HIST 351/451: Urban Latin American History

Tuesdays/Thursdays, (9:40 – 10:55am, Rush Rhees 456)

Prof. Molly Ball (she/hers), [mollycball@rochester.edu](mailto:mollycball@rochester.edu)

Office hours (Rush Rhees 449): Th, 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Although today the vast majority of Latin America's population lives in large metropolitan areas, at the turn of the twentieth century, the region was largely agrarian and rural. Over the course of the semester, we will explore several themes and their intersection with the urbanization process. The course examines the positive elements and challenges facing Latin Americans during this growth process in cities like Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Lima. The themes that we will analyze – gender, class, & ethnicity; migration; environment; politicization; informality – are by no means exhaustive of the research topics related to urban history in the region. Prior knowledge of Latin American history will be helpful, but it is by no means required. In fact, many of the central questions, features, and concerns of Latin American urbanization reflect in other urbanized regions, particularly in the Global South.

As this is a writing-intensive course and research seminar, you will have heavy reading load for this class that includes scholarly monographs and articles. By the end of the semester, you will produce a significant research paper based on primary and secondary sources that reflects the course themes and your interests. In class, we will discuss how and where texts dialogue with one another and we will also give careful consideration to primary sources and methodology. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and critique the readings and sources in a meaningful manner. Anticipate blocking off time each week not only to finish course readings, but also to work on your final research paper.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

* Recognize significant currents and themes in modern Latin American urban history.
* Feel comfortable conducting independent research, analyzing documents, and structuring a cohesive and well-written research project that engages primary and secondary literature.
* Improve critical reading and writing skills, especially honing ability to respond to academic critiques and improve arguments.

**COURSE POLICIES**

Regarding full course policies, commitment to inclusion, expectations, please refer to the “Course Overview and Introduction” folder available on Blackboard.

**Commitment to inclusion:**The University of Rochester, this course, and I are committed to inclusion and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities and to providing a quality education to all students, regardless of their race, sex, gender, or immigration status. Some available resources for students with DACA or undocumented status can be accessed at <http://www.rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html>.   
Please reach out to me if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course.

**Syllabus update statement:**

As modules and lessons will be added as needed, this syllabus will provide with a preview of what is coming. Any changes in schedule and readings will be updated in the BLACKBOARD MODULES. Please refer to the modules for the most up-to-date information.

**Getting in touch with your professor:** The two most effective ways of reaching me are 1) coming to office hours and 2) emailing me ([mollycball@rochester.edu](mailto:mollycball@rochester.edu)).

* Office hours: If there is something specific that you would like to discuss during office hours, please send me an email ahead of time if you are able. If you cannot attend my office hours in person, you can request to connect via zoom. If you have a class or work conflict during my office hours, we can find an alternate meeting time.
* I check emails Monday - Friday before midday and Saturdays before the end of the day. I will answer your email within 48 hours.
  + When writing an email, it is best to use Prof. Ball or Dr. Ball in the salutation.
  + Remember to include your name when signing off (even if you're sending it via your cell).

**Course Design:**

A seminar class meets traditionally meets for 3 hours each week; however, in this seminar, we will be meeting twice a week. Even with the two-day format, this will be a discussion-based course. To facilitate discussion, I ask that you:

* Come to class on time ready to discuss the readings (and any questions posed ahead of time).
* By class time on TUESDAYS, students should come prepared to write down and submit two questions based on the assigned course readings. Questions can include a topic that find of great interest, something that reminded you of other course readings, something that confuses or does not convince you, etc.. Make sure to include any appropriate page references to your questions. The questions that we do not get to on Tuesday will and can be included as a part of Thursday’s discussion.
* Starting in week 3 students will lead (or co-lead) discussions on THURSDAYS. You will be able to use the questions from Tuesday, but you should also generate and post at least 3 new questions to blackboard covering the Thursday assigned readings by Wednesday night (11:59pm). You will sign-up for your session in week 2.

Contingency plan (should classes be online):

* The course time will be maintained, but we will all meet online during the scheduled period via zoom.

