

Course Syllabus



Course LATS 6300 – 001
Course Title Introduction to Latin American Studies
Professor Dr. Humberto González-Núñez
Term Fall 2024
Meetings JO 3.536 – T 4:00pm-6:45pm

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location JO 4.120
Email Address humberto.gonzaleznunez@utdallas.edu
Office Hours T 2:30pm-3:45pm (in-person)/By appointment (virtual)

Pre-requisite

None.

Course Description

In this course, we will focus on selected issues and fundamental problems within the field of Latin American studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. Drawing on historical, literary, and cultural scholarship, we will address themes such as the invention/discovery of America, colonialism/colonization/decoloniality/decolonization, subalternism, Latin American identity, race/ethnicity/indigeneity/*mestizaje*, narcotrafficking/narcoviolence, the biopolitics/necropolitics of the border, femicide, the transculturation of music, among other topics. As we proceed in this survey of key topics, we will question the extent to which the various theoretical approaches to Latin American studies succeed or fail to address these fundamental issues.

Learning Outcomes

1. Gain an overview of Latin American cultural, social, and political history.
2. Develop and refine the skills necessary for critical interdisciplinary thinking and writing about Latin America at the graduate level

Required Texts

1. Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-1865-1]
2. Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*. Translated by Philip A. Dennis. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. [ISBN: 978-0-292-70843-3]
3. Castro-Gómez, Santiago. *Critique of Latin American Reason*. Translated by Andrew Ascherl. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. [ISBN: 978-0-231-20007-3]
4. De León, Jason. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015. [ISBN: 978-0-520-28275-9]
5. Fernández Retamar, Roberto. *Caliban and Other Essays*. Translated by Edward Baker. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989. [ISBN: 978-0-8166-1743-2]
6. González Rodríguez, Sergio. *Field of Battle*. Translated by Joshua Neuhouser. Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2014. [ISBN: 978-1-63590-088-0]

7. ————. *The Femicide Machine*. Translated by Michael Parker-Stainback. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012. [ISBN: 978-1-58435-110-8]
8. Hernández, Anabel. *Narcoland: The Mexican Drug Lords and Their Godfathers*. Translated by Iain Bruce and Lorna Scott Fox. New York: Verso, 2014. [ISBN: 978-1-78168-296-8]
9. Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Translated by Harriet de Onís. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-1616-9]
10. Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*. Translated by Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash. New York: Grove Press, 1985. [ISBN: 978-0-8021-5042-4]
11. Rivera Garza, Cristina. *Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice*. New York: Random House, 2024. [ISBN: 978-0-593-24411-1]
12. Rodó, José Enrique. *Ariel*. Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988 [ISBN: 9780292703964]
13. Rodríguez, Ileana, ed. *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-2712-7]
14. Sánchez, Carlos Alberto. *A Sense of Brutality: Philosophy after Narco-Culture*. Amherst: Amherst College Press, 2020. [ISBN: 978-1-943208-14-2] [OA: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/57780/9781943208159.pdf;jsessionid=65DE7455D4304A686B87C567D3AA412F?sequence=1>]
15. Vasconcelos, José. *The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cósmica*. Translated by Didier T. Jaén. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997. [ISBN: 978-0-8018-5655-6]
16. Other required materials will be distributed via eLearning. Please print out these readings and bring them to class.

Recommended Texts

1. Coronil, Fernando. *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. [ISBN: 978-0-226-11602-0]
2. ————. *The Fernando Coronil Reader: The Struggle for Life Is the Matter*. Edited by Julie Skurski, Gary Wilder, Laurent Dubois, Paul Eiss, Edward Murphy, Mariana Coronil, and David Pedersen. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019. [ISBN: 978-1-4780-0396-0]
3. Franco, Jean. *Cruel Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-5456-7]
4. García Canclini, Néstor. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. [ISBN: 978-0-8166-4668-5]
5. Hernández, Anabel. *A Massacre in Mexico: The True Story Behind the Missing Forty Three Students*. New York: Verso, 2020. [ISBN: 978-1-78873-149-2]
6. Mignolo, Walter D. *The Idea of Latin America*. Oxford: Wiley, 2005. [ISBN: 978-1-4051-0086-1]
7. Moreiras, Alberto. *Against Abstraction: Notes from an Ex-Latin Americanist*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020 [ISBN: 978-1-4773-1982-6]
8. ————. *The Exhaustion of Difference: The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-2724-0]
9. O'Gorman, Edmundo. *La invención de América*. 3rd ed. México D. F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2021. [ISBN: 978-607-16-7051-9]
10. Quiroga, José. *Tropics of Desire: Interventions from Queer Latino America*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. [ISBN: 978-0-8147-6953-9]

