

Introduction to Latin American Studies:

Fall, 2008

Instructor: Michael J. LaRosa

Office: 311 Clough Hall

Office Hours: M 11-1; T 11-12; W 11-1; R 11-1

This course will provide a general introduction to the diverse historic, cultural, social and political realities of Latin America and the Caribbean. We will explore the region from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on the fields of literature, anthropology, sociology, history and international studies/political science. The course is designed to enhance students' critical thinking and interpretation skills and is organized thematically.

Grading: Students will take a mid-term and final exam, and will submit two short analytical essays, of about 5 pp; I will ask students to submit a review of the Sor Juana and Fuentes texts.

Students will also keep a weekly reading journal; each "assignment" will count about 20 percent toward the final grade.

On Thursday, we will spend part of period talking about current events in Latin America; two students will be asked to lead the debate each week. We will also discuss the readings, via student led discussion.

Attendance policy: Students should make every effort to attend class—students who miss an unreasonable (about 20 percent of total) number of classes can not expect a satisfactory grade in this class.

Readings: I have assigned four texts for this class. The "Winn" book will serve as the course text. Some additional readings may be placed on reserve at the library at the discretion of the instructor.

The books for purchase are:

Fuentes, Carlos. *The Crystal Frontier*; Galeano, Eduardo. *The Open Veins of Latin America*; Inés de la Cruz, Sor (Sister) Juana. *La Respuesta: the response*; Winn, Peter. *Americas* (latest edition available).

Course schedule:

Week 1: Introduction to course; 28 August.

Week 2: An introduction to Latin America and Latin American Studies

Reading: Winn, “A View from the South”; Galeano, “Forward and Introduction”; LaRosa and Mejia, chapter one from *An Atlas and Survey of Latin American History**

Week 3: The Conquest

Reading: Winn, chapter 2; Galeano, Part I.

Week 4: The Colony: as viewed through the eyes of Sor Juana.

Reading: *La Respuesta*.

Week 5: Independence Struggle

Reading: Winn Chapter 3

Week 6: post-independence blues....Latin America in the 19th century

Reading: LaRosa and Mejia, chapter five; Chasteen, “Post colonial blues.”*

Week 7: Encounters with the Colossus of the North and a search for the “Authentic” Latin American identity

Reading: Rubén Darío (“A Roosevelt”); José Enrique Rodó “Ariel” (selections)*

Week 8: Race, ethnicity and Indigeneity (*indigenismo*)

Reading: Winn, chapter 7

Video: Mirrors of the Heart: Color, class and Identity (Americas)

Week 9: Gender, sexuality and honor in Latin America

Reading: Evelyn Stevens, “Marianismo: The other face of Machismo in Latin America.”*

Winn, chapter 9

Week 10: Rebellions and revolutions in 20th century Latin America.

Reading: Winn, chapter 13; Galeano, chapters 4-5; Ernesto “Che” Guevara, “The Foco Theory,” and “Two, Three, Many Vietnams.”*

Week 11: Military repression and consequences.

Winn, chapter 5

Weschler, selections from *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*.

Week 12: Religious Faiths and Liberation Theology in Latin America.

Reading: Winn, chapter 10; Americas video, *Miracles are not enough*

LaRosa, “Liberation Theology.”*

Week 13: Migration, urbanization and Marginality.

Reading: Winn, chapter 6; Start Fuentes

Week 14: The Border and immigration northward.

Reading: Finish Fuentes

Week 15: Literature and magical realism in Latin America

Reading: Winn, chapter 11; Julio Cortázar, “The Night Faces up”; García Márquez, “Blacamán the Good, Vendor of Miracles.”

Week 16: Latin American Cinema

Reading: Reading from Zemon Davis, “Ceremony and Revolt” in *Slaves on Screen*.

View “The Last Supper” by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

NB: the final exam will be held during the regularly scheduled final exam period for this course:

The mid-term exam will be held on Thursday of week 9

The essays will be due on Thursday of week six and on the last day of class.

* on reserve in Library—at reserve desk