

**Fall 2008 GHUM 252: 001 and 002**  
**Latin American Identities and Cultures, pre-colonial to present**



**Class Meetings:** Tuesday, Thursday sec. 1 9:30-10:45 (Jackson 001B); sec. 2 2:00-3:15 (Jackson 001A)

**Prof. Wm Van Norman:**

Office hours: Wed 10:00-12:00 and 1:30-3:30 or appointments happily given

Office: 209 Jackson Hall

Office phone: 568-7318

Email: vannorwc@jmu.edu

**Course Description:**

This class looks at how historical processes in Latin America gave rise to specific and varied cultural production and forms in the region. These constructions of culture were and are defined by strong social class and ethnic divisions. We will trace the convergence of three broadly construed cultural groups (Europeans, Africans, Native Americans) and the emergence of the myriad ethnic constellations that arose after contact in the Americas. This class focuses on cultural expressions so we will trace our main themes through their articulation in a variety of formats: music, film, radio, performance, dance, religion, cuisine, and various forms of written expression (primary and secondary sources, plays, short stories, novels, testimonies). We include both popular and elite expressions of cultural production to underscore the strong social class divisions in the region that give rise to competing visions of national identity. In other words, we will discuss and read about many varied forms of culture all across the region known as Latin America. We will build together a collective understanding of how these expressions have contributed to the history and development of the people of the region and how the various nations came to be as they are today. The course is also a part of the General Education curriculum in Cluster 2 Group 1 and addresses the following goals and objectives:

**Goals for Cluster 2**

To introduce students to cultural, historical, aesthetic, religious, and theoretical expressions of and questions about human experience.

To expose students to multiple academic disciplines in the arts and humanities and their methods and unique perspectives.

To inspire a deeper awareness of how the interplay between culture and its expressions affects both collective and individual identities.

To foster appreciation of the aesthetic and formal qualities of literary, visual, and performing arts.

To engage students in thinking critically and communicating clearly about enduring questions concerning human existence.

## **Objectives for Group 1**

Group 1. Human Questions and Contexts (formerly named Historical, Cultural, and Philosophical Perspectives)

After completing one course in this group, students will be able to:

1. Use critical and comparative analysis to question their own and others' beliefs about and responses to the world or universe.
2. Apply the methods of the discipline(s) studied to material from the humanities.
3. Identify, evaluate, and produce arguments using appropriate concepts and techniques and to formulate logical arguments on the same basis.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of broader cultural, historical, religious or conceptual contexts of particular issues, ideas, objects, or events - past and present.
5. Experience humanities events more discerningly (such as exhibits, films, performances or public lectures)

## **Student Responsibilities:**

There are no formal discussion sections for this class though participation is an important part of your success and that of the class. The structure of class time will vary from day to day and will consist of conversations, small group discussions, and other activities. Most days will include a mixture of lectures and other types of work mentioned above, some days will be devoted to relating the readings to other class work.

The readings and time in class will be a mix of not only factual information about the people and cultures of Latin America but will also include interpretations and ways of understanding complex issues. For these reasons it is important that you attend class and keep up with the readings. You will be held responsible for the materials covered in class and in the readings.

## **Policies:**

Late papers will be penalized unless you obtain prior approval (one half grade per day). I will only accept papers in the specified format unless you obtain prior approval.

Attendance will not be taken regularly but a substantial portion of your grade depends on your engagement with the class. If you choose to attend infrequently it will negatively impact your grade.

In class I expect you to be attentive, participate, and contribute towards creating a scholarly environment.

Students are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying their class schedules on e-campus.

The deadline for adding a Fall Semester class without instructor and academic unit head signatures is Tuesday, September 2, 2008. Between Wednesday, September 3, 2008 and Thursday, September 11, 2008, instructor and academic unit head signatures are required to add a class for Fall Semester 2008.

No student will be allowed to register for a Fall Semester class after Thursday, September 11, 2008. No exceptions will be made to these deadlines.

