

**History 397  
Modern Latin America  
Spring 2017**

Professor Jeffrey Rubin

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 1:25 PM – 2:15 PM  
CAS 201 & 10 Lenox Street

Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:30

Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:30

Office Address:

10 Lenox Street, Room 3

353-1675

jwr@bu.edu

Course Description

This course will examine politics, economy, and culture in Latin America in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We will begin by considering novels, narrative non-fiction, and film to situate ourselves in Latin America today and raise key questions about the past. We will then discuss issues of civilization and barbarism, slavery, indigenous life, gender, and liberalism that shaped life and politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which will constitute most of the course, we will start with the Mexican Revolution and conclude by examining innovative grassroots experiments of the 1990s and 2000s, including land take-over movements, Afro-Reggae music groups, and women's organizations. In between, we will examine political and cultural processes that shaped 20<sup>th</sup> century politics and social life, including the formation of the Mexican state, the rise of Eva Peron in Argentina, economic growth and shantytown life in Brazil, and military rule and neo-liberal economics in Chile.

Through focused comparison of several themes and countries over time, we will seek an understanding of both underlying patterns and new directions. We will address the persistence of forms of inequality, authoritarianism, and exclusion in Latin America, the experiences and visions of different groups and classes, the lives of spectacular individuals and experiments, and the successes and limits of democracy and economic growth in recent decades.

Readings

The following books (3) are required reading and are available for purchase at Barnes and Noble:

ONE of the following:

*Shantytown*, by César Aira (Argentina)

*Talking to Ourselves*, by Andrés Neuman (Argentina)

*Ways of Going Home*, by Alejandro Zambra (Chile)

*The Sound of Things Falling*, by Juan Gabriel Vásquez (Colombia)

Plus:

Carolina Maria de Jesus, *Child of the Dark*

Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution*

These books will also be on reserve at Mugar Library. (But there will only be one or two copies of each book on reserve.)

All other readings will be found on the course website, which you can access through Blackboard.

It is essential that readings be available to students. If there is a problem obtaining a particular reading (if, for instance, the reading on the website is incomplete), let me know immediately by email so I can do something about it.

### Course Requirements

Students will be required to do several different kinds of writing for this course: three-page explorations of key questions pertaining to Parts 1 and 2 of the course; two page response papers for days of class discussion; an in-class exam on the 20<sup>th</sup> century (for Part 3 of the course); and a final paper that discusses one particular country in light of the issues we will discuss in the readings for Part 4 of the course.

Students will also be expected to participate regularly and actively in class discussion.

In a three page paper due February 10, at the end of our exploration of Latin America Today, you will respond to the question, “What is at stake in Latin America today?” basing your work on at least one novel, one article, and one film (10% of grade).

In a three page paper due February 24, at the end of our discussion of social issues in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, you will respond to the question, “Who is included, who is excluded, and on what grounds?” basing your work on at least one reading from each of our three discussion classes on the 19<sup>th</sup> century (10 % of grade).

In addition, each student will write 4 response papers, 2 pages each, double spaced, for days on which we have class discussion. These assignments will begin on February 15 and end on April 21. Each student will be assigned four classes for which to

write. A list of assigned dates will be distributed during the second week of class. Response papers will be graded  $\checkmark$ ,  $\checkmark+$ , and  $\checkmark-$ . These grades will be converted into a letter grade at the end of the course. Response papers must be received by 11 PM on the night before the relevant class discussion. Late response papers will not be accepted (15% of grade).

There will be an exam in class on March 31. This will count for 20% of the course grade, and it will cover the material in Part 3 of the course, on the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The final paper, which will be five pages long and count for 25% of the course grade, will be due on Monday, May 1. In the final paper, you will discuss one country of your choice (Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, or Venezuela). This paper will involve some outside research on the country you choose. In your paper, you will bring us “up to date” on some of the major events in your country since 1990 and analyze these events in light of two of the following themes from Part 4 of the course: democracy, neoliberalism, social movements, business, religion, mining, feminisms, and violence and security. You will have a lot of leeway in how you do this, based on your interests and the material you find in your research.

