Anthropology of Latin America

Spring 2012

ANT 310L * LAS 310L
Unique #s: 31295 *40165

JGB 2.216
T-TH 9:30am-11:00am

Dr. Amelia Rosenberg Weinreb
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I. Course description:
The goal of this course is to provide a framework for understanding contemporary Latin America. In particular, we will analyze Latin American history, politics, economics and forms of cultural and social change. We address anthropological understanding of the role of colonialism, urbanization, gender, race, social movements, transitions to democracy and market economies, migration, transnational communities, and the impacts of globalization in the Latin American context. This is not a standard survey course, covering the region as a whole however. Instead, following an introductory unit which provides socio-historical context, students will engage in critical reading of four ethnographies on specific countries on different sub-regions within Latin America in order to explore particular topics and questions in more depth. This year's country focus is on Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador, and Cuba. In each of the units of the course, we will supplement ethnographies with textbook readings and news articles that provide further historical and contemporary context.

II. Course objectives:
Upon completion of the course, students will have developed the skills to be able to:
● Articulate central themes of Latin American ethnography as a whole
● Place course themes within in a wider context of anthropological theory
● Consider the contribution that anthropology has made to the understanding of the geopolitical forces at play in the Americas
● Converse, with historical and ethnographic sensitivity, about a range of contemporary social issues in the region
● Gain greater familiarity with the specific sociohisotrical background, ethnographic details, and contemporary realities of four national contexts.

III. Course Design and Format
This course, though relatively large, will be run in an interactive, seminar-style format, and is recommended for motivated undergraduate students at any stage who are developing a regional interest in Latin America. If you are imagining sitting passively while I lecture from PowerPoint and you check Facebook and shop for shoes online, this class is not for you! Our front row rotates, students

often come to the front of the classroom to co-lead, we break down into small discussion and activity groups, and enjoy a wide variety of conversations, multimedia events and, finally, students weigh in on what questions should appear on the tests. The material in this course changes each times it is offered, because students, their interests, and our collective conversations are organic, spontaneous and evolving. If you miss class, you missed something that cannot be replicated. The course is designed to be a series of interactive weekly meetings, and follow this format:

Tuesdays- An instructor-led discussion establishes the context and background for the readings and outlines their key data, arguments and ideas in the reading.
Thursdays- A small team of students, delegated in advance, will facilitate the discussion or an activity along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis. The TA is available to meet with you to help plan this session, should you need.

IV. Course Requirements:
● **Discussion leadership (7.5%):** 5-6 students in the front row, delegated in advance, facilitate the discussion or an activity along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis. You will do this once during the semester. Participating in class more generally, front row or not, has a positive influence on your grade.

● **One 2-page reading response Paper (7.5%):** The week of your discussion leadership, you will write a two-page response to the reading (12 pt. font Times New Roman, double spaced). These can be reflections, reactions, critical commentaries or overviews. The responses will be submitted to the TA in class on those Thursdays you lead. They will be graded on their quality, thoughtfulness and evidence you have understood the assigned reading. Note: Reading response papers must be turned in on time, and cannot be made up at the end of the course.

● **2 Tests (60%):** We have 2 in-class tests (each 30% of your grade) each which will include the following question format and point values:

20 multiple choice	(2 points each=40 points)
20 fill-in-the blank	(2 points each=40 points)
5 short answer questions	(2 points each=10 points)
1 short essay, written at home	(1 typed page =10 points)
	100 points

Note on the short essay question: Each test will include a more analytic open-ended, 1-page short essay question, a hard copy of which you submit to the TA on the day of the test (12 pt. font Times New Roman, double spaced). This question gives you the opportunity to think through a question, open-book, open-note without pressure. The prompt will be made available to you on blackboard exactly one week before a given test by 9pm.

Note on question content: One week prior to the test, I have students post two questions they would like to see appear on the on blackboard, and often draw up to 80% of test content from student suggestions! These suggested questions also prove useful for students to study and prepare for tests.

● **Final Group multimedia project (25%)**: The aim of this assignment is to produce a presentation file (Powerpoint, Prezi, or equivalent) on a contemporary topic in a Latin American country of your choice with a team of three course-mates. The presentation will necessarily include visual elements in addition to text. Depending on your topic, you can include other media (music, video) – or links to them. Because of diversity in the types of topics covered by people in this assignment, I'm keeping specific recommendations about presentations to a minimum. Your group will be handing in a 1-paragraph proposal describing the project for approval. At the end of the semester, the 4 winning presentations will be screened in class (first, second, third place and honorable mention), finalists will be ranked by students, and will receive extra credit percentage points toward their final grade (first=2%, second=1.5%, third, 1%, honorable mention .5%).