*Extra Hour Policy:* In accordance with the university’s credit hour policy, students are expected to spend an additional hour working on their writing journal. Each week (starting in week 2), students will submit an entry to blackboard that discusses their writing goals for the upcoming week and reflects on the steps they took to accomplish their writing goals of the past week. Students are encouraged to join a writing group either through the Writing, Speaking & Argument program or with a friend/peer group.

Students are also encouraged to attend virtual or in-person events related to course content. These may include conferences, community events, film screenings, etc. Students are also welcomed to write about attendance at these events in their writing journal as an additional entry.

**Illness statement:**   
There will be instances where illness might prevent you from coming to class. We will follow university guidelines related to illness. If you are clearly contagious or have tested positive for flu or COVID, you should not come to class. You should also send me an email letting me know that you will be absent.

*Missed material/assignments due to illness:*

* Unless illness prevents you from completing assignments, you are expected to keep up with and submit assigned work.
* In the event that you are not well enough or have an extenuating circumstance, please reach out to me as soon as possible so that discuss possible adjustments.

**Grading Rubric:**

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| HIST351 | | |
| Writing Journal | 10% | Weekly submissions to blackboard journal by Friday starting in week 2. This can be a photograph of a written journal or a typed version. These will be evaluated on a √ √+ √- scale. |
| Attendance | 20% | This includes class attendance, active participation, submitting assignments (topic submissions in weeks 3 & 5), and leading discussion. Active participation includes submitting questions on Tuesdays and providing thoughtful and critical responses to your classmates’ and my questions. |
| Annotated Bibliography | 10% | The annotated bibliography will be submitted on October 12th. More details will be forthcoming, but you should aim for 10 – 12 potential secondary sources and a discussion of the primary sources that you plan to use. |
| Outline & Abstract | 10% | The outline and preliminary abstract will be submitted on October 26th. For your outline, remember that for every A there is a B and for every 1 there is a 2. Your abstract should be 150 – 200 words. |
| Research paper | 40% | You will write an original 5,000- to 5,500-word research paper.[[1]](#footnote-1) You will submit a FULL rough draft of your final paper by Wednesday, November 22nd. I will grade this as if it were your final paper. Based on my comments (as well as insight on your in-class presentations), you will need to revise and resubmit your final paper by December 12th. Failure to submit either a rough or final draft will result in an incomplete. |
| Presentations | 10% | You will give 2 oral presentations of your research topic in the course. The first will be short (5-minute) presentations on October 10th (week 7). The second will be panel-style presentations during week 13. |

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| HIST451 | | |
| Writing Journal | 10% | See above. |
| Attendance | 15% | In addition to the requirements above, you will be expected to attend 3 graduate meetings to discuss additional readings and specific topics. |
| Pre-draft submissions (bibliography, outline, etc.) | 15% | You will submit a bibliography on October 12th as well as a written discussion of sources (at least 15) and methodologies that the authors in your bibliography have used to approach your topic. You will also submit a written proposed methodology and source section. On October 26th, in addition to the outline and abstract, you will submit a written historiography draft. |
| Research paper | 40% | You will write an original 6,500- to 7,500-word research paper.† You will have until December 16th to submit your final paper. When you submit your revision, you must also submit a revision response. See above for policies regarding grading and submission. |
| Presentations | 5% | See above. |
| Book reviews | 15% | You will submit 3 of 4 book reviews over the course of the semester. You must submit a review in week 3, but then may choose to submit a review in 2 of the following weeks: 7, 10, and 13. You will receive a style guideline in week two. The top priority in grading is demonstrating a analytical grasp of the assigned readings as well as improvement over the course of the semester. |

Assigned Books:

1. Guy, Donna. *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family and Nation in Argentina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. (available online)
2. Piccato, Pablo. *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. (available online)
3. Vitz, Matthew. *A City on a Lake: Urban Political Ecology and the Growth of Mexico City.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
4. Fontes, Paulo. *Migration and the Making of Industrial São Paulo.* Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016.
5. De Jesus, Carolina Maria de Jesus *Child of the Dark*. New York: Signet, 2002.
6. Mendiola García, Sandra C. *Street Democracy: Vendors, Violence, and Public Space in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. (available online)
7. Soto, Hernando de. *The Other Path: The Economic Answer to Terrorism*. New York: Basic Books, 2002. (various paperback editions starting from 1989).
8. *Cities from Scratch*
9. Concrete Dreams: Practice, Value, and Built Environments in Post-crisis Buenos Aires. By Nicholas D’Avella. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

Graduate students

1. Ball, Molly *Navigating Life and Work in Old Republic São Paulo.* Gainesville: Florida UP, 2020.
2. Miller, Shawn William. *The Street is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018
3. Schneider, Cathy Lisa. *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile.* Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1995.
4. Konove, Andrew *Black Market Capital*

Class Schedule

Notes in this font denote class activities/assignments

**Notes in this script *or this script* denote something is due related to your research paper.**

(Instructions that only pertain to graduate students will appear in parentheses.)

Week 1: Introducing Latin American urban history

Required readings: Historiographical essays, Morse and Connolly

Weeks 2 & 3: Gender, Class, (Race) & Ethnicity

September 5: Guy, *Sex and Danger*, pp. ix – 104

September 7: Guy, *Sex and Danger*, pp. 105 – 210

Start Piccato footnotes activity in class.

**Your first writing journal activity is due by Friday at 11:59pm.**

September 12: Piccato, *City of Suspects,* pp. ix – 104

Discussion of footnotes activity

September 14: Piccato, *City of Suspects*, pp. 105 – 220 (Graduate students should have completed Ball, *Navigating Life and Work* by September 14. First graduate book review is due.)

***Preliminary topic ideas discussed in class.***

Weeks 4 & 5: Migration

September 19: de Jesus, *Child of the Dark*, entire book

September 21: No class session. Spend time in library working on your preliminary topics.

September 26: Fontes, *Migration and the Making*, pp. vii – 130

**Topic and top 3 secondary sources submitted at the start of class.**

September 28: Fontes, *Migration and the Making*, pp. 131 – 210

Source activity: primary source specificity and secondary source typology

Weeks 6 & 7: Environmental history

October 3: Historiographical essay & Vitz, *City on a Lake*, pp. 1 – 50

October 5: Vitz, pp. 51 – 163

October 10 – *Mini-presentations of topics and proposed research plan/topic*

October 12 – Vitz, *City on a Lake*, pp. 164 – 234 (Graduate students should have also completed Miller’s *The Street is Ours*. Second opportunity for book review.)

**Annotated bibliography submitted at the beginning of class. (Graduate students submit bibliography and written discussions as outlined in rubric.)**

Weeks 8 & 9: Urban politicization

October 17: FALL BREAK. NO CLASS TODAY.

October 19: Taylor “Making a Spectacle: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” (1998); Torre “Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo; Rosenthal, Anton. “Spectacle, Fear, and Protest: A Guide to the History of Urban Public Space in Latin America,” *Social Science History* 24.1 (Spring 2000); Margaret Power “Class and Gender in the Anti-Allende Women’s Movement in Chile 1970-1973”; selections from Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*

Discussion of favorite organizational structure. What is your favorite book organization thus far? Why are articles organized differently?

October 24: Mendiola, *Street is Ours*,

October 26: Mendiola, *Street is Ours,* (Graduate students should have also completed Schneider’s *Shantytown Protests in Pinochet’s Chile*. Third opportunity for book review.)

**Submit your outline and abstract. (Graduate students also submit historiography section.) Pick a reward that you will give yourself for submitting your rough draft on time and share it in your writing journal if you feel comfortable doing so.**

Weeks 10, 11 & 12: Informality

October 31: de Soto, *Other Path*, pp. xi – 58; *Cities from Scratch*, pp. 1 – 8, 68 – 101

November 2: de Soto, *Other Path*, pp. 59 – 188

November 7: de Soto, *Other Path*, pp. 201 – 258; *Cities from Scratch*, pp. 9 – 67, 102 – 126, 170 – 184

November 9: *Cities from Scratch*, pp. 127 – 169, 208 – 237

November 14: We will watch *74 Square Meters* in class.

