000 words long on a subject within our scope of study. If the student gets the article/entry to be a "featured article," the student will get an A in the class (only if attendance and behavior has corresponded to that of a deserving student). Consult with the professor before September 15, at which point the window of opportunity will close. Those who choose this option should turn in the first draft at the time when the first conventional essay is due (Oct 13). This early date for the first draft can only help the groundwork for achieving the "featured article" status.
- ✓ All written assignments must be completed in order for you to receive a passing grade in this class.

Grading:

In an ideal world we would not have to worry about evaluations. Our existences, however, are far from ideal. So we have to find ways to appraise progress and assess learning in the classroom. Grading, therefore, will be based on the accumulation of points through participation on course activities. I do not grade high easily; I believe that a C is a perfectly fine grade and that As are reserved for exceptional work. But I will not hesitate to pay tribute to those who deserve distinction, and will always recognize diligent students. Coming upon students of this sort have brought some of the highest satisfactions in my career as an educator.

Tentative Grading Scale

Assignment	Date	Percentage
Blackboard Discussions	Twice a Week	20
Friday Written Responses	Weekly	5
Classroom Discussions	Weekly	15
First Paper	October 13	15
Final Paper	December 8	20
Mid Term Exam	October 18	10
Final Exam	December 12-18	15
Total		100

Final Point Scale

A 95-100	B + 88-89	C + 78-79	D+ 67-69
A- 90-94	B 84-87	C 74-77	D 63-66
	B - 80-83	C- 70-73	D- 60-62

Communication

The course is accessible via Blackboard, where you will find the most updated syllabus for the class, specific assignments, articles, the primary source for the research essay, links to online readings and the discussion forums. The Blackboard website is more than a valuable resource; it is our virtual classroom where we will meet at least twice a week to discuss the reading prior to class-time. Make regular use of it.

I will communicate with you periodically via Blackboard (mostly in the announcement page). If you check Blackboard often you will keep abreast with all the developments in class. Make sure you configure your e-mail in Blackboard to receive messages in case I feel the need to send you email messages through it. Otherwise you will miss out on important announcements.

If you wish to contact me using e-mail, please be sure to type "HIST 3264" in the subject header line. Keep in mind that often it is best to discuss some topics in person rather than electronically. Feel free to visit me during my office hours, and please, before firing an email, make sure your question is answered in the syllabus, or Blackboard.

Honor Code:

I wholeheartedly abide by the same VT principles of community <http://www.vt.edu/diversity/principles-of-community.html> and by the History Department's statement of diversity and acceptance: "The Department of History condemns all acts of intolerance on the basis of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation." I insist that my students do the same in the classroom and in all course activities.

I expect students to be familiar with and faithfully follow the Virginia Tech Honor Code while writing all assignments for this course. I am particularly concerned with those features in the Honor Code involving plagiarism. <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu> Avoid even thinking about bending this rule.

ESSAYS:

LEARNING TO WRITE AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH ESSAY, WHICH IS ARGUMENT AND PRIMARY SOURCE-BASED, IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS ON THIS CLASS. EVEN THOUGH THIS COURSE IS NOT AN ENGLISH CLASS, THE PROFESSOR WILL STILL PLACE HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE STYLE, FORMAT, AND ESSENCE OF THE ESSAYS. TO AID STUDENTS IN THEIR WRITING THE PROFESSOR HAS INCLUDED A FORM OF RUBRIC, SETS OF GUIDELINES FOR WRITING ESSAYS IN THIS CLASS, AND SAMPLES OF PREVIOUS STUDENTS' ESSAYS. STUDENTS ARE STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO TAKE THEIR COMPLETED DRAFT (THE ONE PRIOR TO FINAL SUBMISSION) TO THE WRITING CENTER TOGETHER WITH THE SET OF GUIDELINES IN THIS PROSPECTUS. IN THIS WAY STUDENTS WILL DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE HER/HIS CHANCES OF PRODUCING A SUPERIOR WORK.

AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH ESSAYS IS *THE COMMISSION'S REPORT ON SANTO DOMINGO*. STUDENTS WILL FIRST READ THE ARTICLES RELATED TO THE SOURCE, WHICH WOULD BE INCLUDED IN ELECTRONIC FORM IN THE SAME FOLDER AS THE SOURCE. THEY WILL THEN EXPLORE (READ) THE SOURCE PROVING IT WITH QUESTIONS INSPIRED BY THE ANALYTICAL FOCUSES OUTLINED IN THIS SYLLABUS—TRYING ALWAYS TO BE ORIGINAL, AND YET SCHOLARLY SOUND.

