

FALL-2025
Course 26372 - LAS 3930

(POSSIBLE: LAS 4935/ LAS 6938, TBD)

Influencers, Cumbia and Superfoods: Consumption and Social Change in Latin America

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30 am-11:30am (and with an appointment)

Class Meeting Times and Location:

Period 6 (Thursday): 12:50-1:40

Period 5-6 (Tuesday): 11:45 – 1:40pm

Leigh Hall 207

NOTES:

- Graduate Seminar open to advanced undergraduate students
- This course fulfills the requisites for international studies.
- Completing this seminar will meet the writing requirements for UFL students.
- This course fulfills the requisites for students seeking a minor in Latin American Studies

Course Description

Latin America is interconnected with the rest of the world through its culture and the exchange of goods and services. Globalization has integrated consumption patterns in the region with international trends, while also preserving identity formation processes that shape its social dynamics. This course explores consumption patterns in Latin America and among Latinx communities in the U.S., examining how these practices relate to cultural processes and navigate tensions arising from social inequalities, politics, and environmental challenges. Key consumption sectors such as technology, culture, leisure, music, fashion, food, housing, and transportation will be analyzed. Through case studies and creative methodologies—including netnography, video, cartography, and other visual tools—we will critically assess the social, cultural, environmental, political, and economic implications of consumption in these contexts.

Learning Outcomes:

1. **Analyze Global-Local Consumption Dynamics:** Students will evaluate how Latin American and Latinx consumption patterns are shaped by globalization while maintaining distinct cultural identities.
2. **Critically Assess Social and Environmental Impacts:** Students will examine the political, social, and environmental tensions that arise from consumption practices in Latin America and among Latinx communities in the U.S.
3. **Apply Creative Research Methods:** Students will engage with innovative methodologies, such as netnography, video analysis, and cartography, to explore consumption patterns in various sectors.
4. **Compare Key Consumption Sectors:** Students will critically assess industries such as technology, culture, leisure, fashion, food, housing, and transportation, understanding their broader socio-economic implications.

Students' understanding of these objectives will be assessed through a combination of written assignments, case study analyses, creative research projects utilizing visual and digital tools, and class discussions. Participation in hands-on exercises and group projects will also be key components of the evaluation process.

Description of Assignments

Assignment	Description
Forum Participation on Readings (20%)	Students will engage in weekly online discussions by posting critical reflections on the readings and responding to at least one classmate. These discussions will enhance analytical thinking and peer exchange.
Netnography Project: Digital Ethnography of Consumer Behavior (20%)	<p>Students will conduct a netnographic study on a specific consumption trend in Latin America or Latinx communities in the U.S. The project involves online observation, data collection, and a written analysis connecting findings to course themes.</p> <p>It aims at analyzing consumer dynamics in online communities. Each student will select a digital platform (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, Facebook Groups, or online forums) and identify a specific consumer trend or behavior within a virtual community (of Latin America's community, or Latinxs in the U.S.). Using participant observation techniques, students will track discussions, interactions, and shared content over a period of one to two</p>

Assignment	Description
	weeks , focusing on how users express preferences, make purchasing decisions, and engage with brands or cultural products. The final deliverable will be a 3-5 page analytical report summarizing their findings, supported by qualitative data (e.g., quotes, screenshots, thematic analysis). The report should reflect on the role of digital communities in shaping consumption patterns , ethical considerations in online research, and the implications for marketing, social influence, or cultural identity.
Group Presentation & Case Study Report (20%)	Teams will select a case study on consumption patterns in a sector (e.g., food, fashion, music, housing), related to one of the readings during the semester. They will present findings using multimedia tools and submit a written report analyzing socio-economic, political, and environmental aspects.
Attendance & Participation (20%)	Active participation in class discussions, group activities, and exercises is required. Students are expected to engage with the readings, contribute thoughtfully, and collaborate in peer discussions.
Final Written Report (20%)	An individual written report synthesizing course learnings. Students will critically analyze a consumption-related topic of their choice, incorporating course concepts, case studies, and creative methodologies.

Grading Scale:

A 94 – 100%	C 74 – 76%
A- 90 – 93%	C- 70 – 73%
B+ 87 – 89%	D+ 67 – 69%
B 84 – 86%	D 64 – 66%
B- 80 – 83%	D- 60 – 63%
C+ 77 – 79%	E <60

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

COURSE TOPICS:

Week # and Topic	References & Materials
Week 0: Presentation of the course	Bourdieu, P. (2018). <i>Distinction. A social critique of the judgement of taste</i> . In <i>Inequality</i> . Routledge. (pages TBD)

