CUBA IN TRANSITION

IR 529

Fall 2014

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Course Description

The course will focus on the prospects for peaceful transition in Cuba and the pressures for greater openness and democratization. It will examine the relevant aspects of pre-revolutionary Cuba and how the economic and political conditions in the late 1950s created the basis for a successful revolution. It will analyse how Fidel Castro’s Revolution was implemented and how he and his brother have retained control for over 50 years.

The course will cover the international impact of the Cuban Revolution and its influence on the policies of the US and other countries.

The discussion of the relevant factors in a transition in Cuba will include:- the current strengths and weakness of the Cuban economy and its capacity to survive; Cuba’s international links, its dependence on Venezuela and the potential for developing other key relationships; the state of civil society, the dissidents, the role of women’s organizations, churches and NGOs and their capacity to influence the process of change; and the implications of the current economic reforms and new technologies for Cuba’s future.

The experience of other countries’ will be compared and the possible roles of the Diaspora and the international community in assisting adjustments in Cuba will be examined.

Current events in Cuba which are significant for its transition and for its future, for example in its relations with the US, will be discussed throughout the class.

Required Reading

All books can be purchased at Barnes and Noble or online through Amazon.

**Other Reading**

In addition to the books above, there are two surveys of contemporary Cuba which have been published recently and will serve as useful general background:


'Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana' by Marc Frank, University Press of Florida, 2013

For most classes there will be articles assigned to focus on particular aspects of the Cuban Transition. These are listed below under each week’s topics and are available online. We will also have regular discussions about news items reporting on current developments in Cuba.

**Academic Honesty**

Without exception, students are expected to adhere to the Boston University CAS Academic Code. Please read the Boston University Academic Conduct Code. Accordingly, all instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the CAS Academic Conduct Committee. Please see http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/.

**Grading**

The course will require a short research paper of 5000 words citing at least 10 separate sources. This is due at the end of November 2014, and should be on a topic relevant to Cuba’s transition to be agreed with me.

Grading will be based on the following components: 20 % midterm, 30% required paper, 30% final, 20% participation.

**Sequence of Classes**

**WEEK 1**

**Pre-Revolutionary Cuba:** The key characteristics of pre -1959 Cuba and how these suited Castro’s objectives and capacity for Revolution


WEEK 2

The making of the Cuban Revolution. The reasons for its success.

Dominguez: Pages 137-190.
Perez-Stable: Pages 66-84

WEEK 3

55 years of Revolution: Cuba’s evolution internally and how Fidel Castro consolidated control.

Dominguez: pages 191 - 305
Perez-Stable: pages 85-144

WEEK 4

Cuba’s Revolutionary Foreign Policy.

US relations/The Missile Crisis. The Soviet Bloc. Spreading revolution to Africa. Post Cold War developments

Perez-Stable. Pages 119-123 and 145-158
Dominguez: Pages 146-164.
Sweig: Pages 74-125

WEEK 5

The Cuban Communist Party. Its role in history and in contemporary Cuba.


WEEK 6:

The Cuban Military. Its importance as an institution in the Cuban politics and in its economy.

Dominguez: The Civic Soldier. Pages 341-380

http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/Research_Studies/BLatell.pdf
WEEK 7

The Cuban American Community. Its role in Cuba’s Future

- Erikson: pages 106-135
- Florida International University/Brookings Institution: Polls of Cuban American Opinion
- Value Orientations of Cubans in Miami, University of Miami Institute of Cuban American Studies, Dr. Andy S. Gomez & Dr. Eugenio M. Rothe
- Diplomacy & Statecraft, Volume 20, Issue 2, 2009 “From Building Barriers to Bridges: Cuban Ties Across the Straits” Susan Eckstein & Catherine Krull pages 322-340

WEEK 8

Cuban Civil Society and the internal opposition.

- The Cuba Wars, Daniel P. Erikson. The Dissenters Pages 54-77.

WEEK 9

Comparative Models of Transition: China, Spain, Eastern Europe.

- The Spanish Transition and the Case of Cuba, Carlos Alberto Montaner. Article I University of Miami Cuba in Transition Project 2002.

WEEK 10

The History of EU-Cuba Relations: The New Partner of Venezuela


Chasing Chavez in Erikson. Pages 254-276.
“Is Three a Crowd: the Venezuela factor in Cuban Policy Toward the United States” Carlos Blanco and Paul Webster Hare, Brookings October 2010.


WEEK 11

Implications for US policy towards Cuba


“US Public Diplomacy for Cuba: What to Do and How to do it.” Paul Webster Hare, Brookings March 2010


Erikson: Pages 277-314

Intimate Enemies: Paradoxes in the Conflict between the United States and Cuba, Rafael Hernandez in Debating US-Cuban Relations.

WEEK 12

Raul Castro and Cuba’s Economic Reforms: What Might Happen Now

http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Papers/2012/12/cuba%20economy%20feinberg/cuba%20economy%20feinberg%209.pdf?_lang=en


Paul Webster Hare: Cuba; What Might Happen Now, The CDR Index Cuba Affairs University of Miami: September 2011:
http://www.cubanaffairsjournal.org Vol. 6, Issue 2-2011


WEBSITE: There is no website

LATE WORK and ABSENCES

All absences must be reported. The Research Paper is due by the end of November 2014.

DATES OF EXAMINATIONS

Midterm examination TBA
Final examination – to be advised as arranged by IR schedule.