Specific guidelines regarding what you will be expected to cover in the paper and what kinds of sources you should use to do this will be provided at the beginning of April. We will have additional class meetings, in which students will present their work for the final paper for discussion and feedback, on Monday, April 24 (6 – 8 PM) and on Tuesday, April 25 (4 – 6 PM and 6 – 8 PM). Each student will be required to attend any two of these three classes. The Tuesday classes on April 25 will be our last class meetings for the semester.

Overall, approximately 1/3 of the classes for this course will be lectures and about 2/3 will be discussion. We will be engaged in a collective learning process, and participation in discussion is required. The discussions in this class are generally lively and interesting, and they are best when many different people comment and a wide variety of viewpoints are expressed. Class participation will count for 20% of the course grade. I will be available throughout the semester to discuss strategies for effective class participation, especially with students who are not accustomed to speaking in class.

Attendance is required. If you miss more than three classes during the semester, then your grade will be lowered one grade for every two classes you miss (after the three).

Every student’s exams and papers should consist of his or her own analysis and writing. Cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with in accord with the Academic Conduct Code.

## Films

Several films will be shown as part of the course, particularly in the last few weeks of the semester. These are a required part of the course and will be included in exams and paper assignments. Some of the films are available online. For those films not available online, the locations and times for group showings at Geddes Language Center will be sent by email.

Films not available online will be on reserve in the Geddes Language Center for a week before class, so that students can view them individually or in groups. However, you may not be able to view the films close to the times of the showings. It is much better to arrange to come to the group showing.

## Office Hours

I am available during office hours to speak to students about any aspect of the course or broader Latin American interests. *If you are having difficulty with the course in any way, you should be sure to come see me as soon as possible.* You should also come see me if something intrigues or puzzles you, if you would like to know more about a topic or talk about it further, if you are interested in continuing your study of Latin America, etc. I can be particularly helpful with ways to improve your ability to read and understand the material, prepare for and carry out written assignments, think about lectures, and, especially, speak in class.

My office is located at 10 Lenox Street, which is not far from the Student Union. If you stand on Commonwealth Ave with your back to the Student Union and look across the bridge over the Pike, you will see a big white house with lots of dark green trim. That is 10 Lenox Street. After you enter, take the right hand staircase to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. My office is the first door on the left, #3. If I am meeting with another student, please knock, so I will know you are waiting.

## Introduction

### **Jan 20: Course Overview**

## Part 1: Latin America Today

### **Jan 23: Contemporary Novels (DISCUSSION GROUPS)**

Read ONE of the following for today:

*Shantytown*, by César Aira (Argentina)  
*Talking to Ourselves*, by Andrés Neuman (Argentina)  
*Ways of Going Home*, by Alejandro Zambra (Chile)  
*The Sound of Things Falling*, by Juan Gabriel Vásquez (Colombia)

### **Jan 25: Contemporary Novels (PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION)**

Required Lecture (in addition to class): Jennifer Scheper Hughes, Material Religion and Indigenous Christianity in Latin America, CAS B18, 4 PM

### **Jan 27: Narrative Non-Fiction (DISCUSSION)**

Subcomandante Marcos, "Today We Say Enough is Enough," "Who Should Ask for Forgiveness and Who Can Grant It?"

Ann Louise Bardach, "Mexico's Poet Rebel," *Vanity Fair*, July 1994

William Finnegan, "Venezuela, a Failing State," *The New Yorker*, November 14, 2016 <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/14/venezuela-a-failing-state>

"Berta Cáceres, Indigenous Activist, is Killed in Honduras"

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/04/world/americas/berta-caceres-indigenous-activist-is-killed-in-honduras.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/04/world/americas/berta-caceres-indigenous-activist-is-killed-in-honduras.html?_r=0)

"Isidro Baldenegro, Mexican Environmental Activist, is Shot to Death"

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/world/americas/mexico-environmental-activist-shot-sierra-madre.html?ref=americas&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/world/americas/mexico-environmental-activist-shot-sierra-madre.html?ref=americas&_r=0)

