

## **Anthropology and Ethnography of Contemporary Latin America**

ANT 310L3; Unique #s: 30070, 30075, 30080, 30085

LAS 310 4; Unique #s: 40086, 40087, 40088 40089

Fall 2010

UTC 3.132

MW 10am-11am

F discussion sections with TA

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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 through anthropological theory and ethnography. Students will engage in critical reading of selected sections of ethnographies on countries on different sub-regions within Latin America. The course, however, is organized thematically. Themes covered 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. In each of the thematic units of the course, we will supplement textbook readings with ethnographies, and discuss how they illuminate each other. Finally, the course includes a final paper based on either: a) participation local, small-scale, original field work project conducted with members of a Latin American Diaspora community or b) library-based research synthesizing theory and ethnography of a selected Latin American country.

### **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
- Have ethnographic familiarity with issues of Latin American Diaspora and Latino/a migration

- Have the basic skills to conduct ethnographic research and write ethnographic vignettes

### **III. Course Design and Format**

This course, which will be run in a seminar-style format, is recommended for motivated undergraduate students at any stage who are developing a regional interest in Latin America. While there are writing assignments throughout the semester to encourage students analyze and synthesize information and ideas in a rigorous way, there are no in-class quizzes or tests. The classes are designed to be a series of interactive weekly meetings, and follow this format:

**Mon-** An instructor-led discussion establishes the context and background for the readings and outlines their key data, arguments and ideas in the reading.

**Wed-** A small team of students, delegated in advance, will facilitate the discussion along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis.

**Fri-** Friday discussion sessions with the TA are reserved for writing and research workshops to guide small-scale field or library research projects as they develop.

### **IV. Course Requirements:**

- Attendance, active intellectually rigorous engagement in class discussions and discussion sections, blogs and reading response papers (see below): 20%
- Timely submission of three short analytic papers: 20%
- Scores on four take-home quizzes covering assigned reading materials: 20%
- Final research paper which integrates readings and individual research: 40%

**NOTE ON ATTENDANCE: More than four unexcused absences will automatically lower your final grade by one letter grade.**

### **V. Writing Assignments:**

● When you lead discussion (with your group), you will write a two-page (12 pt. font, double spaced) response to the reading. These can be reflections, reactions, critical commentaries or overviews. The two-page typed responses will be turned in class on those Wednesdays that we read an ethnography, and are marked on the course schedule below. These are informal, but are required, and are an important part of the participation grade. They will be marked with a  $\sqrt{+}$ ,  $\sqrt{/}$ , or  $\sqrt{-}$  based on their quality. Note: Reading response papers must be turned in on time and cannot be made up at the end of the course.

● Short papers: Two short papers, 3-5 pages in length, preparing for your final project analyzing our reading in more depth are due at various points in the semester, edited typed and including a bibliography. A prompt and rubric will be provided two weeks in advance.

● Final paper: a 10-15 page (12 pt. font, double spaced) analysis paper that includes a bibliography of literature cited (should have at least 6-10 references total, 3-5 from scholarly sources outside the course, 3-5 from the course).

**To receive a grade, all submissions must include at least 10 pages (typed or hand written) of field notes upon which the project was based.**

## 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+ 86-89% Good grasp of some elements above, others need work
- B 83-85% 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 written assignments on time:* I am 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 quizzes**. 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:* Although this course is designed for creative, individual work and synthesis of ideas from various sources (it would be hard to cheat in the conventional sense of the word), 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 10am-11am on Mondays and Wednesdays. Ask for an appointment if you can't come in during my regular hours.

*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 seminar. **Attendance and participation are factored into your final grade.**