**Writing is essential.** It is the general policy of the history department that instructors should help students improve their writing skills and to understand that there is a direct relationship between thinking clearly and writing clearly. Here's how I'll evaluate (i.e. *grade*) your writing:

- 1) Focus on the issue (does the writing deal with the problem?)
- 2) Evidence (does it support its position with adequate data?)
- 3) Coherence (does the argument develop its points systematically?)
- 4) Scope (does it deal with all aspects of the question?)

## **HONORABLE AND COURTEOUS BEHAVIOR:**

I encourage you to study together; however, you are bound by the Honor Code in taking exams and in writing your papers. As per university guidelines, students must sign the Honor Code on all papers and

exams in order to have the grade received officially recorded. Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code.

I expect you to be courteous to each other. In a large class, manners are especially important.

- **COURTESY DURING CLASSES.** It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or to leave early. Do not do it. If you know that you will have to leave class early, sit near the door so that you can exit as quietly as possible. If you arrive late, enter quietly and take the nearest seat. Also, please turn off all phones, and other electronic devices.
- **COURTESY IN DEBATE.** Disagreement is an important part of intellectual discussion, and arguing out issues is critical to a university education. Therefore, you should expect to disagree with the ideas or opinions of others, especially in class discussions. Please always disagree in a respectful manner. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

### **Assignments and grade breakdown:**

Writing assignment = 25%

This consists of a short research paper [5 to 6 pages] on a topic of your choice related to Latin America, a specific country in Latin America, or a particular group or type of cultural expression. Topics need to be approved. You must submit a topic prospectus to me no later than Oct 23. The prospectus should be a paragraph briefly sketching out your idea for the paper that includes a tentative thesis and a short list of some of the sources you intend to use. Your paper should incorporate 3 to 5 appropriate sources for your topic that may include books, journal articles, newspapers or other media. I strongly encourage you to use Spanish or Portuguese language resources if you have the language skills (even if you are just learning now!) The purpose of the prospectus is to act as a consultation so that I can assist you in finding a project with which you can succeed and so that I can help you identify sources. Start early and talk to me about the paper if you have any doubts or uncertainties.

Reading Journal 20%

You must write a reaction to one of the readings every week. Your comments can vary but should show your engagement with the material in some way. You can write a personal reaction but you should go beyond shock or surprise to raise questions and/or propose answers about the materials you are reading. Your responses should be no more than a paragraph or two per week unless otherwise directed. I will collect a few random journals every week so you need to bring your journal with you to class every day. You should have at least one entry by Thursday (class time) of the second week of the semester. I will mark the reactions with a check (✓) system as follows: a check means you did a good or satisfactory job; a check plus is outstanding (I don't give many of these for reactions/responses); a check minus means there are some issues that need to be addressed and you should pay attention to my comments and you also might consider meeting with me.

In addition to the reading responses I will also assign a few longer writing assignments (specific reactions or responses) from time to time during the semester.

Participation = 15%

Mid-term Exam = 20%

Final Exam = 20%

### **Required Books:**

John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.)

Clorinda Matto de Turner, *Birds without a Nest: A Story of Indian Life and Priestly Oppression in Peru* (Univ. Of Texas Press, [1889] 2004)

Aluísio Azevedo, *The Slum* (Oxford Univ. Press, [1890] 2000)

## **Schedule**

### **Pre-contact civilizations (before 1492)**

#### **WEEK 1:**

August 26 Tues

*Introduction to the Course*

August 28 Thurs

*Foundational Cultures in the “New World,” The Iberian Peninsula, and Africa*

#### Discussion Questions:

How would you define the world view of each of the major cultural groups that contributed to the formation of the Americas before contact? In what ways were these views similar to and different from one another?