**Jan 30: Narrative Non-Fiction (DISCUSSION)**

- Francisco Goldman, “Camila Vallejo, The World’s Most Glamorous Revolutionary,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/magazine/camila-vallejo-the-worlds-most-glamorous-revolutionary.html>
- Ana Alderstein, “A Stitch in Time,” <http://www.npr.org/2015/07/24/425875251/a-stitch-in-time> (radio broadcast, 17 minutes, click on left, above “embed,” to hear it)
- Elisabeth Jay Friedman and Constanza Tabbush, “#NiUnaMenos: Not One Woman Less, Not One More Death!” <http://nacla.org/news/2016/11/01/niunamenos-not-one-woman-less-not-one-more-death>
- Luis Gómez, “#Yosoy132,” <https://nacla.org/article/yosoy132>

**Feb 1: Film (DISCUSSION)**

FILM: *The Official Story*

- Jan 31 (Group showing at Geddes to be announced. This film is available commercially. It is also available at Geddes for individual viewing at other times.)

**Feb 3: Film (DISCUSSION)**

FILM: *Y Tu Mamá También*

- Feb 2 (Group showing at Geddes to be announced. This film is available commercially. It is also available at Geddes for individual viewing at other times.)

**Feb 6: Film (VIEWING)**

Film in class: *Meet the Braz Family*

**Feb 8: Film (DISCUSSION)**

Discussion of *Meet the Braz Family*

**Feb 10: What is at Stake in Latin America? (DISCUSSION)**

Three page paper due on Feb 9 at 5 PM. Respond to the question, “What is at stake in Latin America today?” basing your work on at least one novel, one article, and one film that we have read in the first three weeks of the course.

**Part 2: The 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Civilization, Barbarism, and Nation-Building**

**Feb 13: Historical Context: Wars of Independence, Consolidating Nations, and Liberalism (LECTURE)**

John Chasteen, “Independence” (91 – 112) and “Postcolonial Blues” (119 – 143), in *Born in Blood and Fire*

**Feb 15: Civilization and Barbarism (DISCUSSION)**

Domingo Sarmiento, “Frontier Barbarism,” in David Weber and Jane Rausch, eds., *Where Cultures Meet*

Nils, Jacobsen, “Civilization and Its Barbarism: The Inevitability of Juan Bustamante’s Failure,” in Judith Ewell and William Beezely, eds., *The Human Tradition in Latin America*

Christine Hunefeldt, “At Home and in the Streets,” in *Liberalism in the Bedroom*

**Feb 17: Economic Growth and Peasant Resistance (DISCUSSION)**

Florencia Mallon, “The Peasant Village and the Limits of Power,” (pp. 67-79) and “The War of the Pacific and the Problem of Internal Pacification,” in *The Defense of Community in Peru’s Central Highlands*

**Feb 21 (Tuesday Class): Slavery (LECTURE)**

“Slave Life at Morro Velho Mine,” “Scenes from the Slave Trade,” “Cruelty to Slaves,” “Slavery and Society,” “Abolition Decree, 1888,” “Laws Regulating Beggars in Minas Gerais, 1900,” in Robert Levine and John Crocitti, eds., *The Brazil Reader*

**Feb 22: Women in the Public Sphere I (DISCUSSION)**

James Scobie, "The City and the Factory," in *Argentina*, pp. 160-179 ONLY  
 Donna Guy, "Public Health, Gender, and Private Morality: Paid Labor and the Formation of the Body Politic in Buenos Aires," *Gender and History* 2:3  
 Christine Hunefeldt, "Redefining Female Domains," in *Liberalism in the Bedroom*

**Feb 24: Who is Included? Who is Excluded? And on What Grounds? (DISCUSSION)**

Three page paper due on Feb 9 at 5 PM. Respond to the question, "Who is included, who is excluded, and on what grounds?" basing your work on at least one reading from each of our three discussion classes.

