

SOSC 4450 3.00/ HUMS 4300 3.00
Winter 2016

Aspects of Modern Latin American and Caribbean Studies: Culture and Politics

Tuesdays 11:30 AM -2:20 PM, Room: Stong 303

Course Director: Professor J.A. Hellman

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Office hours: winter term: Drop in: Tuesdays 10:30-11:20 AM and all other times by appointment.

This course will bring together works from both social science and the humanities to explore some of the central themes of Latin American and Caribbean history and contemporary life. Drawing on oral history, novels, and social science, the course will cover a range of topics that include: the impact of the conquest and colonial rule, the consolidation of land tenure patterns, indigenous culture and movements, revolutions, resistance and repression, the politics of race relations, rural life in the Caribbean and Latin America, national and international immigration, and the life of Latin American and Caribbean people in the diaspora.

Requirements:

The course meets as a weekly, three-hour seminar on Tuesdays, 11:30 AM -2:20 PM. Members of the seminar will be expected to attend every week and to come to class prepared with a two page, double-spaced, written reflection on the weekly readings (500-600 words with a “word count” at the bottom of the page). This written work must also be submitted via Turnitin. There will be no formal presentations. Rather, every member of the seminar will be expected to arrive in the classroom ready at any time to respond to a request to lead off the discussion on the readings of that week, based on her or his reading of the material

Given the centrality of seminar participation anyone absent from seminar more than once will lose participation points except in the case of a fully documented medical problem or emergency. Those who regularly come late to class will lose participation credit in proportion to their tardiness.

The policies regarding missed examinations will be as stated on Professor Canel’s website at the following link: <http://www.yorku.ca/ecanel/policies/misexam.html>

15% of the final grade will be determined by an in-class mid term exam in Week 7, February 23rd. For the remaining 25% of the grade you can choose between a formal, sit-down final examination in the regular exam period or you can elect to research and write an oral history of a person from Latin America or the Caribbean whom you will interview in multiple sessions and whose story you will contextualize in an eight to ten page paper. The instructor will provide help to assist you in locating and gaining permission to interview the person whose history you will relate in your written essay.

Evaluation:

30% Seminar participation:
30% Weekly papers;
15% Midterm exam;
25% Final Exam **or** Oral History Project

Week 1, January 5th : Introduction to the Course

and screening of the first half of a film by Gillo Pontecorvo, “Burn!” (“Quemada” in the original)

Week 2, January 12th Colonial Rule/Independence/ Neocolonial Rule

Eric R. Wolf, "Iberians in the Americas," *Europe and the People Without History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 131-157; {Available as an E-book}

Carolyn Fick, “The Saint Domingue Slave Insurrection of 1791: A Socio-Political and Cultural Analysis,” *Journal of Caribbean History*, Volume 25 (1&2) 1991, p. 1-40.

[Recommended for those interested: Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., "The Biological Consequences of 1492," NACLA, "The Conquest of Nature, 1492-1992;" *Report on the Americas*, Vol. 25, N. 2, Sept. 1991; and Franklin W. Knight, "The Political Geography of the Pre-Hispanic Caribbean," in The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism, 1st edit., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); pp. 3-22;]

Film: Gillo Pontecorvo, “Burn!”: Part II

Week 3, January 19th: The Mexican Revolution

Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978, 1983), Chapter 1, “The Revolution,” pp. 3-31.

Ricardo Pozas, *Juan the Chamula*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

Film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brtbXXxCAY0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=GtGwZp5HmFU> (6.5 minutes, with subtitles)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=wHw1isu5Ik>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8ymi3OWmTk&feature=related> (13.5 minutes, in Spanish)

Week 4 January 26th : The Mexican Revolution (continued)

Oscar Lewis, *Pedro Martinez*, (New York: Vintage Press, 1964),

First read Pedro’s testimony, pp. 3-94, and *then* read Lewis’s “Introduction,” pages xxviii-lvii.

Week 5 February 2nd : Patterns of Land Tenure: Debt peonage and agricultural wage labour on hacienda and plantation

Begin reading: Sidney Mintz, *Worker in the Cane*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1974) “Preface,” and Chapters 1-4.

Week 6 Feb 9th : The Plantation

Sidney Mintz, *op cit*, Chapters 5-8. (Especially note pp. 123-2 and 168-176)

Film: “Sugar Cane Alley”

[Highly recommended reading: Sidney Mintz and Eric R. Wolf , “Haciendas and Plantations in Middle America and the Antilles,” *Social and Economic Studies*, Volume VI, September 1957, pp. 380-412.]

Reading Week: February 15th -19th

Week 7 February 23rd: Independence, Neo-Colonialism, Revolution and Resistance:
The Oral History Project

“Introduction” plus Chapter One: Nadine Ramharack, “Resilience: Life in Rural Trinidad;” Chapter Two: Alyssa Sewlal, “An East Indian in the West Indies;” Chapter Three: Richard Lanns, “From Plantation to Tourist ‘Paradise’ in St. Lucia;” Chapter Four: Kevin Edmonds, “Green Gold and Dark Days: The Life of a St. Lucian Banana Farmer ” in Judith Adler Hellman, ed. *Changing Times and Changing Lives in the Caribbean and Latin America: Ten Oral Histories*, (Toronto: CERLAC, 2013) [Available for \$12.50 in print form or free on line as a pdf. If you follow the link <http://www.yorku.ca/cerlac/jhellman/ChangingTimes> and you request the pdf, not the e-pub} .

In Class Mid-Term Exam 1.5 hours

Week 8, March 1st The Oral History Project (continued)

Chapter Five: Ashleigh Phillips, “Race, Class, Revolution and the U.S. Invasion of Grenada,” Chapter Six: Judith Adler Hellman, “Invasion and Resistance in the Dominican Republic;”

plus any two of the following five chapters:

Chapter Seven: Michael McLean Ayearst: A Life on the Meskito Coast During the Nicaraguan Revolution;”

Chapter Eight: Lorenzo Vargas, “Winding Road of Fear;”

Chapter Nine: Juan Manuel Vidal, “Civil War and Peace in El Salvador” or

Chapter Ten: Maria Elena Hernández, “A Defiant Woman in Post Revolutionary Mexico”

Week 9 March 8th Resistance and Migration

J. A. Hellman, *The World of Mexican Migrants: The Rock and the Hard Place*, (New York: The New Press, 2008), Prologue, Introduction (pp. 8-14), Chapters 2 through 9, 10 through 13 are recommended only. Also skip ahead at this point to read “A Note on Methodology,” pp 233-241.

Week 10, March 15th : Resistance and Migration (continued)

J. A. Hellman, *The World of Mexican Migrants: The Rock and the Hard Place*, (New York: The New Press, 2008), Chapters 14-17, plus 19. [chapter 18 is recommended only].

[Also recommended: Patrick E. Bryan and Karl Watson, eds., *Not for Wages Alone: Eyewitness Summaries of the 1938 Labour Rebellion in Jamaica*, Introduction, pp. 1-14; Roderick Francis, pp. 41-50; Ken Hill, pp. 51-4; Kathleen Cross, pp. 102-3]

Week 11, March 22nd

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007), pp 1-207.

Week 12, March 29th

Edwidge Danticat, "Marie Micheline: A Life in Haiti, *The New Yorker*, June 11 & 18, 2007, pp. 96-103.

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, pp. 210-345.

[illegible]

Final Exam: 25% of final grade, to be held in the regular examination period.

or

You may submit an oral history with a final deadline for submission of April 11, 2016