#### Readings:

Jeffrey Pilcher, “The People of Corn,” BB (Blackboard)

#### **WEEK 2:**

Sept 2 Tues

#### Readings:

Karen Vieira Powers, “Pre-Hispanic Gender roles under the Aztecs and the Incas” in *Women and the Crucible of Conquest: The Gendered Genesis of Spanish American Society, 1500-1600*, pp. 15-38. BB

Sept 4 Thurs

#### Readings:

Mary Elizabeth Perry *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* Princeton University Press pp. 3-52. BB

#### **WEEK 3:**

Sept 9 Tues

Continue discussion of the Iberian world before greater integration with the “New World”

Sept 11 Thurs

#### Readings:

James H. Sweet “Demography, Distribution, and Diasporic Streams” in *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770*, pp. 13-30. BB

#### **WEEK 4:**

### **Contact, Colonization and Colonial Society**

Themes: Change, resistance, emergence of hybrid cultures, gender, race and caste, social order and public diversions

#### Discussion Questions:

What social factors shaped the ways in which the mixture of “racial” cultures were viewed in society? How do the views of a mestizo, an indigenous noble (Guaman Poma) compare and contrast with one another? How do elite views of colonial society contrast with those of the slave? How have these themes from the colonial era been remembered and contested in more contemporary art or literature? How did colonial society attempt to control the activities of its citizens?

Sept 16 Tues

#### Readings:

Chasteen, chapter one, “Encounter,” pp. 25-54.

Pilcher, chapter two, “The Conquests of Wheat: Culinary Encounters in the Colonial Period,” pp. 25-44. BB

Sept 18 Thurs

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter two, “Colonial Crucible,” pp. 59-86.

**Start Reading: Clorinda Matto de Turner, *Birds Without A Nest***

**WEEK 5:**

Sept 23 Tues

Readings:

Guaman Poma, A Letter to a King (Selections) BB

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz *Poems, Protest, and a Dream* excerpts BB

Sept 25 Thurs

Readings:

John Charles Chasteen “Morena (American Eve)” in *National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance*, pp. 189-204. BB

**WEEK 6:**

**Late Colonial period, Independence and the New Nation(s)**

*Emergence of New Elite Identities*

Sept 30 Tues

Themes: Racial purity, Foreign Ideals, and the Definition of the Nation

Discussion Questions:

How did the elite of Latin America view the question of who forms the nation? Were these views all in agreement with one another? How did these elites view the problems that their new nations faced? How did they define solutions to these problems? Why has the novel been so important to the construction of national identities in Latin America?

Readings:

Juan & Ulloa (excerpts) BB

Students will view *casta* paintings in class

Discussion:

*Birds Without a Nest*

Oct 2 Thurs

Readings:

Sidney W. Mintz “Food, Sociality, and Sugar” in *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, pp. 3-18. BB

Aluisio Azevedo, *The Slum* (start reading)

**WEEK 7:**

Oct 7 Tues

Chasteen, chapter three, “Independence,” pp. 91-113.

Simón Bolívar “Cartegena Manifesto” BB

Oct 9 Thurs

TBA

**Midterm exam due in class**

**WEEK 8:**

**The 19th Century: New Nations**

*Flowering of Popular Identities during the 19th century*

Themes: Gauchos, mestizaje/racial mixing, dance and music, constructing the nation “from below.”

Discussion Questions:

How do these popular-centered views of nineteenth-century society contrast from that of the elites? How does the ethnic background described in popular views compare and contrast with that of elites?

Oct 14 Tues

Readings:

Chapter two, “Confronting a Colonial Past,” by Oriana Baddeley and Valerie Fraser, *Drawing the Line: Art and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Latin America* (Verso Press, 1989). pp. 41-78.  
BB

Chasteen, chapter 4 “Postcolonial Blues,” pp. 119-147

Oct 16 Thurs

Readings:

Juan Manuel de Rosas, excerpts from *The Caudillos Order*; Domingo F. Sarmiento, excerpts from *Civilization and Barbarism* (From Argentina Reader) 80-90 BB

John Charles Chasteen, Chapter one, “Transgressive National Dances?;” in *National Rhythms, African Roots*, pp. 1-15.

