

History 162: Modern and Contemporary Latin American History

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COURSE GOAL:

Our goal in this course is to study social, political, economic, and cultural developments in Latin America by thinking historically. This includes **constructing an historical narrative and providing the historical context** for these developments in the past and the ramifications for the current issues facing Latin America. Studying these various historical experiences allows us to gain some **insight into traditions and institutions and how they may have changed over time, and what factors influenced these developments**. As part of this endeavor, we will also discuss the pre-Hispanic past and its connections to later historical developments and events. For example, the selective use of the Indigenous past in the formation of a national identity of modern Latin American nations will be highlighted throughout this course. We will use class time not only for lecture, but also for discussion of assigned reading and current events.

METHODOLOGY:

We will accomplish these goals by using the methodology of history—**analyzing primary and secondary sources**. You will be expected to critically analyze and interpret these sources, synthesize the data, and use it to develop and articulate arguments regarding historical questions in either written or oral presentations. We will need to consider the limitations and complexities of this type of methodology. This course will also incorporate the investigation of material culture and art in addition to historical documents, especially since we will study Indigenous communities that did not originally utilize writing systems.

Thinking critically means considering the author, the purpose, and the intended audience of the sources. What are the weaknesses and strengths? In history there can be **many interpretations of sources and many arguments or answers to historical questions**, but some interpretations and arguments are stronger because of how well the evidence is used and how well thought out the argument is.

FRAMEWORK:

This course will allow us to explore regions, cultures, and time periods that may be less familiar to us. Latin America has a diverse and complex history. As a result, we will be looking at broader issues, question and developments and use individual countries as case studies. We will not be able to cover the detailed history of each country within Latin America, but we can look a broader issues and trends that are representative of many of the experiences throughout the region.

A better understanding and appreciation for the regions and its people will not only help to put current events into better context, but will hopefully increase our understanding of others—how they see the world and their place in it, their dreams and aspirations, their challenges and their spirit in dealing with these challenges. It is my hope that we will also gain a better understanding of ourselves and that we do not live in isolation, that how we live our lives and the decisions we make can have a broader impact on the world.

Thinking Historically Student Learning Outcome (SLO): Students will be able to analyze historical sources with appropriate attention to their various contexts.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will demonstrate a grasp of the major themes, concepts, and events in Latin American history.
2. Students will read primary sources from the pre-Hispanic, colonial, modern, and contemporary periods of Latin America. Students will be asked basic questions about these sources (historical context, author, audience, genre); drawing historical conclusions from the sources and assessing their reliability and usefulness through class discussion, presentations, and writing assignments; and reflecting on how their own background shapes their interpretation (especially through Reaction Posts).
3. Students will also identify the arguments of secondary sources pertaining to Latin American history and recognize differences in interpretation (as part of the lectures, debates, and research paper requirements).
4. Students will be able to articulate responsibly how the past is relevant for the present, drawing informed connections between their study of past events in Latin America and their bearing on the present (through class presentations, class discussions, and an entire lecture day devoted to connecting how the past is linked to the present).

Required Books:

Secondary Source (includes primary sources as well):

A History of Modern Latin America, Lawrence Clayton and Michael Conniff

Primary Sources:

Popul Vuh (Maya)

Florentine Codex (Aztec/Mexica)

Facundo, or, Civilization and Barbarism, Domingo F. Sarmiento

Insurgent Mexico, John Reed

I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchú

News of a Kidnapping, Gabriel García Márquez

Below is a list of the types of questions pertaining to the primary sources to be addressed in reaction posts and written Midterm/Final exams.

1. In *Facundo, or Civilization and Barbarism* by Domingo Sarmiento, what does the author say are the challenges and choices facing Argentina? How does his concern reflect broader trends in Latin America in the 19th century?

2. Using Reed's *Insurgent Mexico* discuss the characteristics of the Mexican Revolution in Northern Mexico. What are the key issues? (In other words, who is fighting and why?) How and in what way do people hope to change the political, economic, and social structure of Mexico? What challenges are present which may prevent achieving these goals?
3. Using Rigoberta Menchú's autobiography, discuss the significant trends/issues that have had an impact on indigenous people/peasants in the late 20th century. What has been the consequences of these?
4. Using García Márquez's *News of a Kidnapping*, discuss the impact of drug cartels on social, economic, and political stability in Columbia.

