

History 255  
**Modern Latin America**  
A. Wells  
Fall 2009

Course meeting times and location: 10:00am-11:25am, T-TH, Sills 109  
Discussion Sections: 9:30-10:30am; 10:30-11:30am; T-TH, Peucinian Room, Sills.

Office: 203 Pols House; Office Hours: 2:30-4:00 T-TH or by appointment  
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*Purpose and Orientation:* This survey traces the principal, economic, social, and political transformations in Latin America from the wars of independence to the present. Topics include: colonial legacies and the aftermath of independence; the consolidation of nation-states and their insertion into the world economy; the evolution of land and labor systems; the politics of state-building, reform and revolution; industrialization and class formation; and military regimes and foreign intervention.

*Texts:*

Required: Available at the Bookstore and on reserve at H-L.

- Chasteen, John C., *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- García Márquez, Gabriel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
- Beezley, William H. and Judith Ewell, *The Human Tradition in Latin America: The Twentieth Century*
- Topik, Steven, Carlos Marichal and Zephyr Frank, eds., *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*.
- Wilkinson, Daniel, *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala*

Recommended: Choose one of the following for the book review. Available at the Bookstore and on reserve at H-L.

Altamirano, Ignacio Manuel, *El Zarco: The Blue-Eyed Bandit*. Translated by Ronald Christ. A novel written by one of Mexico's most acclaimed novelists is set in the 1860s when the country was at war with itself; liberals seeking to oust a European-born monarch, Maximilian and the French army of Louis Napoleon which defended his rule, and conservatives wanting a monarchy to bring order and progress to their nation. The novel treats ethnicity, race and gender relations during this politically turbulent period.

Conaghan, Catherine, *Fujimori's Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere*. A political scientist's analysis of Alberto Fujimori's corrupt dictatorship during the 1990s.

The Japanese-Peruvian politician defeated the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), a brutal guerrilla insurgency that sought to overthrow the Peruvian state. His military success, however, was undermined by his administration's deceit and heavy-handed determination to destroy democratic rule.

Derby, Lauren. *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*. Most historians and novelists who have written about the Dominican dictatorship of General Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961) have stressed his brutality and corruption. Professor Derby emphasizes cultural factors to explain his longevity, including Trujillo's use of magic, spectacle and rumor.

### **All Reserved Readings on E Reserves**

#### *Course Schedule:*

September 3 Introduction

September 8 The Colonial Legacy. Chasteen, Chapters 1-2; and Topik, Chapter 1 or 2, (read either essay). Discussion Sections.

September 10 The Impact of Independence. Chasteen, Chapter 3-4. Lecture.

September 15 El Caudillo: Paraguay's Diabolical Dr. Francia. **E-Reserve:** Excerpt from Agustín Roa Bastos, *I the Supreme*. Lecture.

September 17 The Mercurial Santa Anna and Mexico's Chaotic Age. Chasteen, Chapter 5. Lecture.

September 22 *100 Years of Solitude: The Absurdity of Latin American History*. García Márquez, first third of book. Discussion Sections.

September 24 The Calamitous Nineteenth Century. García Márquez, second third of book. Discussion Sections.

September 29 Melquíades' Prophecy Revealed. García Márquez, last third of book. Discussion Sections.

October 1 North American Hegemony in Central America and the Caribbean: Our Backyard. **E-Reserve:** Excerpts from Robert Holden and Eric Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*. Lecture.

October 6 Backyard Imperialism. **E-Reserve.** Alma, Guillermprieto, "Panama City, 1992" in *The Heart That Bleeds*. Evening film showing of "The Panama Deception."

October 8 The Dance of the Commodities. Latin America during the Export Boom. Topik, Introduction and Chapter 5. Lecture **JOURNALS DUE.**

October 9-14 Fall Break

October 15 Latin America and Global Commodity Chains. Topik, read three of the following--Chapters 6, 8-12. Discussion Sections.

October 20 The Mexican Revolution. Beezley and Ewell essay by Joseph and Wells; and Reserved Readings: Chasteen, 217-229. Lecture.

October 22 Populism, the Great Depression and the Advent of the Military. Chasteen, 229-246. Lecture.

October 27 Race and Class Dynamics. Beezley and Ewell, Read 3 of the following: essays: Stein, Esquivel, Arancibia, Conniff, or Bensusan. Discussion Sections.

October 29 Gender Dynamics. Beezley and Ewell, Read 3 of the following essays: Besse, Ewell, Phillips, Martínez, or Medlin. Discussion Sections.

November 3 The Cuban Revolution. Chasteen, 264-273; Beezley and Ewell essays by Machín and Stoner. Lecture.

