

LAST 1010-01: Introduction to Latin America

3 credits, Spring 2022

No prerequisite

Fulfills NTC Global Perspectives and Service Learning requirements

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Community Partner: Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe

Location:

Student Hours: By appointment via email

CPS Representative: Sergio Vazquez

Course Description

What comes to mind when you think of Latin America? Perhaps it's palm fronds and coconuts on the beach. Maybe it's stories of revolutionaries and dictators, poems or novels, or stone monuments from an ancient land. No matter what initially comes to mind, chances are it's only a fraction of the complex and interwoven reality that is Latin America today.

This course provides a basic historical, cultural, and socio-political introduction to the study of Latin America, including the Latinx influence on US culture and society, preparing students for more advanced coursework on the region in a wide array of disciplines at Tulane. The class explores the diversity and continuity within the region relative to a complex history of exchange and interchange with the US and Europe. Students discuss the influence of foreign perceptions on our understanding of Latin America and Latinx American culture and society and survey how Latin American and Latinx artists, writers and intellectuals represent their nations and cultures to themselves and to the world. Focusing on the development of global competency, cultural understanding and intercultural communication and creating the foundations for area expertise, the class provides critical skills for numerous professions in an increasingly globalized society and economy including business, social policy, public health, law and advocacy, among others.

By surveying different types of scholarship on Latin America (e.g. anthropology, political science, history, cultural studies and journalism) as well as by exploring film, music, literature and policy produced within the region, students will be exposed to numerous ways to think about Latin America culture and society, and will observe how Latin American and Latinx artists, writers and intellectuals represent their nations and cultures to themselves and to the world.

This course carries a Global Perspectives flag. This means that it fulfills the University's "Comparative Cultures and International Perspectives" and "Perspectives Outside the European Tradition" distribution requirements.

Course Goals

The mission of the BA program in Latin American Studies is to promote the interdisciplinary study of Latin America, focusing simultaneously on unity and diversity within the region and positioning the region in comparative perspective.

As the introductory course for the program, this class will prepare students to continue their interdisciplinary study of Latin America. It does so by guiding students to achieve the following:

- Identify salient points in the general history, culture and geography of Latin America;
- Compare and contrast basic ethnic, political and cultural characteristics of different Latin American nations and regions;
- Relate regional diversity and regional continuities to global exchange and interchange/colonialism and imperialism;
- Utilize ideas and vocabulary specific to the historical structures and contemporary conditions of Latin America;
- Compare and contrast basic “push and pull” factors and predominant migratory trends of US Latinx groups from diverse Latin American cultures and nations;
- Analyze key impacts of past and present migration on the U.S. economy and society;
- Distinguish between various forms of “knowledge”—local and foreign; scholarly and popular—that contribute to a broad understanding of Latin American culture and society;
- Interpret and evaluate historic texts including documents, testimonials, visual representation, music, film and secondary research; and
- Understand the fundamentals of cultural competency and be able to apply them in contemporary intercultural contexts.

Service Learning Outcomes

The service learning portion of this course will help students to:

- Provide hurricane relief to the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe.
- Foster public awareness of the Tribe’s federal recognition process.
- Communicate best practice for supporting local Indigenous communities.
- Compare work with PACIT to the broader Indigenous solidarity movement in the US and throughout Latin America.

Program Outcomes

The mission of the BA program in Latin American Studies is to promote the interdisciplinary study of Latin America, focusing simultaneously on unity and diversity within the region and positioning the region in comparative perspective. The program's main objectives are:

1. To provide broad exposure to the individuals, cultures, histories and geographies that distinguish the region;

2. To explore the notion of interdisciplinarity and develop the ability to utilize concepts and apply methods from multiple disciplines toward the study of Latin America;
3. To cultivate critical thinking and effective communication, particularly in discussing Latin American culture and society; and
4. To acquire the linguistic skills and critical vocabulary necessary to understand and discuss the historical structure and contemporary conditions of Latin America.

This course addresses the following program outcomes:

- To demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge of the history, culture, geography and peoples of Latin America;
- To understand the notion of interdisciplinarity as it relates to Latin American Studies; and
- To evaluate and critique research on Latin America.

Required Student Resources

John Charles Chasteen. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. 4th edition, W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.

Additional readings will also be required. These will be available on Canvas under the Files section, or via links on the syllabus. You are responsible for all assigned readings.

