

Rhodes College
Spring, 2013

History of Contemporary Latin America
Instructor: Michael J. LaRosa

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

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.

Arenas, Reinaldo. *Before Night Falls*.

Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire*. (Third or latest ed.)

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Novellas*.

Levine, Robert M. and Sebe Bom Meihy, Jose Carlos. *The Life and Death of Carolina María de Jesus*.

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 authored by Gabriel García Márquez. It can be in Spanish or English, and I'd like to know what you're planning to read within the first month of 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.

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 (January 9-18)

Introduction: Why Latin America
Latin American Wars for Independence...a review.

Reading: Read "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" JCC: 1-46; 87-114.

Week Three (Monday Jan 21)

Export-Led economic growth at mid-century
Reading: JCC, 117-147. No class on Monday, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday

Week Four: January 28
Church state conflict in Latin America
Read: "Leafstorm"

Week Five: Feb. 4
Mexico Under Porfirio Díaz
Reading: Reading, *Judas at the Jockey Club* [R]
JCC: chapter five

Week Six: Feb 11

Enter the US: War in Cuba, Panama's invention and Colombia Divided
Reading: LaRosa and Mejía from *The United States Discovers Panama*. Plus reading from George Black, *The Good Neighbor*. [R]
JCC chapter six. **No class on Friday Feb 15.**

Week Seven: Feb. 18

Mexico in Revolution
Reading: JCC chapters seven and eight

Week Eight: Feb. 25

Indigenismo and the emergence of a Latin American cultural identity
Reading: Start Arenas.
Mid-term on Friday of this week—1 March

Week Nine: March 4

Studying Latin American visually: film, paintings, photography as historic documents
Film: "The Motorcycle Diaries"
Read: "No one writes to the colonel"; continue with Arenas.

Week Ten: March 11: No class, spring break. Finish Arenas

Week Eleven: March 18

Modern Cuba

Film: *Before Night Falls*.

No class on Friday March 22.

Week Twelve: March 25

Latin American Literature

Reading: *Collected Novellas*

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

Week Thirteen: April 1

Modern Brazil

Reading: Skidmore and Smith [R].

Reading: Start Levine and Sebe Bom Meihy

Week Fourteen: April 8

Revolutions and Human rights in Latin America: the case of Guatemala, Cuba and Colombia

Reading: Finish Levine and Sebe Bom Meihy

Film: “Fresa y Chocolate” by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

Week Fifteen: April 15

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: April 22

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, Levine and Sebe Bom Meihy, and the final question dealing with course material since mid-term.