November 5 The Abduction of a Professor: A Cold War Cautionary Tale. **E-Reserve:** Excerpt of Wells, *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR and the Jews of Sosúa*. Lecture. **JOURNALS DUE.**

November 10 Guatemala's Civil War. Wilkinson, Part I and Part II. Discussion Sections.

November 12 A Revolution's Mid-Life Crisis. No readings. Evening Showing of "Fresa y Chocolate."

November 17 From Guatemala a Guatepeor. Wilkinson, Part III and IV. Discussion Sections

November 19 Sandinismo's Fall from Grace. **E-Reserve:** Conor Cruise O'Brien, "God and Man in the New Nicaragua." Lecture.

November 24 Argentina's Chaos and Anarchy: The Descent to Hell. **E-Reserve:** *Nunca Más: The Report of the National Commission on the Disappeared*. Lecture.

November 25-30 Thanksgiving

December 1 Argentina's "Dirty War." **E-Reserve:** Luisa Valenzuela, "Other Weapons." Discussion Sections.

December 3 Confronting Globalization Amid the Garbage Dumps. **E-Reserve:** Guillermprieto, "Mexico City, 1990," and "Mexico City, 1992." Discussion Sections.

December 8 Garbage Pickers, NGOs and the State. Evening film Showing of "Recycled Life." No readings.

December 10 Retrospect and Prospect. **E-Reserve:** Noam Chomsky, "The Manufacture of Consent." Discussion Sections.

December 12-15 Reading Period.

December 16 **JOURNALS DUE, ABSOLUTELY**

### *Course Requirements*

**Journal:** Students often say that even though they did not participate frequently in class, they did the readings earnestly, followed class discussions and gave the subject matter a great deal of thought. The best activity suited to demonstrating this ongoing effort is constant writing. The major vehicle for this will be your journal. Begin it immediately and react to readings, lectures, class discussions, or any other material that seems relevant to the course and the issues and ideas explored here.

The word "synthesis" best describes the function of your journal. Try through constant review of what you have already read and written to notice and expand upon persistent themes, topics, or problems explored over the course of the semester. But don't delay writing until such patterns emerge in your thinking. Obviously, if you are practicing this kind of attention to your reading and writing you will be in a very good position to contribute to the discussion sections. Above all, think critically about what you read and hear. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's arguments? Is the evidence persuasive? Is bias evident?

**The journal should not summarize the readings.** Rather, develop themes or react and respond to what you read. Look for linkages between different types of material. **A typical journal entry should be approximately two double-spaced pages for each day's set of readings. It should present a thesis or argument, incorporate specific examples from the readings and other class materials to sustain your ideas, and arrive at a substantive conclusion. Conclusions should not just summarize your main points but should think through the larger implications of your analysis. In short, journal entries are mini-essays, not personal reflections.**

Examples of journals from an earlier history course have been put in a folder entitled "Sample Journal Entries" and placed on reserve in Hawthorne-Longfellow Library. To give you feedback on your questions and ideas (and to diminish the chances of procrastination), the journals will be turned in on three occasions during the semester

(October 8, November 10 and December 16). **You need to write journal entries for two-thirds of the assigned readings (or other course materials) each time your journal is turned in. Thus, each time you turn in your journal, you are required to hand in six entries (or if you write a double entry, five entries). When you turn in the journal, be sure to include your previous entries and my comments.** By the end of the semester, you should have compiled a journal of about 35-40 pages of writing (although there are no set minimum or maximum limits). Written comments on your journal entries should give you a very good idea of how you are doing and help you assess your progress and improve your analytical and critical thinking skills. Although this is not a formal writing assignment, it is expected that you will take care and attention in your journal writing. **Two of your entries must be on the films that we will view throughout the semester.**

**Book Review:** Choose one of the books listed under recommended texts and write a 4-5 page (typed double-spaced) review. The assignment should not summarize the book. Instead develop and discuss major themes of the work with specific examples, and then critically evaluate the work (whether you liked or disliked the book, again with specific examples to support your ideas). The book review is a **formal piece of writing** and should be appended to the journal when it is turned in at the end of the course. Rough drafts can be submitted to the instructor as long as sufficient lead-time is provided.

**Class Participation/Discussion:** Class participation is absolutely essential to the success of the lectures and discussion sections. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's reading. Active, constructive, informed participation is particularly important in the small group discussions.

**Extra Credit:** Anyone who wishes to improve their grade may write a second book review from the list of recommended texts. The paper should be no longer than five pages and is due during Reading period. One to a customer.

**Grading:** Journal 60%; **Book Review** 25%; **Class Participation and Attendance** 15%.

**College Policy on Viewing Films:** In accordance with copyright law, film screenings are not open to the public.