

## **Film as History: Modern Latin America (HIS155)**

TTh 11:05-12:20pm  
Spring 2016

LCHAS148  
Professor Molly Ball

This introductory course uses film to understand several trends and elements central to Latin American society and culture in the twentieth century. Specifically, the class will be structured around five main themes: Latin America and the United States; Class, Race and Gender; Revolution and Repression; Underdevelopment and Informality; and Religion. By the end of the course, students will have a strong introduction to Latin American modern history and understand the role films, as well as other sources, play in our perception of history. We will use a variety of methods and materials, including primary and secondary sources, and of course, films, to cover each theme. By the end of the course, you will have a strong introduction to Latin American modern history and understand the role films can play in our perception of history. You will also help develop a course website that will hone your critical writing and thinking skills and your ability to translate your knowledge into an accessible digital format.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Understand the role key themes played in modern Latin American history and distinct manifestations of those themes across the region.
- Critically analyze the primary and secondary sources in the study of history, with special attention that film plays as both a source and mode of history.
- Plan, write and design a website that incorporates the course objectives and that is accessible to a target audience.

### **Digital Portfolio:**

A major component of your final grade will be the digital portfolio and your contributions to the class website. You will be asked to work individually, in small groups and as a whole to develop a target audience, overarching goals and appropriate elements for the course. You will be graded on both the scholarly content and your ability to translate your ideas into a digital format for the target audience.

As a class we will decide the target audience and objectives of the website. You will then divide into groups based on the five course themes. Your group will be responsible for that portion of the website and making sure that it conforms to the goals and target audience as outlined by the class. Individually, you will be responsible for researching and writing relevant text that will be incorporated into your groups' portion of the website.

### **Required Reading:**

Holden and Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*  
*Reyita: Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*  
*Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*  
John King *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America*

**Latin America and the United States (January 13<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>):**

## Readings

- Holden and Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*, docs 3, 24, 25, 29, 37, 44, 45, 49, 53, 54, 61, 74, 75, 83, 87, 91, 101, 102, 107, 108, 109, 62, 118, 123
- Donald C. Meyer, "Toscanini and the Good Neighbor Policy: The NBC Symphony Orchestra's 1940 South American Tour," *American Music* (18.3), 2000: 233-256.
- Jennifer Osorio "Proof of a Life Lived: The Plight of the Braceros and what it says about how we treat records" *Archival Issues* (29.2), 2005: 95-103.
- Kelly Lytle Hernandez *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol*, chapter 8
- Paul Lopez, *The Braceros: Guest Workers, Settlers and Family Legacies* (2009), selections

## Assignments:

- Latin American newspapers database
- Bracero Archive activity (braceroarchive.org)

## Films:

*The Three Caballeros* (1944); *Sin Nombre* (2009)

## Race, Class & Gender (February 1<sup>st</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>)

### Readings:

- Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986): 1053-75.
- Ginetta Candelario "Hair Race-ing: Dominican Beauty Culture and Identity Production" *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, vol1, no 1 (2000): 128-56.
- Peter Fry "Politics, Nationality and the Meanings of "Race" in Brazil" *Deadalus* 129.2 (2000): 83-118.
- Robin Derby "The Race, National Identity and the Idea of Value on the Island of Hispaniola" in *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Nancy Priscilla Naro, ed., London: Institute of Latin American Studies, U. of London, 2003: 5-37.
- Charles Nero "Homosexuality and the Repression of Intellectuals in Fresa y Chocolate" *BLAR* 18.1 (1999): 17-33.
- 1975 Cuban Family Code
- *Reyita: Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

## Films:

*Fresa y Chocolate* (1994); *Mirrors of the Heart: Race and Identity* (1993);  
*Blacks in Latin America* (2011)

## Repression and Revolution (February 22<sup>nd</sup> - March 14<sup>th</sup>)

### Readings:

- Heidi Tinsman, "Politics of Gender and Consumption in Authoritarian Chile, 1973-1990" *Latin American Research Review* 41.3 (Oct 2006): 7-31.
- Selections from Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*
- Torre "Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers in the Plaza de Mayo"
- John King, *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America*

Assignments:

- Declassified documents activity (National Security Archive)

Films:

*The Official Story* (1985), *Cautiva* (2003)

**Underdevelopment and Informality (March 16<sup>th</sup> – April 4<sup>th</sup>):**

Readings:

- Carolina Maria de Jesus *Child of the Dark*
- Selections from Hernando de Soto, *The Other Path*

Assignments:

- Newspaper *favela* activity
- Rapid, mini-country report
- Comparison of Reyita and Carolina

Films:

*74 Square Meters* (2011), *Los Olvidados* (1950), *El Baño del Papa* (2007)

**Religion (April 6<sup>th</sup> – April 20<sup>th</sup>):**

Readings:

- Andrew Chesnut "Entrepreneurial Spirits: Religions of the African Diaspora," chapter 5 in *Competitive Spirits* (2003)
- Daniel H. Levine, "Assessing the Impacts of Liberation Theology in Latin America" *The Review of Politics*, 50.2 (Spring 1988): 241-63.
- Virginia Garrard-Burnett, "Like a Mighty Rushing Wind: The Growth of Protestantism in Contemporary Latin America "
- David Stoll "The Holy Ghost in Northern Quiché," chapter 6 in *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala* (1993).
- Jeffrey Lesser, chapter on in *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans* (2008)

Assignments:

- Debates based on documents from *El Mozote*

Films:

*Salvador* (1986), *Papirosen* (2011)

**Website development (April 25<sup>th</sup> – final exam)**

**Basic Classroom/Course policies:**

Come to class prepared. This means completing the readings and assignments and thinking about them critically. It also means **coming to class on time** and respecting the breaks that we take.

When sending emails, place HIS155 in the header so that I will prioritize your message when I check email. In general, I do not check email after 10pm or on Sunday during the day.

Late policy. Any assignments not turned in by the stated due date will be considered late. You will lose 10 points for every day that something is turned in late.

Electronic devices. We will be using laptops and a variety of online resources during this class. Unless you are instructed to do so, please refrain from texting, emailing, surfing, googling, etc.

Academic Honesty.

**Grading Rubric:**

Class participation	20%	Attendance; participation in discussions and activities
Response papers	35%	Effective inclusion of course materials; exhibits critical thinking; grammatical and style elements
Digital portfolio	45%	Completion on time and thoughtful contributions

**Class participation:**

As shown above, several elements compose participation and attendance alone will not be sufficient for a passing class participation grade. You must also thoughtfully engage in discussions and class activities. At times during the course, you will be required to view films outside of class. These films will be made available to you either online or on reserve at the Arts and Music library. As far as the course attendance policy, you will be allowed two unexcused absences during the course. However, you are responsible for contacting me and for still turning in any materials due or assigned **on time**. If you miss a film day, you will be able to view a copy in the Media Library.

**Film Response Papers:**

Five response papers should show your ability to synthesize and critically analyze the theme's readings and film(s). Although you are not required to cite outside sources, your response should reference specific examples from the week's readings (both secondary and primary sources) and films. I am interested in how your analytical and writing skills develop and your grade will reflect such improvements accordingly. You will be responsible for a sixth response paper at the end of the course that reflects on at least two core themes we discussed. This paper will be based on two films, one of which should be a film we have already viewed.