Summary of Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade at-a-glance:
● Discussion leadership (7.5%), and a graded reading response papers (7.5%): **15 %**
● Two in-class tests (30% each): **60%**
● Final group research project resulting in a visual multimedia file: **25%**

Note on attendance, contribution, and classroom vibe: Regular attendance is not only the key to your own success as a student in this course, but also for the quality of the course as a dynamic whole. Arriving late and leaving early disrupts class flow, so make every effort to arrive to class on time with your materials prepared and **phones and computers, etc. off. This is a low-tech, highly interpersonal course.**

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ABSENCES: After 1 absence (no questions asked), your final grade will be lowered two percentage points for each additional absence after that.

V. Grading
Grades will be based on the following scale:

A	95-100%	Excellent grasp of subject matter; explains concepts clearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear and interesting connections, exceptionally original, coherent and well-organized; ideas clearly written/stated, outstanding classroom participation
A-	90-94%	Very good grasp of subject matter; explains concepts clearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear connections; ideas clearly written/stated
B+	85-89%	Good grasp of some elements above, others need work
B	83-84%	Satisfactory grasp of some elements above
B-	80-82%	Uneven, spotty grasp of the elements above
C+	76-79 %	Limited grasp of the above
C	73-75%	Poor grasp of the above
C-	70-72%	Very poor grasp of the above
D	60-69%	Little evidence of grasp of material, having done readings, attended class, or completed assignments
F	0-59%	No evidence of having done readings, attended class, or completed assignments

VI. Important notes on grading and participation:
***Complete assignments on time*:** We are committed to returning assignments to you promptly so you can benefit from my feedback while material is fresh in your mind. I do not grade papers or exams until I

have the entire printed set in front of me. For these reasons, **I do not accept late assignments**. Bring a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day it is due. If you anticipate a problem, or have a history of deadline problems, meet with a consultant at the learning or writing center to help you plan ahead:

The UT Learning Center: http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/
Undergraduate Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/

Grading policy: I am very happy to discuss how you may improve your work, and will read early drafts, but **I will not reconsider grades on papers or tests**. I grade all the papers in a set at the same time to ensure that I am applying the same standards, and I make every effort to be fair.

Plagiarism and copying: Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. Should copying occur from another student, both the student who copied work and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment.

Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.
Here are University statements about plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing.
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/

Using office hours, getting help: I check email regularly, and will usually reply to emails within 24 hours for basic questions, and no longer than three days for more complicated ones. My door is open from 11am-12pm on Thursdays. Ask for an appointment if you can't come in during my regular hours.

VII. University Notices and Policies
University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

In this course, that means we will all work to ensure that the discussion space is shared relatively equally among the participants, and to maintain an atmosphere of respect for each other's perspectives and arguments, especially when there are strong disagreements.

Students with disabilities
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Please contact me as early in the semester as possible to let me know if you need anything to participate fully.

Religious Holy Days
By UT Austin policy, students are required to notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will certainly give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence

VIII. Required Texts (for purchase at the Co-op Bookstore)
Life is Hard by Roger Lancaster
The Circulation of Children by Jessaca Leinaweaver
Crude Chronicles by Suzanna Sawyer
Cuba in the Shadow of Change by Amelia Rosenberg Weinreb

Note: A required course pack is available for purchase at Abel's Copies, which is located at University Towers (715D West 23rd St.)

Key due dates at-a-glance:
Plan ahead!