11. Ramos, Julio. *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Translated by John D. Blanco. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-1990-0]
12. Rivera Garza, Cristina. *Grieving: Dispatches from a Wounded Country*. Translated by Sarah Booker. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2020.
13. ————. *The Restless Dead: Necrowriting and Disappropriation*. Translated by Robin Myers. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2020.
14. Williams, Gareth. *The Other Side of the Popular: Neoliberalism and Subalternity in Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. [ISBN: 978-0-8223-2941-1]

Assignments

Attendance and In-Class Discussion – 20%

Philosophy is an activity that is best carried out through dialogue and conversation, which means that the expectation for this course is that students will come prepared to share their thoughts and questions in class as part of their ongoing contribution to our collective learning environment. Attendance for this class is crucial since it will provide you an opportunity to meaningfully engage with your professor and peers by discussing difficult and dense texts and ideas together, which will help you obtain a more comprehensive understanding. When attending class, it is important come prepared to discuss since attendance comprises 10% of your grade and active in-class discussion represents the other 10%. Constant absences will result in a lower grade for both attendance and in-class discussion.

Presentation – 30%

Students will be asked to sign up to give a brief presentation (10-15 minutes; ~1500 words) for two class sessions. This presentation will be an opportunity for you to familiarize yourself with the structure and claims of the weekly readings by introducing the text to the class. The presentation should focus on the following three items: 1) the author's main thesis/argument, 2) a critical appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's claims, and 3) how you situate the author's claims within your own intellectual interests/project. Each presentation is worth 15% of your grade with each section begin divided into 5%.

Final Paper Proposal – 15%

As preparation for the final paper, students will turn in a 1000-word proposal that includes the following four items: 1) the main thesis/argument, 2) the sources you plan on discussing, 3) the general outline/direction of your essay, and 4) an annotated bibliography describing the importance of each source for your final paper. Each section of the final paper proposal is worth 3.75%.

Final Paper – 35%

The final paper for this course will be a culmination of your reflection on the various authors/themes discussed throughout the semester. The length of your final paper should be approximately 6000-word. The purpose of this assignment is to thoroughly explore one or more of the issues/topics and demonstrate your ability to critically analyze them through the lens of one or more of the major theoretical frameworks discussed throughout the semester.

Grading Policy and Criteria

A	94-100	C+	77-79.99	A = excellent and outstanding work
A-	90-93.99	C	73-76.99	B = very good work
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-72.99	C = satisfactory work
B	83-86.99	D	60-69.99	D & F = unsatisfactory work
B-	80-82.99	F	0-59.99	

Comet Creed

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Following the commitment to honesty and integrity found in UTD’s Comet Creed, the expectation for this course is that students will engage in cordial, polite, independent, and original scholarly thought and expression. Neither disrespect for others nor plagiarism (including the use of AI-generated content) will be tolerated.

If you are concerned that your use of sources and/or AI might result in plagiarism, please come meet with me and I would be more than happy to discuss any concerns you might have.

Any student who decides to submit plagiarized work for this course will receive an F on the assignment and will be reported to the UTD Office of Community Standards and Conduct for further disciplinary sanctions. For more information on UTD’s policy regarding academic dishonesty, see <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty/>.

Academic Support Resources

Please familiarize yourself with the various resources that UT Dallas provides to ensure your academic success: <https://oisds.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/#academic-support-resources>.

