

Rhodes College
Spring, 2012

History of Contemporary Latin America
Instructor: Michael J. LaRosa, PhD

Office: 215 Buckman and 136 Burrow
Phone: 843-3656
Hours: T,R 8-11 (BURROW); W 8-11 (BUCKMAN)

This course is a history of contemporary Latin America. Topics will be addressed in chronological order and thematically. Students will leave this course with a more complete understanding of the historical struggles and actors—and cultural uniqueness—of the Latin American region.

There are four required texts for this course. The Chasteen book is the course text.

Braun, Herbert. *Our Guerrillas Our Sidewalks* (second edition).
Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire*. (Third ed., or second)
García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Novellas*.
Fuentes. *The Crystal Frontier*.

Requirements: All students enrolled in this course will submit one final exam, one midterm and two short essays. Each assignment will count 22 percent and about 12 percent of the final grade will be determined by attendance and participation.

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. Fridays will be reserved for discussion, quizzes and I will assign short (ungraded) papers for submission on Friday.

Literature: We will read four novellas this semester—a novella is not quite a novel, but longer than a short story. Three of the novellas are found in your *Collected Novellas* text. The fourth one: you should find it on your own and compare it to the three read by Gabriel García Márquez. It can be in Spanish or English, and I'd like to know what you're planning to read before spring break.

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.

Film: We will view three films out of class; the film viewings are mandatory and students will write about the films at the final exam. The films are thematically related, and all deal with contemporary Latin American history.

Weekly schedule of readings, lectures and assignments

Weeks One and Two

Introduction: Why Latin America

Latin American Wars for Independence...a review

Reading: Read "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" JCC: 1-46; 87-114. No class on Monday, Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

Week Three (Jan 23)

Export-Led economic growth at mid-century

Reading: JCC, 117-147

Week Four:

Church state conflict in Latin America

Read: "Leafstorm"

Week Five

Mexico Under Porfirio Díaz

Reading: Reading= hand out, *Judas at the Jockey Club*

JCC: chapter five

Week Six

Enter the US: War in Cuba, Panama's invention and Colombia Divided

Reading: LaRosa and Mejía (hand-out) from *The United States Discovers Panama*. Plus reading from George Black, *The Good Neighbor*

JCC chapter six

Week Seven

Mexico in Revolution

Reading: JCC chapters seven and eight

Week Eight

Indigenismo and the emergence of a Latin American cultural identity

Reading: TBA

Mid-term on Friday of this week—2 March

Week Nine

Studying Latin American visually: film, paintings, photography as historic documents

Film: “The Motorcycle Diaries”

Read: “No one writes to the colonel”

Week Ten: No class, spring break

Reading: Braun.

Week Eleven

Modern Brazil

Reading: Finish Braun, plus chapter from Skidmore and Smith (Reserve)

Week Twelve

Latin American Literature

Reading: *Collected Novellas*

Film: “Men with Guns”

Braun paper due—Friday.

Week Thirteen

Some Revolutions in Latin America: Guatemala, Cuba and Nicaragua

Reading: Start Fuentes

Easter Recess: No class on Friday 6 April.

Week Fourteen

Human rights in Latin America: the case of Colombia

Reading: finish Fuentes.

Film: “Fresa y Chocolate” by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Week Fifteen

Women in Latin American History.

Readings: TBA. **Hand in literature paper on Friday: Comparison of your novella to the three García Márquez novellas.**

Week Sixteen

Latin American Liberation theology

Reading JCC, chapters 9-10+LaRosa essay.

NB: Final exam will be held during the regularly scheduled final for this course. There will be three short essays, one dealing with the films, another, Fuentes, and the final question dealing with course material since mid-term.