Listed below are examples of study questions that will be addressed in written assignments and discussed in the classroom (evidence of fulfilling thinking historically)

Pre-Hispanic Past of Latin America and the Colonial Era

Study Questions:

- Describe and identify the diversity of Indigenous socio-political groups in the pre-Hispanic past.
- How was this diversity socially and politically re-defined during the colonial era?
- How did the internal politics of Indigenous groups impact the wars of the colonial era?
- Why is the American Southwest and California also considered part of the greater area of Latin America? How is this part of the region's history and what is the legacy of that history today?

19th century Post-Independence

Transitions—Modernization and the Colonial Legacies

Study Questions:

- What were the causes of political instability after independence?
- What were the factors that hindered or fostered economic development?
- What were the significant intellectual developments of the period and what impact did they have politically, socially, culturally, and economically?

20th Century: The Revolutionary Options

Precursors and Context

Study Questions:

- What reforms did revolutionary movements seek to implement?
- What were the politically, economically, socially, culturally consequences of revolution?
- What is the United States' role in Latin America, especially in response to revolutionary movements?
- What factors contributed to the development of dictatorships in Latin America?

Indigenous People

Study Questions:

- What are the prevailing concerns of Indigenous people in Latin America?
- How was the history of Indigenous people (its legends, art, symbols) used in the formation of new national identities? How were the living Indigenous people viewed and treated during this time?
- Are they victims or actors of history?
- What were the factors that contributed to ongoing civil war in Central America?
- What was the impact of the Cold War on Latin America's indigenous populations?
- What are Pan-Indigenous movements and what do they hope to accomplish?

Violence and Free Trade

- What is the impact of Globalism?
- What impact does free trade and Neo-Liberal economics have on the region?
- What impact does the foreign debt of Latin America have politically, economically, and socially?
- What are current trends, issues, and attempts at reform?

	Course Outline (Example)
Week 1	Tues: Introduction to Course and Latin American Geography Thurs: Introduction to Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica (Olmec, Maya, Teotihuacan Mexico)
Week 2	Tues: Introduction to Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica (Olmec, Maya, Teotihuacan Mexico) Thurs: Maya Hieroglyphs and Maya communities today
Week 3	Tues: Introduction to Pre-Hispanic Andes (Chavín, Nasca, Moche, Wari, Inca) Thurs: Introduction to Pre-Hispanic Andes (Chavín, Nasca, Moche, Wari, Inca) AND Indigenous communities today Due: Reaction Essay A (12th)
Week 4	Tues: Pre-Hispanic American Southwest and California (part of Latin American history) Thurs: Chumash and California Missions
Week 5	Tues: Guest Speaker (speaks to Indigenous perspective) Thurs: Colonial Mexico DUE: Reaction Essay B (24th)
Week 6	Tues: Mexican War of Independence Thurs: Mexican Revolution and National Identity Construction
Week 7	Tues: <i>Indigenismo</i> (focus on visual evidence: Rivera and Kahlo) Thurs: Colonial Peru and Peruvian War of Independence In-person Quiz Part 1 (Oct 8th)

Week 8	NO CLASS ON OCT. 15 TH Thus: Case Study of Simón Bolívar and other Latin American Revolutions
Week 9	Tues: Cold War Politics in Latin America Thurs: Cold War to Current Events in Central America DUE: Reaction Essay C (22nd)
Week 10	Tues: Cold War to Current Events in South America Thus: Cold War to Current Events in the Caribbean
Week 11	Tues: Midterm Review and Flipped Classroom Exercise Thurs: In-Class Midterm
Week 12	Tues: Latin American Literature (guest speaker) Thus: In- Person Quiz Part 2 and In-class activity
Week 13	Tues: In-class Museum Project Presentations Thurs: In-class Museum Project Presentations Museum Project Due Nov 19th
Week 14	Tues: Finish In-class Museum Project Presentations NO CLASS ON NOV 28 TH
Week 15	Tues: Latin American Architecture (<i>how architecture shapes our lived experience and materializes the complex history of Latin America</i>) Thus: Overarching themes and Final Exam Review Research Essay due by 11:30 pm Dec 5th
Week 16	Dec 10th FINAL EXAM 3:00-5:00pm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade in this course will be based on 2 exams (1 midterm exam and a final exam), Museum Project Presentation, Research Paper, in-class/online quizzes, and short reaction essays.