Eduardo Gutierrez, “Juan Moreira,” in Edward Hale Bierstadt, *Three Plays of the Argentine*, (Duffield and Company, 1920), pp. 1-20. BB

**WEEK 9:**

Oct 21 Tues

*End of slavery and oppression of the underclass*

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 5 “Progress,” pp. 149-178

BB TBA [on Afro-Latin culture]

Oct 23 Thurs

Readings:

Discussion: Aluisio Azevedo, *The Slum*

**Research topic prospectus due in class**

**WEEK 10:**

**The 20th Century**

Oct 28 Tues

Film: Like Water for Chocolate

Oct 30 Thurs

Film: Like Water for Chocolate (conclusion)

Readings:

Barbara A. Tenenbaum “Why Tita Didn’t Marry the Doctor, or Mexican History in *Like Water for Chocolate*” in Donald F. Stevens ed. *Based on a True Story: Latin American History at the Movies* (Scholarly Resource Books, 1997) pp. 157-72. BB

**WEEK 11:**

*Culture of Populism*

Themes: The Use of Mass Media and the Rise of the Working Classes.

Discussion Questions:

What was the connection during the 1920s between art and revolution? Why was the revolutionary government in Mexico concerned about sex? How did these and other concerns and interventions help to construct the nation (or were they effective approaches)?

Nov 4 Tues

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 6 “Neocolonialism,” pp. 181-214.

Katherine Bliss “The Science of Redemption: Syphilis, Sexual Promiscuity, and Reformism in Revolutionary Mexico City” Hispanic American Historical Review 79:1 1999 1-40. BB

Students will also view some art of David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Orozco, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.

Nov 6 Thurs

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 7 “Nationalism,” pp. 217-248.

Rubén Darío “To Roosevelt” BB

**WEEK 12:**

Nov 11 Tues

Discussion Questions: How did technology shape or re-shape culture? Where were differences in how technology was used or understood in relation to class structures in Latin American societies? What was the relationship between technology and the emergence of populist governments in Latin America?

Readings:

“Radio and Estado Novo,” in Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music and the Making of Modern Brazil*, (Duke University Press, 2004). pp. 19-40 BB

Joy Elizabeth Hayes, “Broadcasting the Revolution,” Chapter four of *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920-1950*. pp. 42-62 BB

Nov 13 Thurs

Readings:

“Peron and the People” Daniel James in *The Argentina Reader* (DUP) pp. 273-295 BB

**WEEK 13:**

Nov 18 Tues

*Revolutionary Cultures Reactionary Cultures and Resistance*

Themes: Violence from below, consolidating and representing revolutionary changes in society

Violence from above, cultural resistance and responses to state violence

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 8 “Revolution,” pp. 249-278.

Che Guevara, “Man and Socialism,” in *The Cuba Reader*. BB

Pablo Neruda “Ode to Tomatoes” BB

Nov 20 Thurs

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 9 “Reaction,” 279-310.

Chile:

Chapter Six, “The Culture of Fear,” from Constable and Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies. Chile Under Pinochet*, New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1991. pp. 140-165. BB

Marjorie Agosin, “Chile: Patchwork of Memory,” *NACLA*, vol. XXVII, no. 6, May/June 1994 (on arpilleras) pp. 11-14. BB

**WEEK 14:**

Nov 25-27 Tues Thurs No Class Thanksgiving Holiday

**WEEK 15:**

*Transnational Latin America*

Themes: Migration, New Alliances, New Influences

Discussion Questions:

How has migration changed Latin American nations and peoples (both immigration and emigration)?  
Are these changes substantially different than changes brought about by migration in earlier centuries?  
Has migration changed what we think about Latin America? How has Latin American migration effected areas beyond the region?

Dec 2 Tues

Readings:

Chasteen, chapter 10 “Neoliberalism,” pp. 311-329

Dec 4 Thurs

Readings:

George Brandon, “Santería in the United States (1959-1982)” in Santería From Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) pp. 104-125.

**Writing assignment due in class**

**Final Exam due (submit by email by 6 pm Thursday Dec. 11)**