**Part 3: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The People Coming on the Scene**

**Feb 27: The Mexican Revolution (LECTURE)**

Gilbert Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, pp. 30 - 85

**Mar 1: State-Building and Politics in Post-Revolutionary Mexico (DISCUSSION)**

Nora Hamilton, "Cárdenas and the New Alliance," in *The Limits of State Autonomy*  
 Mary Kay Vaughan, "The Construction of the Patriotic Festival in Tecamachalco, Puebla, 1900-1946, in William Beezley et. al., eds., *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*  
 Marjorie Becker, "Torching La Purísima, Dancing at the Altar," in Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation*  
 (context, useful for exam: Keen and Haynes, "Cárdenas")

**Mar 3: Peronism in Argentina (LECTURE)**

Daniel James, "Introduction," "Peronism and the Working Class," in *Resistance and Integration*  
 (context, useful for exam: Keen and Haynes, "The Infamous Decade" and "The Peron Era")



**Mar 13: Social Myths and Popular Culture in Argentina (DISCUSSION)**

Julie Taylor, "Introduction," "The Biography," and "The Myth," in *Eva Perón: The Myth of a Woman*  
 Eva Perón, "A Great Sentiment," from *La Razón de Mi Vida*  
 National Investigations Commission, "The Role of Eva Perón," in Helen Delpar, ed., *The Borzoi Reader in Latin American History*

**Mar 15: La Violencia in Colombia (LECTURE)**

Greg Grandin, "Violence Continues in Colombia as the Peace Accords Advance," *The Nation*, September 15, 2016 <https://www.thenation.com/article/violence-continues-in-colombia-as-peace-accords-advance/> (short!)

Required Lecture (in addition to class): Mary Roldán, expert on Colombia, 4 PM, location to be announced.

**Mar 17: Samba, Culture, and Economic Development in Brazil (LECTURE)**

FILM: *Black Orpheus* (1959 version), March 16 (This film is available online)

Hermano Vianna, "Gilberto Freyre" and "Samba of My Native Land," in *The Mystery of Samba*  
 Keen and Haynes, "Vargas" and "Reform and Reaction"

**Mar 20: Brazil: The National Security State (LECTURE)**

Keen and Haynes, "Brazil's Colonial Fascism"

**March 22: Life in Brazil's Favelas (DISCUSSION)**

FILM: *Bus 174*, March 21

Carolina Maria de Jesus, *Child of the Dark* (entire)

**Mar 24: Chile: Socialist Reform and Military Coup (LECTURE)**

Peter Winn, in *Weavers of Revolution*, pp. 3-7, 32-52, 53-69, 79-119, 134-136, 209-226, 246-252

**Mar 27: Torture, Disappearance, Terror (DISCUSSION)**

FILM: *Chile Obstinate Memory*, March 26

Jacobo Timerman, "Under the Dictator," *The New Yorker*, November 2, 1987  
 Peter Kornbluh, "Destabilizing Democracy," in *The Pinochet File*

**Mar 29: The Cuban Revolution (LECTURE)**

Selections from *The Cuba Reader*: Roosevelt, Castro, Guevara, Matthews, Puebla, Rodriguez, Benjamin et. al., Lewis et. al, Landau, Paz, Sanchez (1)

Required Lecture (in addition to class): Cristina Lleras, Curator, Museo de la Memoria, Bogotá, 5 PM, Pardee School, 121 Bay State road

**Mar 31: Exam on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

In class exam

**Part 4: Latin America since 2000: The Second Coming of the People on the Scene****April 3: Democracy (LECTURE)**

FILM: *Our Brand is Crisis*, April 2

**April 5: Social Movements and Political Innovation in Brazil (DISCUSSION)**

FILM: *Favela Rising*, April 4

John Hammond, "Law and Disorder: The Brazilian Landless Farmworkers' Movement," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*  
 Rebecca Abers, "From Clientelism to Cooperation: Local Government, Participatory Policy, and Civic Organizing in Porto Alegre Brazil," in *Politics and Society* 26:4  
 Jeffrey Rubin, "Speaking a Business Language: Private Sector Support for the Afro Reggae Cultural Group," in Rubin and Bennett, eds., *Enduring Reform*