Th 3/8	Test #1
T4/10	Proposal for final Projects Due
Th 4/26	Final Projects Due
T 5/1	Test #2

IX. Tentative Course Schedule: ***This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Date	Main Topic(s)	Readings to be completed before class	Evaluation
Unit 1 **INTRODUCTION** What's going on in contemporary Latin America? What historical background do we need to know to understand it?			
T 1/17	Introduction to the course stereotypes and impression of a region. Map quiz.		
Th 1/19	Latin America in the News. What's happening in Latin America Right now? Front row discussion leaders: bring in most interesting, current newspaper (2011) articles to discuss and present. **Student-led**	Read the syllabus. Discussion leaders, be prepared to summarize, discuss and workshop your articles.	Type up a short paragraph or list answering these questions about the syllabus: a) what surprises you; b)what you look forward to; c) what you most dread
T 1/24	Anthropology, Latin America, and the Caribbean	Ch. 1-2 in course pack pp. 1-49	
Th 1/26	Society before the Europeans Colonialism Massive Jeopardy game on chapters	Ch. 3-4 in course pack pp. 50-109	

	1-4 ✂ **Student-led**		
Unit 2 **FOCUS ON NICARAGUA**			
T 1/31	Background: Central America, Nicaragua	In course pack pp. 17-22; 44-48	
Th 2/2	*Life is Hard* ✂ **Student-led**	*Life is Hard* , Intro material-ch. 3: pp. xiii-48	
T 2/7	*Life is Hard*	*Life is Hard,* ch. 4-ch. 6: pp. 48-92	
Th 2/9	*Life is Hard* ✂ **Student-led**	*Life is Hard*, ch. 7-ch. 15: pp. 111-184	
T 2/14	*Life is Hard*	*Life is Hard,* ch. 15-18 pp. 191-235	
Th 2/16	Update: What's happening in Nicaragua Today? ✂ **Student-led**	*Life is Hard, conclusion*: pp. 279-299	
Unit 2 **FOCUS ON PERU**			
T 2/21	Background, South America, Peru	In course pack pp. 35-60 and 98-103	
Th 2/23	*The Circulation of Children* ✂ **Student-led**	*The Circulation of Children,* ch. 1: pp.1-36	
T 2/28	*The Circulation of Children*	*The Circulation of Children,* ch.2-3: pp. 37-80	Post on discussion board by 5pm: What would **you** like to see on test #1? Submit 2 sample questions.
Th 3/1	*The Circulation of Children* ✂ **Student-led**	*The Circulation of Children,* ch.4-6: pp.81-133	
T 3/6	Update: What's happening in Peru today?	*The Circulation of Children,* ch. 7: pp.155-162	
Th 3/8			**TEST #1**
T 3/13	***Spring Break: NO CLASS***		
Th 3/15	***Spring Break: NO CLASS***		

Unit 4 **FOCUS ON ECUADOR**			
T 3/20	Layover Day: -Elizabeth Presents (first half) -Topics and issues in Latin America: brainstorm and form small groups for final project (second half)	Rubric for final project will be provided today	Come to class having thought about final project topics. Write down three to share.
Th 3/22	Background on Ecuador **Student-led**	*In course pack: 88-97*	
T 3/27	*Crude Chronicles*	*Crude Chronicles*, Opening, ch. 2: pp.1-87	Send names of group project members and proposed topic/question to Elizabeth by 5pm
Th 3/29	*Crude Chronicles* **Student-led**	*Crude Chronicles,* ch, 3 -4: pp. 91-146	
T 4/3	-Discuss *Crude Chronicles* (first half) -Discuss turning topics into questions (second half)	*Crude Chronicles,* ch 5-7: 149-209	
Th 4/5	Update: What's happening in Ecuador today? **Student-led**	*Crude Chronicles,* closing: pp. 211-223	
Unit 5 **FOCUS ON CUBA**			
T 4/10	Layover Day, Elizabeth Presents		Submit 1-paragraph description of your final project
Th 4/12	Background on Caribbean and Cuba **Student-led**	In course pack: pp. 116-122, 132-136 , *Cuba in the Shadow of Change* , Intro-2: pp. 1-51	
T 4/17	*Cuba in the Shadow of Change*	*Cuba in the Shadow of Change,* ch. 3-6: pp 52-113	

Th 4/19	*Cuba in the Shadow of Change* **Student-led**	*Cuba in the Shadow of Change*, ch. 7-9: pp.52-82	
T 4/24	What's happening in Cuba Today?	*Cuba in the Shadow of Change* Ch 9- conclusion: pp. 160-189	**Post on discussion board by 5pm:** What would **you** like to see on test #1? Submit 2 sample questions.
Th 4/26	Latin American and Chicano/a student experiences: A panel discussion **Student-led**		**DUE: FINAL PROJECTS** sent electronically to Elizabeth no later than 9am.
T 5/1			**Test #2**
Th 5/3	Awards Ceremony for Winning Projects, Course Evaluation, Latin American Food and Drink Party		