UTD is also committed to aiding students who require accommodations to succeed in this course. If you would like to discuss such matters, please contact me during the first week of class. According to UTD policy, a student must register with Student AccessAbility for an accommodation to be officially considered. For further information, please see <https://accessability.utdallas.edu>.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – 8/20

- Introductions/Syllabus/General Remarks

Week 2 – The Invention and Discovery of America – 8/27

- Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*
- Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*
- Edmundo O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*

Week 3 – Colonialism, Colonization, Decolonization, and Decoloniality – 9/3

- Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
- Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power and De/coloniality of Power”
- Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “The Decolonial Turn”
- Alberto Moreiras, “On Infinite Decolonization”

Week 4 – Latin America and the Subaltern Project – 9/10

- Ileana Rodríguez, “Reading Subalterns Across Texts, Disciplines, and Theories: From Representation to Recognition”
- Walter D. Mignolo, “Coloniality of Power and Subalternity”
- Alberto Moreiras, “A Storm Blowing from Paradise: Negative Globality and Critical Regionalism”
- Gareth Williams, “The Subalternist Turn”

Week 5 – The Search for Latin American Identity – 9/17

- José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*
- Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*
- Cristina Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*

Week 6 – The Search for Latin American Identity (Mexico) – 9/24

- Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*
- Roger Bartra, “Mexican *Oficio*: The Miseries and Splendors of Culture”
- Marco Dorfsman, “The Inheritance of the Labyrinth”
- Enrico Mario Santí, “Ten Keys to *The Labyrinth of Solitude*”

Week 7 – The Search for Latin American Identity (Cuba and the Caribbean) – 10/1

- Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*
- Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*
- Juan Carlos Quintero-Herencia, “Towards an Archipelagic Effect (): Poetics, Politics and Sensorium in the Caribbean”
- Fernando Coronil, “Transculturation and the Politics of Theory: Countering the Center, Cuban Counterpoint”
- Enrico Mario Santí, “Towards a Reading of Fernando Ortiz’s *Cuban Counterpoint*”

Week 8 – Race, Ethnicity, Indigeneity, and Mestizaje – 10/8

- Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*
- José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*
- María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States*
- Aníbal Quijano, “Questioning “Race””

Week 9 – Race, Ethnicity, Indigeneity, and Mestizaje – 10/15

- José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*
- Aníbal Quijano, “The “Indigenous Movement” and Unresolved Questions in Latin America”
- Patricia Seed, “No Perfect World: Aboriginal Communities’ Contemporary Resource Rights”
- Marcia Stephenson, “The Architectural Relationship between Gender, Race, and the Bolivian State”

Week 10 – Narcotrafficking and Narcoviolence – 10/22

- Anabel Hernández, *Narcoland: The Mexican Drugs Lords and Their Godfathers*
- —————, *A Massacre in Mexico: The True Story Behind the Missing Forty Students*
- Sergio González Rodríguez, *Field of Battle*

- Ioan Grillo, *Blood, Gun, Money: How America Arms Gangs and Cartels*
- Carlos Alberto Sánchez, *A Sense of Brutality: Philosophy after Narco-Violence*

Week 11 – The Biopolitics and Necropolitics of the Border – 10/29

- Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*
- Jason de León, *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*
- Carlos Alberto Sánchez, ““Illegal” Immigrants: Law, Fantasy, and Guts”
- _____, “On Documents and Subjectivity: The Formation and De-Formation of the Immigrant Identity”
- _____, “Towards a Phenomenology of Undocumented Immigrant Reason”
- Sayak Valencia, “Gore Capitalism, Borderization, and Fascism 2.0”

Week 12 – Femicide, Biopolitics, and Necropolitics – 11/5

- Sergio González Rodríguez, *The Femicide Machine*
- Cristina Rivera Garza, *Liliana’s Invincible Summer*
- Melissa W. Wright, “Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-U.S. Border”

Week 13 – Femicide, Biopolitics, and Necropolitics– 11/12

- Cristina Rivera Garza, *Grieving*
- _____, *The Restless Dead: Necrowriting and Disappropriation*
- Sayak Valencia, *Gore Capitalism*

Week 14 – Music and Transculturation in Latin America – 11/19

- Alejo Carpentier, “Music in Cuba”
- Fernando Ortiz, “The Conga”
- _____, “The Religious Music of Black Cuban Yorubas”
- Juan Carlos Quintero-Herencia, “Notes toward a Reading of Salsa”
- José Quiroga, “Salsa, Bad Boys, and Brass”

Final Paper Proposal due by 11/24 11:59pm

Week 15 – 11/26 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16 – Concluding Remarks and Presentations 12/3

Final Paper due by 12/15 11:59pm

Please note: this schedule is subject to modification as the semester progresses. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will make a note in-class and provide an updated syllabus