Evaluation

Assignment	Points	Percentage of Grade
Attendance	100	10%
Participation	100	10%
In-Class Presentations	100	10%
Map Quizzes (3 total)	100	10%
Reflection Essays	200	20%
Midterm Exam	200	20%
Final Exam	200	20%
Total:		100%

Brief Description of Assignments

Midterm: For the midterm, students will select one Latin American country and give a brief in-class presentation that presents key aspects of the country to the class. The

presentation should introduce the country's history and tie it to themes covered so far in the semester. More information on the Midterm Project is available on Canvas.

Final Exam: The final exam consists of a General Knowledge section and a Thematic Knowledge section. The first will test students' knowledge of important aspects of Latin American history and geography, and the second will test students' ability to identify important themes within Latin American and Latinx content. More information on the Final Project is available on Canvas.

Map Quizzes: Students will be tested on their knowledge of basic geographical landmarks, physical features, political boundaries, languages, and cultural attributes of Latin America. This will help "place" our discussions of Latin America's political and cultural geographies. See "Map Quiz Study Guide" on Canvas for more details.

Participation: Participation in class discussions fosters learning and helps students better understand the themes of the course and identify examples to support them.

In-Class Presentations: Students will give two in-class presentations throughout the semester on a topic of the student's choice from a list of options. If for some reason you are unable to present on the assigned day, please notify the professor at least 24 hours in advance to reschedule; failure to do so will result in a zero for the presentation.

Reflection Essays: Whether or not you will be undertaking Service Learning this semester, you will be required to submit three reflection essays throughout the semester. These essays encourage reflection on practical applications of the themes discussed in the course to service learning or to community engagement in general.

Service Learning Description

Students enrolled in the Service Learning component of this course will be partnering with the Pointe-au-Chien Indigenous Tribe to provide hurricane relief and study public awareness of the Tribe's federal recognition process. Students will visit the PACIT Community Center on three separate weekends to assist with hurricane relief as directed by the Tribe. Additionally, students will research the federal recognition process in order to gain a greater understanding of the ways in which US policy has affected this and other Indigenous groups.

Throughout the semester, students will submit three reflection essays in which they will identify ways to tie the content of the course into their service learning. The first of these essays will serve as a "pre-reflection" and require that students research the federal recognition process, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the PACIT's history with each of these. Students will also reflect on what they expect to contribute over the semester and express any concerns or fears they might have. A visit from the CPS facilitator after the submission of the first essay will allow for discussion of the topics reviewed and guide students' thinking for the next two essays. After the submission of each of the following

essays, the class will hold its own discussion to share thoughts and reflections they had regarding the service learning experience.

At the end of the semester, students will give a final presentation in which they will share the insights they gained over the semester. They will also present ideas and suggestions for how to spread more public awareness for the Tribe's federal recognition process.

Student participation in Service Learning will be assessed in two ways: grading of each essay according to the rubric distributed in class and grading of the final project, presented in class.

Expectations of Student

The primary expectation of students in this course is to engage in respectful and open communication: with the professor, with other students, and with appropriate university resources. If for any reason you need to miss class or turn in an assignment later than the requested date, I will work with you to find an appropriate solution. During class, students are expected to be mentally present, participate, and avoid all distractions from the class (including but not limited to electronics, food, etc.). Check Canvas regularly for updates from the professor. Any inappropriate (e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic, or generally rude and disrespectful) comments in class or online discussions will result in zero points for the assignment and may be followed up with further meetings.

Student Hours

I set aside certain hours each week to meet with students and answer any questions you may have about our course or other topics about Latin America. This is time that I have dedicated to meeting with you and answering your questions. If my door is open at any other time, you are welcome to come in!

Attendance Statement

Because class meetings will include material not covered in readings, students are expected to attend each class session. If for some reason you are unable to attend class, notify the professor in advance. Attendance is taken via an "exit ticket" question designed to apply what we discussed in class to the modern world. The three lowest scores for each quiz will be dropped.

*COVID19 Note: Due to the ongoing pandemic, I am allowing for a modified attendance structure. If you are feeling ill, I will make arrangements for you to be able to attend the class virtually or make up the material missed in some other way. Please do not come to class until you are sure you are not contagious. See our classroom COVID-19 Policy for more details.