Week 1: Conceptualizing Consumption in the Social Sciences	Trentmann, F., & Otero-Cleves, A. M. (2017). Presentation. Paths, detours, and connections: consumption and its contribution to Latin American History. <i>Historia crítica</i> , (65), 13-28.
	Paterson, M. (2023). <i>Consumption and everyday life</i> . Routledge. (pages TBD)
	Sinclair, J., & Pertierra, A. C. (Eds.). (2012). <i>Consumer Culture in Latin America</i> . Springer. (pages TBD)
Week 2: Latin American societies, inequalities, consumers, and citizens	D'Argenio, M. C. (2019). From spectators to consumers: Citizenship in the Latin American illustrated press (1880s–1930s). In <i>Citizenship in the Latin American Upper and Middle Classes</i> (pp. 11-29). Routledge.
	Francois, M. E. (2008). The Products of Consumption: Housework in Latin American Political Economies and Cultures. <i>History Compass</i> , 6(1), 207-242.
	Kaltmeier, O., & Steinitz, M. (2023). The Refeudalization of Society: Social Inequality and Political Culture in Latin America. In <i>Refeudalization and the Crisis of Civilization</i> (pp. 122-224). Routledge.
Week 3: Superfoods and diets: Food Consumption and Socio-Environmental Justice	Morris, C., & Sammells, C. A. (2021). From Indigenous Food to "Healthy" US Dining. The Cultural Politics of Food, Taste, and Identity: A Global Perspective.
	Bifaretti, A., Pavan, E., & Grigioni, G. (2023). Consumer attitudes and concerns about beef consumption in Argentina and other south American countries. <i>Agriculture</i> , 13(3), 560.
	Peña-Lévano, L., Adams, C., & Burney, S. (2020). Latin America's Superfood Economy. <i>Choices</i> , 35(4), 1-6.
Week 4: Reggaeton, cumbia & salsa: Music, Consumer Cultures, and Identities	McCleary, K. (2016). FERNANDEZ L'HOESTE AND PABLO VILA,(EDS). Cumbia! Scenes of a Migrant Latin American Music Genre. <i>Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe</i> , 27(1), 94-97.
	Alabarces, P., & Silba, M. L. (2015). "Cumbia, Nena": Cumbia Scene, Gender, and Class in Argentina. In <i>Made in Latin America</i> (pp. 79-88). Routledge.
	Samponaro, P. (2009). "Oye mi canto"("Listen to My Song"): The history and politics of reggaetón. <i>Popular Music and Society</i> , 32(4), 489-506.
	Miranda, R. S. (2022). Bienaventurado el que escuche este liriqueo: Negotiating Latinidad through reggaeton. <i>Latino Studies</i> , 20(4), 498-526.
Week 5: Fashion, Consumer Cultures, and Identities	Melendez-Escalante, T., & Marra-Alvarez, M. (Eds.). (2024). <i>Latin American and Latinx Fashion Design Today-j Moda Hoy!</i> . Bloomsbury Publishing.
	Dewey, M., & Nahoum, A. V. (2025). Low-Cost Fashion: The Political Economy of Garment Production and Distribution in Latin America. <i>Elements in Politics and Society in Latin America</i> .

	Melendez-Escalante, T., & Marra-Alvarez, M. (Eds.). (2024). <i>Latin American and Latinx Fashion Design Today-¡ Moda Hoy!</i> . Bloomsbury Publishing.
Week 6: Influencers and social media: Digital Production & Consumption and the Platform Economy	Fletcher, K. A. P., & Emmanuel-Stephen, C. M. (2018). Social Media Engagement: Reshaping the Consumption Patterns of Generation Y Caribbean and Latin American Consumers. <i>Media Influence: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice</i> , 494-514.
	Arriagada, A. (2023). Chilean Fashion Influencers as Digital Labour: Unpacking the 'Media Kit' as a Market Device. In <i>Digital Platforms and the Global South</i> (pp. 215-232). Routledge.
	Arriagada, A., & Craig, D. (2025). Living my Latin American influencer dream: How racism and nationality shape Latin American influencers within the US. <i>International Journal of Cultural Studies</i> , 28(1), 168-184.
Week 7: Mafia, Illicit Economies, and Consumers	Veblen, T. (2005). <i>Conspicuous consumption</i> . Penguin UK.
	Jaffe, R. (2012). The popular culture of illegality: crime and the politics of aesthetics in urban Jamaica. <i>Anthropological Quarterly</i> , 85(1), 79-102.
	Cabañas, M. A. (2014). Imagined narcoscapes: Narcoculture and the politics of representation. <i>Latin American Perspectives</i> , 41(2), 3-17.
Week 8: Telenovelas consumption in Latin America and the US	Barrera, V., & Bielby, D. D. (2001). Places, faces, and other familiar things: The cultural experience of telenovela viewing among Latinos in the United States. <i>The Journal of Popular Culture</i> , 34(4), 1-18.
	La Pastina, A., Rego, C. M., & Straubhaar, J. D. (2003). The centrality of telenovelas in Latin America's everyday life: Past tendencies, current knowledge, and future research. <i>Global Media Journal</i> , 2(2), 1-15.
Week 9: Street vendors, Markets, and Alternative Consumption	Linares, L. A. (2018). The paradoxes of informalizing street trade in the Latin American city. <i>International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy</i> , 38(7-8), 651-672.
	Crossa, V. (2009). Resisting the entrepreneurial city: street vendors' struggle in Mexico City's historic center. <i>International journal of urban and regional research</i> , 33(1), 43-63.
Week 10: Commodities and the Ethics of Consumption	Crane, D. (2010). Environmental change and the future of consumption: Implications for consumer identity. <i>Anuario filosófico</i> , 353-353.
	Gallagher, K. P., & Porzecanski, R. (2009). China and the Latin America commodities boom: a critical assessment. <i>PERI Working Papers</i> , 164.
	Moore, J. W. (2022). How to read capitalism in the web of life: Towards a world-historical materialism in the web of life. <i>Journal of World-Systems Research</i> , 28(1), 153-168.
Week 11: Transport Systems, Mobility, and Citizenship	Viola, E., & Basso, L. (2015). Earth stewardship, climate change, and low carbon consciousness: reflections from Brazil and South America. <i>Earth Stewardship: Linking Ecology and Ethics in Theory and Practice</i> , 367-382.