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Attendance and Class Etiquette	15	3%
Online Quiz #1	20	4%
Online Quiz #2	20	4%
Online Quiz #3	20	4%
Reaction Post A	10	2%
Reaction Post B	10	2%
Reaction Post C	10	2%
Pop Quizzes	20	4%
In-Class Quiz Part 1	35	7%
In-Class Quiz Part 2	35	7%

Museum Presentation Project	60	12%
Research Paper	65	13%
Midterm	90	18%
Final Exam	90	18%
	Grand Total: 500 points	

Grading Scale:	
A	94-100
A-	90-94
B+	86.66-90
B	83.33-86.66
B-	80-83.33
C+	76.66-80
C	73.33-76.66
C-	70-73.33
D+	66.66-70
D	63.33-66.66
D-	60-63.33
F	Below 60

Details of Assignments:

- All assignments will be submitted online through CANVAS other than the in-person quizzes, exams, and presentations.
- In-class Museum Project Presentation (10–15-minute conference-style presentation, individual or partner- each student has the choice) is an artifact-based analysis that would introduce students to material history. I will supply a list of artifacts that can be accessed through online catalogs and request that students link the artifacts to a major event and theme from the course material. Students can get 5 points extra credit by choosing a non-listed artifact from a different online museum catalog or by visiting a museum and choosing from the artifacts there. Detailed instructions will be given out closer to the deadline.
- Research Paper: 1,500 words, topic of your choice. Must incorporate at least 4 primary sources and 5 secondary sources.
- In-person and online quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and T/F
- Pop Quizzes are short answer
- Reaction Essays are short online responses to questions or articles related to class material. They will be 5–7 sentences in length

Please only use academic sources of information in your assignments. For example, **NO Wikipedia or general blogs.** When citing information, please use any of the assigned reading in this class, smarthistory.com, textbooks, books from the library, or academic articles from google scholar or JStor. These are all sources written by researchers that have significant knowledge about the subject. **Also, no use of AI for assignments.**

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Assignments in this course are to reflect each student's own learning, thinking, and creating. In order to cultivate and evaluate each student's individual work, the use of generative artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT) in any part of completing an assignment is prohibited as an unauthorized aid. For example, if you generate a written response of any length from ChatGPT and submit it as your own work, that will be considered plagiarism as stated in Westmont's Academic Dishonesty Policy. Plagiarism can result failing the course and could lead to suspension or expulsion.

Westmont's [academic integrity policy](#) prohibits us from "present[ing] another's work as our own." Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT attempt to do the work of writing and other creation for their users. Therefore, **students should NOT substitute AI-generated content or ideas for original academic work.** Westmont faculty members design assignments for students' incremental and active learning through methods such as reading, summarizing, discussion, and an authentic generative process in which a student does the work of critical thinking and message construction.

Make-up assignments/ Late policy

Makeup exams/quizzes will only be administered for excused absences (documentation required). Requests for a makeup exam/quiz must be made by email *before* the missed exam/quiz. If students do not take the make-up before graded exams are returned an alternate exam format (short answer and essay) will be used for the make-up. ***Online reaction essays and quizzes cannot be made-up due to the week-long period in which to complete them online. Pop quizzes can also not be made up for credit.*** All other assignments must be submitted on time for full credit.

Extra Credit:

There will be extra credit offered through the Museum Project and Instagram Project. Additional opportunities may be provided through activities in class, but these opportunities will not make up enough lost points for a missed assignment (around 12 points of extra credit available in total per student).

