

17.55J
Introduction to Latin American Studies
Tues. & Thurs. 3-4 pm in 8-205

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¡Bienvenidos! Bem-vindo! Welcome to Introduction to Latin American Studies!

This semester we will be exploring Latin America's culture, history, and politics. The course begins with an overview of major themes in the region. Then we delve into three units focusing on human rights in Argentina and Chile, the Salvadoran civil war, and migration from Latin America to the United States. Using films, journalistic reporting, memoirs, and other sources, these units will allow students to gain substantive mastery of three major topics in contemporary Latin America. Students will then use this knowledge to develop their own arguments in essays and in-class debates.

Because this course fulfills the CI-H requirement, there is a heavy emphasis on written and oral communication. Students will write three papers, revising one of them. They will also participate in two in-class debates and participate in class discussions.

This class is intended for undergraduate students. Students in their first year are welcome to take the class, as are students who are majoring in science or engineering. 17.55J is truly an introductory class, so there is no expectation of prior knowledge about Latin America or the social sciences or humanities.

CLASS MEETINGS

We have lecture from 3-4 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in 8-205. You are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lecture; please raise your hand if you have something to add!

Each of you will attend a one-hour discussion section once a week. Sections will be scheduled on Mondays and perhaps Wednesdays. Sections begin in Week 3 (Sept. 15), and they will be led by your TA, Martin Liby Alonso. Sections provide an opportunity for you to discuss the readings and other topics covered in class.

We will be watching several films in class this semester. When films are shown, you will have the option to stay past 4 pm to finish watching the film. If you do not want to watch the film with the class, or if you cannot stay late to finish the film, you may check the film out from the library and watch it at another time of your choosing.

We are going on two local field trips this semester: to see the exhibit *Samba Spirit* at the MFA, and to visit an immigrant neighborhood in East Boston. The MFA field trip is mandatory. It will be on Saturday, Sept. 20 or Sunday, Sept. 21. The East Boston field trip is optional, but highly recommended. It will be on Saturday, Nov. 22 or Sunday, Nov. 23. The field trips will be organized as group outings at a time that is mutually convenient for as many students as possible. If you are not able to attend with the class, you will need to go on your own at another time.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

First Paper	15%
Second Paper	20%
Third Paper	25%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Participation	20%

Papers

Students will write three papers. Each paper should be 6-7 pages long. Students will be able to choose from 2 or 3 prompts for each paper. The prompts will be distributed 2 weeks before each paper is due.

Students must rewrite at least one paper this semester. You may choose to rewrite the first paper, the second paper, or BOTH the first paper and the second paper. No re-writes are permitted for the third paper.

Re-written papers will be due 2 weeks after the graded papers are returned to the class. For re-written papers, the grade for the re-write will be recorded as the grade for the paper. The grade for the re-write may be lower than the grade for the first draft if the student does not make significant efforts to revise and improve the paper.

	Topic	Due Date	% Final Grade
Paper 1	<i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i>	Oct. 7	15
Paper 2	Human rights and conflict in Central America, Argentina, and Chile	Nov. 13	20
Paper 3	Migration to the US	Dec. 9	25

Quizzes

There will be 5 quizzes: 1 map quiz and 4 reading quizzes. The map quiz will be in class on Sept. 16 and will require you to label countries and major cities in Latin America.

The dates of the reading quizzes will not be announced in advance. The reading quizzes are not exams; they are short in-class quizzes reading quizzes designed to ensure that you are keeping up on the reading.

Each quiz is worth 4% of your final grade. If you miss a quiz because you are absent, you may make up ONE (and only ONE) quiz during my office hours. After making up one quiz, you will forfeit the points from any other in-class quizzes that you miss, unless your absence is due to a true, documented personal emergency.

Participation

This is a CI-H subject, so oral communication is an important component of the class. Participation in class discussions is encouraged, both in lecture and in section. Students will also participate in two debates.

In order to participate in class, you need to attend class, arrive on time, and pay attention. Everyone gets one “free” unexcused absence that will not affect your grade. After that, additional unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation grade. Absences will be considered excused only due to a documented, serious personal emergency. Minor illness or tiredness is not a personal emergency.

Excessive tardiness or multitasking during class will also cause you to lose participation points. Please use **laptops** and other electronic devices responsibly. All bells and chimes should be silenced. Laptops and tablets should be used only for taking notes or referring to the readings. No online shopping, no doing assignments for other classes. No texting or sending emails. If you can't resist the temptation, I recommend shutting off your wifi or putting away your electronics all together.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If you are using someone else's words or ideas in your work, you need to cite your source. You may not copy another student's work and present it as your own, and you may not “recycle” your own papers that you have written for other classes. All assignments must be your own, original work prepared specifically for this class. Please refer to MIT's academic integrity handbook for detailed guidance, including helpful examples: <https://integrity.mit.edu/> .

TEXTBOOKS

Colburn, Forrest D. 2002. *Latin America at the End of Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Danner, Mark. 1993. *The Massacre at El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War*. New York: Vintage Books.

García Márquez, Gabriel. 2006 [1967]. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. New York: Harper Collins.