SCHEDULE

AUGUST

25: INTRODUCTIONS
27: GLOBAL STUDIES: INTRO ESSAY & NORTH AMERICA (MEXICO TOO)
29 GLOBAL STUDIES: CENTRAL AMERICA

SEPTEMBER

1: GLOBAL STUDIES: SOUTH AMERICA
3: GLOBAL STUDIES: THE CARIBBEAN
5: GRANDIN: PAGES 1-51
8: GRANDIN: PAGES: 52-86
10: GRANDIN: PAGES: 87-120
12: GRANDIN: PAGES: 121-END
15: SMITH: INTRODUCTION
17: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PREFACE
19: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 1-18
22: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES 19-33
24: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 34-41
26: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 42- 54
29: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 55-69

OCTOBER

1: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 70-89
3: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 90-103
6: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 104-122
8: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 123-137 (FIRST ESSAY EARLY DUE DATE)
10: FALL (LONG) BREAK
13: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 141-155 (FIRST ESSAY ORIGINAL DUE DATE)
15: HOLDEN & ZOLOV: PAGES: 156-181
18: MID TERM
20: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 1-33
22: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 34-59
25: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 60-79
27: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 80-101
29: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 102-128
31: PAMPHILE: PAGES: PAGES: 129-147

NOVEMBER

3: CALDER: PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION
5: CALDER: PAGES: 1-31

7: CALDER: PAGES: 32-66
10: CALDER: PAGES: 67-90
12: CALDER: PAGES: 91-114
14: CALDER: PAGES: 115-132
17: CALDER: PAGES: 133-155
19: CALDER: PAGES: 156-182
21: CALDER: PAGES: 183-212

DECEMBER

1: CALDER: PAGES: 213-237
3: FILM: WILLIAM WALKER
5: FILM: WILLIAM WALKER
8: FILM: ROMERO (FINAL ESSAY DUE)
10: FILM: ROMERO

Essay Grading Standards

Professor Hidalgo

A good essay is never the result of spontaneity. It always implies a good deal of information gathering and thinking, and then, a good deal of meticulous inscription of thoughts into written and organized words. That is why readers, professors included, value them highly. But nobody is inherently a good writer. A good writer is made with practice and painstaking care in following the elemental writing rules, and in trying to continually improve on them.

The writing and rewriting processes are never separated from the information gathering and thinking processes. This means you start writing from the beginning, and even when the rewriting is well advanced, you continue gathering and evaluating information. In another occasion we will address the topic of gathering and evaluating information, but in this document we will focus on the writing and rewriting processes.

The key for creating a good essay is in both the processes of writing and rewriting. If you only follow one step (the writing) and disregard the rewriting process, despite your inherent genius, you will produce a weak and mediocre essay at best. At worst, it would be a failing essay. So, when preparing yourself for a writing project, budget yourself in such a way that you can invest enough time and energies to come back to the “drawing table” several times. By necessity this involves consulting with others—having other people read your drafts.

You may be familiar with the first step that requires you to set into writing all your thoughts. The main purpose of this step is not to have an organization or logic, but to simply have all your thoughts in print. Indeed, before moving into the rewriting phase you should make sure all the ideas you want to get across are present in your yet haphazard essay. Take care not to invest yourself emotionally in the manner or style of writing, so it would be easier for you to change it in the format rewriting stage.

Only when you are relatively satisfied with the content level you can move to the next step, which is rewriting. For some, this is a highly sensitive procedure because you may have invested yourself emotionally in the way you wrote your original ideas, but if you think that there are several writing alternatives that may convey your message better, you may be more willing to let go of that word, sentence, or paragraph. So how do you critique yourself? You should start with these questions:

Critical Review Critique

1. Does a direct thesis convey both the subject and the reviewer's value judgment?
2. Does the review provide a summary or description to help you experience the film, music, event, etc.? Note places where the author provides too much or too little detail.
3. Does the essay clearly identify relevant criteria for evaluation? Are they appropriate, believable, and consistent?
4. Are any important features of the reviewed subject omitted?
5. **Logos (logic, content):** Does the essay provide sufficient, relevant, and interesting details and examples to adequately inform and entertain?
6. **Ethos (author):** Does the author's judgment seem sound and convincing?
7. **Pathos (emotional appeals):** Does the author responsibly and effectively utilize emotional appeals to the audience?
8. Does the author include adequate reference to the opposition and respond to that opposition appropriately?

For every essay, regardless of the mode, consider the broad categories of content, organization, style, and correctness.

- ✓ **Content:** Consider the topic (its appropriateness and interest for the assignment as well as a clear focus suitable to essay length) and the way the topic is developed (clarity sufficiency of its argument, its scope, subcategories, amount and type of examples, anecdotes, evidence, etc.).
- ✓ **Organization:** Consider how the essay is introduced and concluded (especially looking for a "frame" to the essay, where the intro and conclusion refer to the same idea), whether the thesis is located in the most helpful place (direct or implied), how the essay is structured, whether the order or extent of development is successful, as well as how individual paragraphs are organized (clear topic sentences, appropriate and concrete evidence, logical organization of evidence).
- ✓ **Style:** Style can refer to the overall style of an essay: whether the tone is appropriate (humorous, serious, reflective, satirical, etc.), whether you use sufficient and appropriate variety (factual, analytical, evaluative, reflective), whether you use sufficient creativity. Style can also refer to the style of individual sentences: whether you use a variety of sentences styles and lengths, whether sentences are worded clearly, and whether word choice is interesting and appropriate.
- ✓ **Correctness:** Correctness refers to grammar, punctuation, and form of the essay. You do not need to know the exact grammatical term or rule to know

when a sentence is not correct. Even though you may not know the term dangling modifier, you could identify that the following sentence is not correct:

Rolling around in the bottom of the drawer, Tim found the missing earring. [certainly the earring was rolling, not Tim!]

You could also easily tell that the following sentence actually contains two sentences that need punctuation between them:

The new manager instituted several new procedures some were impractical. [You need to add punctuation (period) after "procedures" and capitalize "some."]