November 16: *Peer editing. Bring in 2 pages of a section of your rough draft that you would like to have a peer review. We will switch and provide feedback during class.* (Graduate students should watch *Wasteland* and have Konove’s *Black Market Capitalism* completed.)

Weeks 13 & 14: Project-intensive weeks

November 21: There will be no class on Tuesday, November 21st. Use this time to work on and submit your FULL rough draft.

**A full copy of your rough draft and a revised abstract should be submitted by Wednesday, November 22. You will not have any assigned readings this week, but you should be working on your presentations for the week after Thanksgiving.**

November 28: Presentations

November 30: Presentations (Fourth and final opportunity for graduate student book/movie review due.)

Weeks 15 & 16: Early 21st century

December 5: *Cities from Scratch*, pp. 238 – 262; *Concrete Dreams*, pp. 1 – 93

December 7: *Concrete Dreams*, pp. 94 – 178

December 12: Optional reading – *Concrete Dreams*, pp. 179 – 234

**Revised draft due for undergraduate students by start of class on December 12.**

Final course reflection

December 16: **(Revised draft and revision explanation due for graduate students by 10pm.)**

Graduate student addendum:

We will schedule meetings during the following weeks 2, 6, 12, and 14. In addition to a discussion of additional texts during these meetings, we will discuss your goals (week 2), brainstorm possible journals and discuss historiography via keywords (week 6), and address conferences and presentation styles (week 12). You are also welcome to propose specific topics of interest to you.

Want to check out a relatively recent bibliographic essay on Latin American urban history: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-research-review/article/urban-and-beyond-in-latin-america/C48411F504C5F4E823E004447543B3DF#fn8>

Latin American Urban Conglomerations

The following Latin American city agglomerations recorded over one million inhabitants in the city proper by 2021. [[2]](#footnote-2) The cities in parentheses form part of the urban agglomeration that precedes them. Federal capitals appear in all caps.

*Argentina*: BUENOS AIRES, Córdoba, Mendoza, Rosario

*Bolivia*: Santa Cruz

*Brazil*: Belo Horizonte, Belém, BRASILIA, Campinas, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Goiâna, Guarulhos, Maceió, Manaus, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Gonçalo, São Luis, São Paulo

*Chile*: SANTIAGO

*Colombia*: Barranquilla, BOGOTA, Cali, Cartagena, Medellín

*Cuba*: HAVANA

*Dominican Republic*: SANTO DOMINGO

*Ecuador*: Guayaquil, QUITO

*Guatemala*: GUATEMALA CITY

*Honduras:* TEGUCIGALPA

*Mexico*: Aguascalientes, Ciudad Juarez, Cuernavaca, Culiacán Rosales, Guadalajara, La Laguna, León, Mérida, Mexicali, MEXICO CITY, Monterrey, Puebla de Zaragoza, Querétaro, Saltillo, San Luis Potosí, Tijuana, Toluca, Zacatecas

*Paraguay*: ASUNCION

*Peru*: Arequipa, LIMA, Trujillo

*Uruguay*: MONTEVIDEO

*Venezuela*: CARACAS, Maracaibo

*Border Cities*: Tijuana/San Diego; Juárez/El Paso; Ciudad del Este/Foz de Iguaçu/Puerto Iguazú

1. Notes count toward the final word count, but tables, charts, figures, and bibliography do not. A 5,000-word paper is roughly 18 – 20 pages. A 6,500 – 7.500-word paper is a good length for a journal article or chapter submission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based on the United Nations *72nd Demographic Yearbook for 2021*, available online. Some cities are not measured by agglomeration, but rather by population in the city proper. Santiago’s city proper population is roughly half a million. Although there is no statistic for the agglomeration, it likely exceeds one million. <https://desapublications.un.org/publications/demographic-yearbook-2021> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)