## **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

*Marketing Democracy* by Julia Paley

*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.)**

**IX. Key due dates at-a-glance:**

**Plan ahead!**

F 9/24: Quiz #1

F 10/1: Short paper #1

F 10/8: Quiz #2

F 10/15: Short paper #2

F 10/29: Quiz #3

W 11/25: Map Quiz and Quiz #4

F 11/30: FINAL PAPER

**X. 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.*

✧=Student Led

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed before class	Evaluation
W 8/25	Introduction to the course stereotypes and impression of a region. Map pre-test.		
F 8/27		Read, "Latin America: Myth and Reality"	syllabus: type up: a) what surprises you; b) what you look forward to; c) what you most dread
M 8/30	Latin America in Global Context	Ch. 1 "Why Latin America?" (pp. 1-10); "Latin America, the United States and the World." Debate from <i>Taking Sides</i> "Is Latin America Making Progress Towards Integration?" pp. 2-14.	
W 9/1	✧ Colonial Foundations, Modern Transformations	Ch. 2-3 in MLA (pp. 13-67)	Trivial Pursuits on historical facts.
F 9/3	What is ethnography?	"Reading ethnography?" in course pack.	Due: good short-essay quiz question on the

			course blog by 9am AND Bring current (2010) newspaper article on Latin America
M 9/6	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS		
W 9/8	Latin America in the news	Be prepared to summarize, discuss and workshop your article.	
F 9/10	ROSH HA SHANAH HOLIDAY NO CLASS		
M 9/13	Ethnography: Nicaragua	Background on Nicaragua, in coursepack <i>Life is Hard</i> Part 1;	
W 9/15	✿ Student-led discussion on <i>Life is Hard</i>	<i>Life is Hard</i> , Part 2	Due: 2-page reading response paper, typed and stapled
F 9/16	YOM KIPPUR OBSERVED NO CLASS		
M 9/20	Wrap up <i>Life is Hard</i>	<i>Life is Hard</i> Part 3-4	
W 9/22	TA-led discussion		
F 9/24	In-class film		Due: take-home quiz #1, typed and stapled
M 9/27	Chile	Background on Chile in coursepack; <i>Marketing Democracy</i> Intro, Ch 1 and 2	
W 9/29	✿ Student-led discussion on <i>Marketing Democracy</i>	<i>Marketing Democracy</i> , ch 3-4	Due: 2-page reading response paper, typed and stapled
F 10/1			Due: Short Paper #1

			Due: good short-essay quiz question on the course blog
M 10/4	Wrap up <i>Marketing Democracy</i>	<i>Marketing Democracy</i> , ch 5-6 epilogue	
W 10/6	Methodology and Field Projects: Overview of participant observation, interviewing, fieldnotes	Read course pack items:- <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> ch. 1-4;	
F 10/8		Taking fieldnotes workshop	Due: take-home quiz #2, typed and stapled
M 10/11	Problems and pitfalls with undergrad research papers		Due: field notes typed up
W 10/13	Workshshop: Final project; 3 volunteers needed to workshop proposals		
F 10/15			Due: Short paper #2, typed and stapled.
M 10/18	Ecuador	Background on Ecuador in coursepack; <i>Crude Chronicles</i> Opening, ch 1 and 2	
W 10/20	✂ Student-led discussion on <i>Crude Chronicles</i>	<i>Crude Chronicles</i> ch 3 and 4	Due: 2-page reading response paper
F 10/22			
M 10/25	Wrap-up <i>Crude Chronicles</i>	<i>Crude Chronicles</i> ch 5, 6 and closing	Due: good short-essay quiz question on the course blog
W 10/27	TA-led discussion		
F 10/29			Due: take-home quiz #3, typed and stapled
M 11/1	In-class movie		
W 11/3	Urbanization	In course pack: -"Urban Bias" -"Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation" -"The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia	
F 11/5			

M 11/8	✂ Student led discussion on migration	"Migration." Selection from _From Cuenca to Queens: An Anthropological Story of Transnational Migration.	Due: 2-page reading response paper
W 11/10	Wrap-up urbanization and migration		
F 11/12			
M 11/15	Cuba	Background on Cuba in coursepack; <i>Cuba in the Shadow of Change</i> , Intro-ch 1 and 2	
W 11/17	✂ Student-led discussion <i>Cuba in the Shadow of Change</i>	<i>Cuba in the Shadow of Change</i> 3-4	Due: 2-page reading response paper
F 11/20			Due: good short-essay quiz question on the course blog
M 11/23	Wrap-up Cuba	<i>Cuba in the Shadow of Change</i> ch 5-7	
W 11/25	Map Quiz		Due: take-home quiz #4, typed and stapled
F 11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY NO CLASS		
M 11/30		Conversation: What future for Latin America?	DUE: FINAL PAPER
W 12/1	Class party with food and music!		
F 12/3			