Read any TWO of the above three articles

Tim Padgett, "Brazil's Landless Rebels," *Time*, January 19, 1998

**April 7: Neoliberalism and Globalization (LECTURE)**

William Finnegan, "Leasing the Rain," *The New Yorker*, April 8, 2002

OR

Lawrence Wright, "Lithium Dreams," *The New Yorker*, March 22, 2010

**April 10: Business (DISCUSSION)**

Carlos Forment, "Recuperated Factories in Contemporary Buenos Aires from the Perspective of Workers and Businessmen," in *Enduring Reform*

Jan Rus and Gaspar Morquecho Escamilla, "The Urban Indigenous Movement and Elite Accommodation in San Cristóbal, Chiapas, Mexico, 1975-2008: Tenemos que Vivir Nuestros Años, We Have to Live in Our Own Times," in *Enduring Reform*

Jeffrey Rubin and Sergio Gregorio Baierle, "Democracy by Invitation: The Private Sector's Answer to Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil," in *Enduring Reform*

Read TWO of the above three

**April 12: Religion (DISCUSSION)**

Laura Roush, "Santa Muerte, Protection, and Desemparo: A View from a Mexico City Altar," in Rubin, Smilde, and Junge, eds., *Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship*

Robert Brenneman, "Wrestling the Devil: Conversion and Exit from Central American Gangs," in *Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship*

Javier Arellano-Yanguas, "Religion and Resistance to Extraction in Rural Peru: Is the Church Follow in the People?" in *Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship*

Read TWO of the above three

**April 14: Mining (DISCUSSION)**

Anthony Bebbington, "The New Extraction: Rewriting the Political Ecology of the Andes?," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Fall 2009 *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Fall 2012

[https://www.nmbu.no/sites/default/files/pdfattachments/bebbington\\_the\\_new\\_extraction.pdf](https://www.nmbu.no/sites/default/files/pdfattachments/bebbington_the_new_extraction.pdf)

Rafael Hoetmer, "This is No Longer a Democracy: Thoughts on the Local Referendums on Mining on Peru's Northern Frontier," in Alvarez, Rubin, & Thayer, et. al., *Beyond Civil Society*

**April 17: No Class: Patriot's Day****April 19: Feminisms (DISCUSSION)**

Film: *In Women's Hands*, April 18

Millie Thayer, "The Gray Zone between Movements and Markets: Brazilian Feminists and the International Aid Chain," in *Beyond Civil Society*

Jeffrey Rubin, "In the Streets and in the Institutions: Movements-in-Democracy and the Rural Women's Movement in Rio Grande do Sul, in *Beyond Civil Society*

Jeffrey Rubin and Emma Sokoloff-Rubin, "Holding Paradox," in *Sustaining Activism*

Jeffrey Rubin and Emma Sokoloff-Rubin, "Intimate Protest" (96-101), in *Sustaining Activism*

Jeffrey Rubin and Emma Sokoloff-Rubin, "Demanding Speech and Enduring Silence," in *Sustaining Activism*

(Look back at Jan 30 reading: Elisabeth Jay Friedman and Constanza Tabbush, "#NiUnaMenos: Not One Woman Less, Not One More Death!"

<http://nacla.org/news/2016/11/01/niunamenos-not-one-woman-less-not-one-more-death>)

**April 21: Violence and Security (DISCUSSION)**

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Death Squads and Vigilante Politics in Democratic Northeast Brazil," in Auyero, Bourgois, and Scheper-Hughes, eds., *Violence at the Urban Margins*

Oscar Martínez, "On the Road: Oaxaca," and "Here They Rape, There They Kill: Chiapas," in *The Beast*

**April 24: Protest Since 2000 and Alternatives for Peace (LECTURE)****Final Paper Presentations and Discussion (each student must attend two):**

**April 24, 6 – 8 PM, 10 Lenox Street**

**April 25, 4 – 6 PM, 10 Lenox Street**

**April 25, 6 – 8 PM, 10 Lenox Street**

**May 1: Final Papers Due by 5 PM**