Timerman, Jacobo. 2002 [1980]. *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number*. Trans. Toby Talbot. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Martínez, Rubén. 2013 [2001]. *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*. New York: Picador.

All required books are in stock at the COOP, but they may be cheaper online.

SCHEDULE

UNIT ONE: Bienvenidos y Bem-vindo

Week 1

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapters 2, 3, and 7.

Thursday, Sept. 4: Introduction and Geography

Week 2

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapters 11 and 12.

Tuesday, Sept. 9: Pre-Columbian Civilizations and The Conquest

Thursday, Sept. 11: Race, Gender, and Religion

Week 3 – SECTIONS BEGIN

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapter 13

One Hundred Years of Solitude (first half)

Tuesday, Sept. 16: Brazil Beyond the World Cup. *Map quiz in class.*

Thursday, Sept. 18: Writing and Argumentation Workshop

MFA field trip to be scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 20 or Sunday, Sept. 21.

Week 4

Assigned Readings:

One Hundred Years of Solitude (second half)

Tuesday, Sept. 23: Class cancelled for MFA field trip. *Prompts distributed for Paper 1.*

Thursday, Sept. 25: Magical Realism.

Week 5

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10

News articles (student research)

Tuesday, Sept. 30: Politics

Thursday, Oct. 2: Economic Development (Guest lecture by Martin Liby Alonso)

UNIT TWO: Human Rights in Argentina and Chile

Week 6

Assigned Readings:

Timerman, first half

Allende, Isabel. Selected writings to be made available on Stellar.

*****Paper 1 due by the start of class on Oct. 7. Email PDF to Martin Liby Alonso.*****

Tuesday, Oct. 7: Chile's September 11

Thursday, Oct. 9: Argentina's Dirty War

Week 7

Assigned Readings:

Timerman, second half

Feitlowitz, Marguerite. 1998. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture.*

Oxford: Oxford University Press. Selections to be made available on Stellar.

Tuesday, Oct. 14: Class viewing of *The Official Story.*

Thursday, Oct. 16: Repression and Culture

Week 8

Assigned Readings:

Lutz, Ellen and Kathryn Sikkink. 2001. "The Justice Cascade: The Evolution and Impact of Foreign Human Rights Trials in Latin America." *Chicago Journal of International Law*, pp. 1-34. (PDF available on Stellar)

Media coverage of the Pinochet extradition case (student research)

Tuesday, Oct. 21: The Justice Cascade

Thursday, Oct. 23: Workshop on Oral Presentations

UNIT THREE: Civil War in El Salvador

Week 9

Assigned Readings:

Danner, first half

Tuesday, Oct. 28: The Cold War and the Regional Context

Thursday, Oct. 30: The FMLN and the Salvadoran Military. *Prompts distributed for Paper 2.*

Week 10

Assigned Readings:

Danner, second half

Dada, Carlos. "How We Killed Archbishop Romero." *El Faro*. 25 March 2010.

http://www.elfaro.net/es/201003/noticias/1416/?st-full_text=0

Bernabeu, Almudena and Carolyn Patty Blum. (2012). "The Road to Spain: The Jesuit Massacre and the Struggle Against Impunity in El Salvador." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 18(1): 96-100.

Information about Salvadoran human rights trials:

<http://www.cja.org/article.php?list=type&type=199>

Tuesday, Nov. 4: Class viewing of *Innocent Voices*.

Thursday, Nov. 6: Human Rights

Week 11

Assigned Readings:

Moodie, Ellen. (2010). *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. Selections to be made available on Stellar.

Pearce, Jenny. (1998). "From civil war to 'civil society': has the end of the Cold War brought peace to Central America?" *International Affairs* 74(3): 587-615.

Karl, Terry. (1992). "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution." *Foreign Affairs* 71(2): 147-164.

Wood, Elisabeth. (2005). "Challenges to Political Democracy in El Salvador." in *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America*. Eds. Frances Hagopian and Scott Mainwaring. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 179-201.

Tuesday, Nov. 11: Class cancelled (Veterans Day)

*****Paper 2 due by the start of class on Nov. 13. Email PDF to Martin Liby Alonso.*****

Thursday, Nov. 13: A Post-Conflict Success Story?

UNIT FOUR: Migration to the United States

Week 12

Assigned Readings:

Martínez, first half

Colburn, Chapter 9

Tuesday, Nov. 18: Latin Americans in the United States

Thursday, Nov. 20: Pushed and Pulled North

Field trip to East Boston on Saturday, Nov. 22 or Sunday, Nov. 23. This trip is optional but highly recommended.

Week 13

Assigned Readings:

Martínez, second half

Tuesday, Nov. 25: Class viewing of *El Norte*. Prompts distributed for Paper 3.

Thursday, Nov. 27: Class cancelled (Thanksgiving)

Week 14

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapter 14

News coverage of youth migrants from Central America (student research)

Tuesday, Dec. 2: Migration since *Crossing Over*

Thursday, Dec. 4: In-Class Debate: Refugees or Economic Migrants?

Week 15

Assigned Readings:

Colburn, Chapter 15

*****Paper 3 due by the start of class on Dec. 9. Email PDF to Martin Liby Alonso.*****

Tuesday, Dec. 9: Conclusion