

Rhodes College  
Spring, 2013

History of Colombia  
Instructor: Michael J. LaRosa

Office: 215 Buckman | Phone: 843-3656 | Hours: T,R 9-11; W 10-12

This course is a history of the Colombian nation, and we will begin in the sixteenth century with the Spanish conquest of Colombia. We will focus on contemporary Colombia, ie the period from the Wars of Independence in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Topics will be addressed in chronological order and thematically. There is an independent research and presentation component to this course.

There are four required texts for this course. *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History* will serve as the main text for the course.

Ábad Faciolince, Héctor. *Oblivion: A Memoir*.

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Novellas*.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The General in His Labyrinth*.

LaRosa, Michael J. and Mejía, Germán R. *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History*.

Requirements: All students enrolled in this course will submit one final exam, one midterm and two short essays and one short project. Each assignment will count 20 percent.

Attendance and other policies: There are no excused absences from this course, unless you are participating in an official, college-sponsored event. Students who—for whatever reason—miss an unreasonable number of classes (more than 10 percent) should not expect a satisfactory grade in this course. All work must be submitted on time and on paper, unless otherwise noted. I do not accept late papers, or electronic papers. Part of each Friday's class will be dedicated to discussion, quizzes and other assignments I deem necessary during the semester.

Email and office hours: I prefer to visit with students in my office. Please stop by during my hours, or at other times when I'm there. I don't answer all emails, but I will take as much time as you need when you come to see me during my hours.

**Literature review:** We will read three works in this course written by cotemporary authors (Ábad Faciolince and García Márquez). I will ask you, in a 1500 word essay, to review the Ábad Faciolince memoir by drawing historical reference and artistic inspiration from Mr. García Márquez's work.

**Journalism Project:** Each student will find and review the work of three journalists who have written about Colombia in recent (the past fifty) years—though I'd prefer that you deal with journalism from the past 25 years. I will not hand out this work—I will ask

you to find it, but four names that come to mind are Tina Rosenberg, Alma Guillermoprieto, Simon Romero and June C. Erlick. Students will write up a 1000 word critical reflection on the journalists work, evaluating the work as a “source” for studying contemporary Colombian history.

**Research project and oral presentation:** Each student assigned to this class will carry out a research project focused on contemporary Colombia and present findings to the class in a brief 10-15 minute presentation. The written component of this project should not exceed 1,500 words and should take the form of a type of “policy” or position paper. For example, you could write a report to the State Department arguing against (or in favor of) their travel warning policy to Colombia, you could write a report to the Dean of the Faculty at Rhodes College recommending that the college allows study-abroad to Colombia, you could write up a grant application to teach in Colombia via the Fulbright program, you could write a report on recent human rights concerns in Colombia, you could evaluate the Santos Administrations Peace Initiative with the FARC (the armed insurgency group), you could evaluate and make recommendations concerning United States military funding to Colombia—the possibilities are endless. I want a focused position paper grounded in good research and writing. Each student must, by the middle of February (15<sup>th</sup>) inform me (personally) of their research intentions.

Weekly schedule of readings, lectures and assignments

Weeks One and Two (January 9-18)

Introduction: Why Colombia: Colombia in Geography and pre-Conquest peoples and history

Reading: Read Foreword and Introduction to text.

Week Three (Monday Jan 21)

Colonial Colombia: A Brief Review

Reading: Bushnell chapter [R] No class on Monday, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday

Week Four: January 28

Origins of the Contemporary Colombian Nation.

Reading: Chapter one in L/M. Start *The General*

Week Five: Feb. 4

The Colombian people.

Reading: Chapter 2, L/M. Read *The General*

Discussion on Friday of the GGM book, *The General in His Labyrinth*

Week Six: Feb 11

Political organization in Colombia and other unifying elements of society.

Reading: L/M chapters 3-4

**No class on Friday Feb 15.**

Week Seven: Feb. 18

Conflict in Colombia, a History.

Reading: L/M chapter five. Read “Chronicle of a Death Foretold”

Mid-term Exam on Friday 22 Feb.

Week Eight: Feb. 25

Photographing Colombia’s history.

Reading: “Photo Essay” from textbook. Read “Leafstorm”

Week Nine: March 4

Colombian economics

Reading: Chapter six from L/M plus “No one writes to the colonel”

Week Ten: March 11: No class, spring break. Start Ábad Faciolince

Week Eleven: March 18

Colombia’s quest for infrastructural unity: A Historical overview

Reading: Chapter 7, L/M

**No class on Friday March 22. Finish Ábad Faciolince**

Week Twelve: March 25

Colombian culture

Reading: Chapter 8, L/M

**Literature paper due on Wed. No class on Friday 29 March—Easter.**

Week Thirteen: April 1

Daily life in Colombia.

Reading: Chapter 9 L/M

Week Fourteen: April 8

Colombia and the rest of the World.

Reading: Chapter 10, L/M plus conclusion

Read Rosenberg [R]

Week Fifteen: April 15

Colombia and the Contemporary Situation:

Reading: Guillermprieto, Romero, Erlick [R]

**Presentations. Journalism paper due on Friday of this week.**

Week Sixteen: April 22

Presentations + projects due on last day of class.

NB: A comprehensive final exam will be held during the regularly scheduled final for this course.