

## **(PALAS 362) Latin American Cultures and Civilizations**

Dr. Alejandro Manara  
Universidad de Belgrano  
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies  
Course Syllabus 2015

### **Course information**

M – W 1:00- 2:30 PM Room tba  
Instruction in English

### **Contact information**

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### **Course description**

Since its discovery until the present, Latin America has been imagined and conceived as the “New Continent”, a place for utopia, but also as a space of uneven modernity and extreme forms of violence. The course explores distinctive cultural aspects of Latin America by looking at the ways it has been represented in readings spanning from the diaries written by Christopher Columbus to the texts of the Cuban Revolution, the iconography of Peronismo, or the recent debates on Neoliberalism, Globalization and Populism. Drawing on essays, but also on short-stories, paintings, photographs, and films, the course addresses a set of questions that lie at the heart of how one thinks about Latin America. What is expected from “Latin America”? What were the different “ideas” that Latin America embodied? What are the forms of “Latin American” culture? How are the different “cultures” connected? The purpose of the course is threefold: to introduce students to problems central to Latin America, to familiarize students with a variety of non-fictional writings in Spanish, such as essay, chronicle, journalism and documentary films, and to sharpen student’s skills as analytical readers.

### **Course requirements**

Following UB policies, students need a minimum of 75% of attendance to be in good standing for the final exam. Sliding the ID card is the only way to track attendance. Students are expected to do close readings, participate in class, and do one oral presentations in pairs or in groups of three. During the semester, students will write two short (2-3 pages) papers. The requirements also include a midterm and a final comprehensive exam. In addition to this, each student will be expected to make a significant contribution to the classroom dialogue. As part of this, students will be asked to bring two specific comments regarding the required readings in order to discuss in class. Any student caught plagiarizing will be given a “no credit” for all courses taken in the semester. As part of the course requirements, the students will have to visit the Evita Museum in the assigned week (see academic calendar below).

### **Grading Policy**

Participation	10 %
Oral Presentation (1)	15 %
Midterm	20 %
Final Exam	35 %
Short Essay (2) (2 pages)	20 %

For a better understanding of the comparable table for grading: check the conversion table for the numerical scale (in orientation kit packet).

Week 1: The "New World": Accounts of the Discovery and the Conquest:

Tuesday, March 10

The ideas of Latin America. Course Presentation.

Christopher Columbus. "Letter to Luis de Santangel"

Thursday, March 12 Amerigo Vespucci. Account of his first voyage.

Edmundo O'Gorman. *The invention of America* (selection)

Tzvetan Todorov. *The Conquest of America* (selection 14-33)

Week 2.

Tuesday, March 17

Hernan Cortes. "The Second Letter" (excerpts).

Bernal Díaz del Castillo. *The conquest of New Spain*. (selection).

Thursday, March 19

J.H. Elliott. "The Uncertain Impact".

J.H. Elliott. "Cortés and Montezuma"

**Oral presentations will be assigned.**

Week 3. Colonial Encounters and its Consequences

Thursday, March 26

Great pre-Columbian civilizations (chapters from the *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya* and the Origin of the Aztecs)

Film. *Cracking the Maya Code*. Documentary.

Week 4. Revisiting the Conquest

Tuesday, March 31

Bartolomé de las Casas. *A short account of the destruction of the Indies*.

**Oral presentation** on Bartolomé de las Casas.

Week 5.

Tuesday, April 7

Werner Herzog. *Aguirre, the wrath of God* (screening in class)

Students have to write the first short paper / Prompt by email.

**Short Paper is due**

Thursday, April 9

Simón Bolívar. "Letter of Jamaica".

José Martí "Our America".

**Oral presentation** on Simón Bolívar and José Martí.

Week 6. Civilization and Barbarism

Tuesday, April 14

Domingo F. Sarmiento. *Facundo. Civilization or Barbarism* (Selection).

Lucio V. Mansilla "An Expedition to the Ranquel Indians" (146-153)

**Oral presentation.**

Thursday, April 16

Film. María Luisa Bemberg, *Camila*

Week 7

Tuesday, April 21 **Midterm Exam**

Thursday, April 23

Jorge Luis Borges. "Story of the warrior and the captive maiden".

**Oral presentation** on Jorge Luis Borges.

Week 8. Images of the Mexican Revolution and the Cuban Revolution

Tuesday, April 28

Carlos Fuentes. "Land and Freedom: The Mexican Revolution"

Juan Rulfo. "They gave us the Land". Octavio Paz. "The sons of La Malinche". **Oral presentations** on Mexican Muralists / Rulfo/

Thursday, April 30.

Walter Salles, *Motorcycle Diaries* (screening in class).

Week 9.

Tuesday, May 5

Fidel Castro. "History will absolve me" (excerpts).

Miguel Barnet. "Biography of a Runaway Slave" (58-64)

*Salut les cubains* (Agnès Varda. 1963) (27min film)

Third Cinema: Julio García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema" (458-65)

Thursday, May 7

Memories of Under-development, (T. Gutierrez Alea)

Week 10. The aesthetics of Peronism

Tuesday, May 12

Daniel Santoro, *Manual del niño peronista*

Julio Cortázar, "House Taken Over". Rodolfo Walsh, "That Woman".

**Oral presentation** on Rodolfo Walsh.

Thursday, May 14

May Day & the 17<sup>th</sup> of October as San Perón...

J.M. Taylor: "The Myth of the Myth".

Visit to the Evita Museum. Research and write a short paper on Evita.

Week 11. Dictatorships in the Southern Cone

Tuesday, May 19

Fernando Solanas. *The hour of the Furnaces* (Argentina, 1968) /screening.

Thursday, May 21

Debate on *The hour of the furnaces*.

Richard Gillespie. "Montoneros: Soldiers of Perón".

**Short paper on Evita is due**

Week 12.

Tuesday, May 26

Andres Di Tella. *Montoneros* (Argentina, 1998) / screening in class.

Thursday, May 28

Patricio Guzmán. *Nostalgia of the Light* (Chile, 2010) / excerpts.

Week 13. The year 2001 in Argentina / A new face for Latin America  
Tuesday, June 2

F. Solanas. *Memorias del saqueo /Social genocide*. (Argentina, 2004).  
Final Paper consultations

Thursday, June 4

Ejército Zapatista. "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle"  
"The Maquiladoras", William Langewiesche.

Film: Lourdes Portillo, *Señorita extraviada*. **Oral Presentation** on the  
Zapatistas & Maquiladoras.

Week 14

Tuesday, June 9.

Invited Guest: Gisela Padovan, Deputy Chief of Mission, Brazilian Embassy  
in Buenos Aires. Lecture about F-H Cardoso, Lula da Silva and Dilma  
Rousseff's presidencies.

Thursday, June 11. Review in class. Each student should bring a subject  
she/he feels strongly about.

Week 15

Tuesday, June 16.

Final exam.

Thursday, June 18. "Final Grade Sheet and signature of Hoja de situación  
(**attendance is mandatory**)".

## **Bibliography**

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