No-Screen/Laptop Policy

This course will have a no-screen and no laptop policy. This means no electronics with screens (including but not limited to laptops, tablets, phones, smart watches, etc.). Why do this? When people misuse laptops in class, they distract others. It is problematic when students are hindered from contributing to class discussion because they know that some of their classmates are not paying attention. Laptops and other screens often encourage the temptation to go on social media, shop, check your email, try to finish other class assignments— all activities that distract both YOU

and your nearby classmates. This policy is shared by other faculty at Westmont as well as other Universities and is common for graduate school programs. There is also a lot of research to suggest writing notes by hand enhances your ability to recall and remember material. Only people with permission from the university (such as through ARO) can use screens during class.

Course Expectations

1. Students are expected to be on time and ready to engage in the learning process. Please be kind and courteous to all in the classroom and during class discussions.
2. No laptop, headphones, nor cell phone use in class please
3. **If I see a cell phone out once, it's a warning. If I see it out twice, the student will lose 10 points from class etiquette. If the issue continues, additional points will be subtracted.**
4. Students are expected to be "intellectually present," therefore, there is a no-screen policy in class.
5. The University's "no food in the classroom" policy will be enforced (bottled water may be consumed in class). **The only exception is if you have medical or other permission and have spoken to me beforehand.**
6. The instructor is available to meet with students prior to the exam to assist in preparations, but you must put in the amount of time and effort needed to accomplish the grade you desire.

Contact Information

Please feel free to reach out to me anytime through my Westmont email (listed at the top of the syllabus). I will endeavor to respond within 24-48 hours. You can also attend my office hours (see top of syllabus), or we can arrange for a zoom meeting if you are unable to attend office hours.

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend all class sessions for the courses in which they are enrolled. Attendance will be taken each class period. Face-to-face courses require students to be present in the classroom. ***Students are expected to notify their professor(s) of planned absences in advance and unplanned absences (due to sickness or emergency) within a reasonable period of time.***

Students who miss class due to illness are to inform their professors about their absence and work with them on how to complete the course activities and assignments that they miss. ***It is your responsibility to follow-up with the professor to see what you missed in class AND to contact a fellow classmate for lecture notes for the missed class.***

Unexcused absences include work conflicts, routine family care, personal travel, and work for other courses. Excused absences must have documentation (i.e., doctors note, etc.).

Students with more than **TWO unexcused absences** in a Tu/Th class will result in a 0/15 points for Attendance and class etiquette. More than that can result in an **automatic failing** grade for the course. Attendance is mandatory for museum project presentation days and an unexcused absence will result in 5 points lost on that project.

Recording Class Sessions

Students are expressly prohibited from electronically recording this course, in part or in whole, whether on campus or online, except by permission from the instructor or by written permission from Office of Disability Services (ODS). Electronic recordings made by students may not be reproduced, shared with those not enrolled in this course, or uploaded to any online environments, including, but not limited to, social media platforms.

Alternative Submission Procedures

If you have technical difficulties when submitting work, please email me immediately describing the issue and to submit your work so there is a time stamp, and you can still get credit for the work. If you are having technical difficulties, you can email me the finished assignment at my Westmont email address.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of university policies and will not be tolerated in this course. Cheating involves attempting to obtain or assisting other(s) to obtain course credit through dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Plagiarism involves failure to acknowledge an original author or source for the ideas, writings or other material included in your work. Work that you submit is assumed to be original unless your source material is documented appropriately, such as a Works Cited page. **Using the ideas or words of another person, even a peer, or a web site, as if it were your own and without citation, is plagiarism.** You should make sure you are familiar with the college's academic integrity policy, which is available online at:

http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/provost/plagiarism/academic-integrity-policy

Academic Accommodations

Westmont is committed to ensuring equal access to academic courses and college programs. In keeping with this commitment under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008, individuals with diagnoses that impact major life activities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations. Students who choose to disclose a disability are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Resource Office (ARO) as early as possible in the semester to discuss potential accommodations for this course. Accommodations are designed to ensure equal access to programs for all students who have a disability that impacts their participation in college activities. Email aro@westmont.edu or see westmont.edu/accessibility-resources for more information.

Counseling Center and Support

If you are going through a difficult time, please make sure to talk to someone, such as at the counseling center (CAPS). CAPS serves as a safe, free, and confidential space to connect with a trained professional. You can find more information here: <https://www.westmont.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>. If the difficulty is adversely affecting your academic performance, please let me know as soon as you can.