

## **070-223: Anthropology of Latin America**

Prof.

MW 2:15-3:35, Loree 115

Office hours: M 3:45-4:45; F 3:30-4:00

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### **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of the diverse societies of Latin America from an anthropological perspective. It explores the cultural, economic, political and religious aspects of life in this large and diverse region. Themes that we will focus on include concepts of race, ethnicity and gender as they appear in Latin America; political and economic processes; urbanization and migration; festival, spectacle and ritual; religion; and indigenous social movements. Much of the material we will read comes from the region of Latin America that I know best – the Andes – and I will be calling on my own field experience to illustrate many of the themes we will be discussing.

### **Course Objectives**

My objectives for you in this course are that you become familiar with the diverse ways of life in Latin America, understanding that the region is not uniform but tremendously diverse. I want you to learn the geography of Latin America, and come to know something of its history and contemporary reality. In particular, I hope you'll come to understand Latin America not as a bounded region but as part of an integrated globe that includes the United States. The assessments in the class are designed to evaluate your understanding of these broad themes, as well as the specific details of the material studied. Whatever your major or future career, my goal is that by the end of the course you will have a much greater understanding of Latin America and its place in the larger world. More broadly, the objectives of the class are for you to develop a familiarity with the anthropological approach to its subject, improved speaking and writing skills, an ability to discuss and analyze information, and a willingness to tolerate ambiguity when it disrupts your certainties about the world.

### **Requirements**

1. Attendance You are required to attend all class meetings. We cover a lot of material in class, all of it potentially appearing on the exams, so missing any class session can be costly. If you have a legitimate excuse for being absent, such as illness or family emergency, please inform me of the situation, beforehand if possible. I will monitor class attendance throughout the semester; *more than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade*. If you have concerns about your attendance record, please consult with me in office hours. Please come to class on time – it is very disruptive to professor and classmates when students arrive late to class. *Late students will not be admitted to the classroom*.

2. Reading and participation Please do all the assigned readings for each class meeting. Being prepared for class is necessary for full comprehension of the lectures and engaged participation

in class discussions. Participation involves being alert and taking notes during lectures; asking questions to clarify points of misunderstanding; engaging actively in small-group activities; and contributing meaningfully and often to discussions. Keeping up with the readings is the best way to be sure you are ready to participate.

3. Evaluations and grading Your grade in the course will be based on your comprehension of the materials studied, using three different types of evaluation. There are 4 pop quizzes during the course of the semester; you may drop your lowest quiz grade (quizzes count for 5% each, or 15% of your course grade). No make up quizzes will be given. There is also a map quiz early in the semester (Wed Sep 12), worth 10% of your grade. There is one five-page essay, on a topic that I will assign you (25% of your grade), due Nov 19. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and stapled; late papers will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are late. Plagiarism (to be explained in class) will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. There is one midterm exam (25%) and a final exam (25%), which is cumulative for the course and will be held on the day assigned by the University. Your attendance and active participation is expected for each class session. If you are always in class and an active participant in class activities, and your semester grade is borderline between two grades, I will bump you up to the higher grade.

### **Course Readings**

Course readings are available for electronic download. In addition, two books are required for purchase at the coop bookstore:

Goldstein, Daniel M. *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia*.  
Sawyer, Suzana. *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador*.

### **Course Schedule**

The course schedule below is organized by week. By the date listed, I expect you to have read all of the readings for that week; reading in advance of class is critical to your comprehension of the classroom lectures, films, and activities. Where possible, read the articles in the order listed.

Wed Sep 5 – Introduction to the course

Mon Sep 10 – Doing anthropology in Latin America

By this date, please read the following:

- Goldstein, *The Spectacular City*, chapter 1, “Ethnography...”
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. “Introduction: Tropical Sadness,” in *Death Without Weeping* (on reserve)

*Wed Sep 12 – map quiz today!*

Mon Sep 17 – Colonial legacies: Race, ethnicity, and gender

Read for today:

- Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi, “Dirty Indians, Radical *Indígenas*, and the Political Economy of Social Difference in Modern Ecuador” (on reserve)
- Seligmann, Linda. “To Be In Between: The *Cholas* as Market Women” (on reserve)

Mon Sep 24 – Colonial legacies and post-colonial impacts: Latin American and the world economy

- Nietschmann, Bernard. “When the Turtle Collapses, the World Ends” (on reserve)
- Wolf, Eric. “Closed Corporate Peasant Communities in Mesoamerica and Central Java” (on reserve)
- Greenberg, James B. “Capital, Ritual, and Boundaries of the Closed Corporate Community” (on reserve)

Mon Oct 1 – Urbanization and urban life

- Lewis, Oscar. “The Folk-Urban Ideal Types” (on reserve)
- Paerregaard, Karsten. “Imagining a place in the Andes” (on reserve)
- Goldstein, “Introduction: Becoming Visible in Neoliberal Bolivia”

Mon Oct 8 – Festivals, rituals and spectacles

- Goldstein, chapter 4
- Nash, June. “Cultural Resistance and Class Consciousness in Bolivian Tin Mining Communities” (on reserve)

Mon Oct 15 – Religions, traditional and modern

- Allen, Catherine J. “To Be Quechua: The Symbolism of Coca Chewing in Highland Peru” (on reserve)
- Gill, Lesley. “‘Like a Veil to Cover Them’: Women and the Pentecostal Movement in La Paz” (on reserve)

Mon Oct 22 – Midterm review

*Wed Oct 24 – midterm exam today!*

Mon Oct 29 – Indigenous identity and social movements

- Sawyer, Suzana. *Crude Chronicles*, pages 1-87

Mon Nov 5 – Globalization, neoliberalism and post-neoliberal reforms

- Sawyer, chapters 3, 5, and 6

Mon Nov 12 – Crime, violence, democracy, and the law

- Goldstein, chapter 5
- Caldeira, Teresa P.R., and James Holston. “Democracy and Violence in Brazil” (on reserve)

Mon Nov 19 – *Essay due today!*

*Wed Nov 21 – No class, Acción de Gracias*

Mon Nov 26 – The war on drugs

- Read: Farthing, Linda. “Social impacts associated with anti-drug law 1008” (on reserve)
- Farthing, Linda. Excerpts from “The Drug War in the Andes” (on reserve)

Mon Dec 3 – The U.S. in Latin America...

- For this week – visit the website of WOLA (the Washington Office on Latin America) at [www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org), and read some short, current articles on drug policy and its impacts in the Americas (on the left of the screen, point to “Programs,” then click “Drug Policy” on the pop-up menu)

Mon Dec 10 - ...and Latin America in the U.S.

- Inda, Jonathan Xavier. “A Flexible World: Capitalism, Citizenship, and Post-National Zones” (on reserve)
- Mountz, Alison, and Richard Wright. “Daily Life in the Transnational Migrant Community of San Agustín, Oaxaca, and Poughkeepsie, New York” (on reserve)

***Fri Dec 21, 8:00 AM – Final Exam***