Students must comply with University policies on COVID-19 testing and isolation, which are located [here](#). Faculty and students must wear face coverings in all common areas, including classrooms, and follow social distancing rules. Failure to comply is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and students will be subject to University discipline, which can include suspension or permanent dismissal. If a student cannot attend class for any

reason, the student is responsible for communicating with their instructors to make up any work they may miss. Faculty will provide online options for class participation, outlined in this document, and unless a student is seriously ill, they are expected to use this option. The University Health Center will provide documentation verifying a student is ill, as well as verification that a student may return to class. With the approval of the Newcomb - Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Tulane University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. Instead, to establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. Goldman Center contact information: goldman@tulane.edu; (504) 862-8433; accessibility.tulane.edu.

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e. Code of Academic Conduct and Code of Student Conduct) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive. Unless I indicate differently on instructions, all assignments and exams are to be completed individually and without any study aid, including textbooks, class notes, or online sites. If you have any question about whether a resource is acceptable, you must ask the instructor rather than assume.

The service experience is an extension of the classroom, and so the Code of Academic Conduct and Code of Student Conduct also apply to students' choices and behavior at their service partner's sites, including around social distancing precautions.

Religious Accommodation Policy

Per Tulane's religious accommodation policy, I will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are able to observe religious holidays without jeopardizing their ability to fulfill their academic obligations. Excused absences do not relieve the student from the responsibility for any course work required during the period of absence. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester about their intent to observe any holidays that fall on a class day or on the day of the final exam.

Course Schedule

Week, Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignments Due
Week 1: T	Introduction to the course; Pre-Columbian America: Early Beginnings	None	
Week 1: Th	Pre-Columbian America: Flourishing Cultures	Chasteen Ch. 1	
Week 2: T	Pre-Columbian America: Rise and Fall of Empires		
Week 2: Th	Encounter	Chasteen Ch. 2	
Week 3: T	Encounter	<i>Aztec Empire</i> graphic novel, Episodes 1-6	
Week 3: Th	War and Conquest	<i>Broken Spears</i> excerpt	
Week 4: T	Establishing a colony	Chasteen Ch. 3	Reflection Essay 1
Week 4: Th	Establishing a colony	Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Respuesta" and "Hombres Necios"	
Week 5: T	Revolution!	Chasteen Ch. 4	

Week 5: Th	Nativism, costumbrismo, and art	Chasteen Ch. 5	
Week 6: T	Gaze and power of outsiders	Chasteen Ch. 4-5 Countercurrents Watch: "How the U.S. Stole Mexico"	
Week 6: Th	Progress and reform-but for who?	Chasteen Ch. 6	
Week 7: T	Midterm - In Class		
Week 7: Th	Neocolonialism	Chasteen Ch. 7	
Week 8: T	Neocolonialism	Sandino, "Manifiesto" Dario, "To Roosevelt"	Reflection Essay 2
Week 8: Th	US intervention: United Fruit Company, Tulane, and Banana Republics	"Bananas!" Chapter from Unfathomable City Neruda, "United Fruit Co."	

Week 9: T	US intervention: Puerto Rico, Panama, and resistance to the US	Marti, "Our America"	
Week 9: Th	Nationalism: Mexican Muralism	Chasteen Ch. 8 Flattley, "The History of Mexico: Diego Rivera's Murals at the National Palace"	
Week 10: T	Nationalism	Watch: "Traslado de Tlaloc" Read: "El día que se llevaron a Tlaloc de su pueblo"	
Week 10: Th	Cuban Revolution and the Cold War	Chasteen Ch. 9	
Week 11: T	20th Century Literature and Art	Rosario Castellanos, "Coming of the Eagle" Julio Cortazar, "The Night Face Up"	Reflection Essay 3
Week 11: Th	Rigoberta Menchu and the Pan-Maya Movement	Chasteen Ch. 10 Read: "The Stela of Iximche"	

Week 12: T	Desaparecidos and the War on Drugs	Chasteen Ch. 10 Countercurrents Read: “How the war on drugs perpetuates violence in Latin America” Read: “Trump and Biden ignore how the war on drugs fuels violence in Latin America”	
Week 12: Th	Orientalism and Stereotypes	Chasteen Ch. 11	
Week 13: T	Femicide, protests, and sex & gender identity	https://nacla.org/news/2019/12/27/un-violador-en-tu-camino-virality-feminist-protest	
Week 13: Th	Indigenous Revivals and Anticolonial Movements		
Week 14: T	Indigenous Revivals and Anticolonial Movements	https://www.architectural-review.com/today/we-have-money-and-can-build-in-a-way-that-represents-us https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-architect-transforming	

		-bolivian-city-colorful-hand-painted-designs	
Week 14: Th	Final Exam - In Class		

*Schedule may be adjusted according to classroom needs and university closures.