

Rhodes College  
Spring, 2009

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

Office: 311 Clough Hall  
Phone: 843-3656  
Hours: MWF 10-12

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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*.  
García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Novellas*.  
LaRosa, Michael and Mejía, Germán. *An Atlas and Survey of Latin American History*.

Requirements: All students enrolled in this course will submit a mid-term, a final exam, 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.

Each Friday, two students from the class will prepare and deliver a quiz to the class based on the weeks' reading: the quiz will be collected but not graded.

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. Students who miss 30 percent of the course will fail, regardless of the quality of their work or the reason for absence. Students must hand in all four assignments to pass the course. All work must be submitted on time.

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. My door is never closed, unless I'm napping...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.

The first paper: By Wednesday of the second week of class, each student will submit a 500 word critical essay of the Gabriel García Márquez story "Chronicle of a Death Foretold." This paper will be expanded and re-submitted at the end of the course and should reflect new knowledge and awareness of some important themes of Latin American history and culture. The final review will count as one of the assigned papers; the first effort will not be graded.

Film: We will watch two films during the semester and incorporate the films via a question on the final exam; the films are thematically related, and all deal with contemporary Latin American history.

Weekly schedule of readings, lectures and assignments

Week One

Introduction to the course: Why Latin America?

Reading: "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" and JCC, 15-28. Read chapters 1-6, Atlas.

Week Two

Latin American Wars for Independence...a review

Reading: Finish "Chronicle"—paper due on Wed. JCC: 88-117. Atlas, chapter 7.

No Class Monday: Martin Luther King, Jr., birthday

Week Three

Export-Led economic growth at mid-century

Reading: JCC, 119-148

No class on Monday, MLK Holiday

Week Four:

Church state conflict. Atlas, chapter 8.

Week Five

Mexico Under Porfirio Díaz

Reading: Reading: **Reserve, Judas at the Jockey Club**

JCC: chapter 7

Week Six

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

Reading: LaRosa and Mejía, **Reserve, from The United States Discovers Panama. Plus reading from George Black, The Good Neighbor**

Week Seven

Mexico in Revolution

Reading: JCC chapter eight

**Mid-term on Friday**

Week Eight

*Indigenismo* and the emergence of a Latin American cultural identity

Reading: Atlas, chapter 11; re-read "Chronicle of a Death Foretold."

Week Nine

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

Film: "The Motorcycle Diaries"

**First paper due on Friday—re-write of GGM "Chronicle of a Death Foretold."**

Week Ten: No class...spring break

Week Eleven

Modern Brazil

Reading: **Reserve**

Week Twelve

Latin American Literature

Reading: *Collected Novellas*

Week Thirteen

Some Revolutions in Latin America: Guatemala, Cuba and Nicaragua

Reading: JCC, pp. 245-274; Atlas, chapter 12. Start Braun

Film: "Men With Guns"

Week Fourteen

Human rights in Latin America: the case of Colombia

Reading: Finish Braun

Week Fifteen

Migration and Immigration issues from Latin America. Reading, Atlas, chapter 10.

**Second essay due on Friday (review of Braun)**

Week Sixteen

Latin American Liberation theology

Reading JCC, chapters 10-11+LaRosa essay.

NB: Final exam will be held during the regularly scheduled final for this course. The Braun paper is due on the last day of class.