LAS 6938/4935  
Latin American Elites: Critical Perspectives Gained from “Studying Up”

Fall 2020  
Thursdays 4-7 pm  
Instructor: Dr. Carmen Martínez Novo  
Classroom: Grinter 376 and online  
Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3, Thursdays 3-4 or by appointment  
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Preferred method to contact instructor is e-mail

Course description:

This course examines Latin American elites, a group of people who by virtue of position or education exercise influence in society, paying special attention to what defines them as power holders, their sub-cultures, histories, strategies of class reproduction, and relations to racialized groups and the poor. The course has a gender component as it gives special attention to elite women who often are in charge of maintaining the social networks, class culture, and the relations with the vulnerable. Anthropologists have argued that in order to understand power scholars need to investigate ethnographically not only marginalized groups, but also those who exercise authority and power. This class will explore the critical perspectives gained from “studying up,” as well as the theoretical and methodological difficulties of doing this kind of work.

Course Goals

- Teach about the cultures of power and privilege in Latin America in historical and comparative perspective.
- Teach about the methodological difficulties of conducting research on the powerful due to problems of access and issues of representation.
- Teach why the study of the powerful can contribute to social justice and social change goals.
- Teach an approach that understands power as being embodied in particular individuals, groups and institutions and as emerging from the agency of these individuals.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students read and critique classic and more recent scholarship on Latin American elites.
2. Students will discuss the perspectives gained from the study of those who hold power and influence in society as well as the theoretical and methodological difficulties of doing this kind of work.
3. Students will learn the differences and similarities between Latin American elites.
4. Students will learn to critically review a body of literature and to identify the main debates on a particular topic.
5. Students will present their work in class orally and with the help of multimedia technology (power point, filmed interviews, photography, music, etc.).

**Required materials:**


**Optional materials:**


**Components of course grade and value of each activity:**

For undergraduate students taking this class:

1. Class attendance and participation 10 %
2. In class presentation of readings 20 % *(students present on the readings of a day of their choice)*
3. Mid-term paper 25 % (essay on readings)
4. Final Paper 35 % (research paper)
5. Class exercises 10 %
6. Total: 100 %

For graduate students taking this class:

1. Attendance and participation 10 %
2. In class presentation of readings 20 % *(students present on the readings of a day of their choice)*
3. Mid-term paper 25 % (essay on readings)
4. Research Paper 35% (bibliographic review on a particular elite or ethnographic research that involves “studying up”)
5. Class exercises 10 %
6. Total: 100 %

**GRADING SCALE**

A 93-100
A- 90-93
B+ 87-90
B 83-87
B- 80-83
C+ 77-80
C 73-77
C- 70-73
D+ 67-70 1.33
D 63-67
D- 60-63
E 0-60

Course Schedule:

8/27 Introduction to the class.

Why and How Should Social Scientists Study Up? Theoretical and methodological perspectives
9/3 Studying up and the concept of elite

9/10 State elites

Elite networks, cultures and strategies of class reproduction
9/17
Studying up the Latin American State
9/24
-Introduction: The Magical State and Occidentalism
-Chapter six: The Motor Wars: The Engines of Progress
-Chapter 8: The Devil's Excrement: Criminality and Sociality

Elites and race: mestizaje and whiteness
10/1

10/8
Hugo Cerón-Anaya. 2019. Privilege at Play: Class, Race, Gender and Golf in Mexico. Introduction and chapter 2

10/15
Cerón-Anaya, chapters 3 and 4
Questions for mid-term paper distributed.

10/22 Mid-term paper due. We watch and discuss the film Roma.

Inequalities and elite relations to the subaltern
10/29
Proposal for research paper due.

Class and Race cultures in Brazil and the Caribbean
11/5

11/12
Ramos-Zayas, Chapters 5 and 6

Paternalism/Maternalism
11/19

**Whiteness and violence**

12/3

12/10 **Final paper due**

**COURSE POLICIES**

- Students should read the texts assigned for the day before coming to class. This is very important because we intend to have a participatory class with an inviting academic environment in which all feel free to express their informed opinions. Students should be ready to participate, ask questions, engage in group discussion, based on the assigned readings for that day and on readings from previous days.

- Students should be familiar with canvas and should check their UF e-mail for instructor’s messages.

- Attendance is extremely important in this class. Students are allowed up to one unexcused absence without a repercussion in grades. Each additional absence will be reflected in a deduction of a letter grade from the class attendance and participation component of the final grade.

- Unexcused tardiness of 15 minutes or more or leaving class early will be counted as an unexcused absence unless the student has a documented reason for arriving late or leaving early.

**Excused Absences:**
Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.
Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays.

- Students should hand their assignments as a hard copy in class or in the professor’s mailbox according to the instructions and by the deadline set in the handout. Students may be given extra time to complete assignments after they provide documentation of justified cause for the delay. If there is no justified cause for delay, 5 points will be deducted from the assignment per day of delay.

- While differences of opinion are valued and encouraged, discussion and debate must take place in a civil and respectful manner. Personal attacks or other acts of denigration will not be tolerated in this class.

**UF POLICIES**

- **Students with Disabilities Act:** The Dean of Students Office coordinates needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066.

- **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator.

- **Academic Misconduct:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Work submitted for credit by UF students should not include any form of plagiarism, cheating or unauthorized aid. Unless an assignment is explicitly identified as collaborative, all work should be completed independently. Students should understand and follow the Student Honor Code that they signed upon enrollment at the University of Florida: “I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

**UF HELPING RESOURCES**

- **Latin American and Caribbean Collection at UF Libraries:** Specialized staff support use and enjoyment of the 500,000 volumes, 50,000 microforms, thousands of current and historical serial titles and digital resources in this world-class collection. LACC library staff provide expert help in online searches for research and study materials.
• **Academic Writing, Grammar and Style:** The [UF Writing Studio](https://writingstudio.ufl.edu) is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!

• **Technical difficulties with E-learning in CANVAS:** Contact the UF Help Desk at [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu) or (352) 392-HELP, then select option 2.

• **Personal Challenges:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. The Counseling Center and Student Mental Health both provide confidential counseling services at no cost for enrolled students. Resources are also available for students seeking to clarify career and academic goals and to deal with academic challenges.
  • [University Counseling Center](https://counseling.ufl.edu), 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling.
  • Student Mental Health, [Student Health Care Center](https://health.ufl.edu), 392-1171, personal counseling.
  • Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
  • Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.
APENDIX

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IN CLASS PRESENTATION OF A CLASS READING

Each student will be responsible for **presenting and discussing the reading assigned for one day of their choice**. The presentation should be visual, written (in a power point or other presentation technology), and oral. The presentation should contain the following elements:

1. Context for the reading:
2. A) Information on the author
   B) General information on the topic or geographical location of the reading
3. Brief summary of the main points of the reading
4. Discussion of points in the reading that need further explanation
5. What is significant or interesting from this reading? What have we learned from this reading that can be of value to us?
7. Connect the reading to the student’s own background if appropriate. How is what is described in the reading similar or different from the students’ personal experiences?
8. Questions for class discussion.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PAPER

1. Students choose a topic in consultation with instructor. They write a 1-page proposal immediately after the mid-term and receive comments on relevance and feasibility from the instructor.
2. Students review a bibliography on their chosen topic (at least 4 academic articles and/or two or more books).
3. Students conduct interviews and participant observation for their chosen topic if they have decided to conduct ethnography.
4. Students combine the debates in the bibliography with their ethnographic findings in their research paper. The paper should be 10-15 pages long.