	van Laake, T., & Moscoso, M. Getting active: the promotion of walking and cycling in Latin America. <i>Sustainable Urban Transport in Latin America</i> .
Week 12: Tourism, Heritage, and Commodification of Culture	Manuel-Navarrete, D., & Redclift, M. (2012). Spaces of consumerism and the consumption of space: Tourism and social exclusion in the "Mayan Riviera". In <i>Consumer culture in Latin America</i> (pp. 177-193). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
	Piñeros, S. T. (2017). Tourism gentrification in the cities of Latin America: The socio-economic trajectory of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. In <i>Tourism and Gentrification in Contemporary Metropolises</i> (pp. 75-103). Routledge.
Week 13: Malls, streets, spatialities of consumption	Kaltmeier, O. (2016). Urban Landscapes of Mall-ticulturality:(Retro-) Coloniality, Consumption, and Identity Politics: The Case of the San Luis Shopping Center in Quito. In <i>Selling EthniCity</i> (pp. 95-115). Routledge.
	González, S. (2020). Contested marketplaces: Retail spaces at the global urban margins. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 44(5), 877-897.

Other (complementary) References:

Almeida, F. (2014). Thorstein Veblen and Albert Bandura: a modern psychological reading of the conspicuous consumer. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 48(1), 109-122.

Stearns, P. N. (2006). *Consumerism in world history: The global transformation of desire*. Routledge.

Academic Integrity and Course Policies

Academic Honesty

Maintaining academic integrity is a core value of the University of Florida community. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the UF Student Honor Code, available at <https://dso.ufl.edu/>. By submitting any coursework, students affirm the following pledge, whether explicitly stated or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in completing this assignment."

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requiring accommodations should contact the UF Disability Resource Center (DRC), which provides accommodation letters to facilitate necessary adjustments. These letters must be presented when requesting accommodations, and all information will remain confidential. Please notify me as early as possible to ensure timely support. The DRC can be reached at **352-392-8565** or through their website.

Course Evaluations

Students are encouraged to provide constructive and respectful feedback on the course by completing evaluations online through GatorEvals. Instructions on professional and respectful feedback can be found

at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Evaluation notifications will be sent via email, and students can access the evaluation portal through Canvas.

UF Computing Help Desk

For assistance with technical issues related to Canvas and e-Learning, students can contact the UF Computing Help Desk at **352-392-HELP (4357), option 2**, or via email at **helpdesk@ufl.edu**. The Help Desk operates 24/7, except during holidays and scheduled breaks.

Student Support and Resources

E-Learning Technical Support

For technical assistance with e-Learning platforms, contact the support team at **352-392-4357 (option 2)** or via email at **Learning-support@ufl.edu**.

Career Connections Center

Located in Reitz Union Suite 1300, the Career Connections Center provides career counseling and professional development services. Contact them at **352-392-1601** for guidance on career planning and job opportunities.

Library Support

The UF Libraries offer extensive research resources and assistance in locating academic materials. For help navigating the library system or finding research sources, visit the UF Libraries website.

Teaching Center

For academic support, including study skills development and tutoring services, the Teaching Center is available at Broward Hall. To reach them, call **352-392-2010** or schedule an appointment at **352-392-6420**.

U Matter, We Care

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, support is available through the **U Matter, We Care** initiative. Contact them at **umatter@ufl.edu**, call **352-392-1575**, or visit their website for resources and assistance.

Counseling and Wellness Center

The Counseling and Wellness Center offers free mental health services to all UF students, including crisis intervention, consultations, and therapy. For more information or immediate assistance, call **352-392-1575**.

Student Health Care Center

For 24/7 medical guidance and assistance, contact the **Student Health Care Center** at **352-392-1161** or visit their website for available services.

University Police Department

For campus safety concerns, visit the **UF Police Department** website or call **352-392-1111**. In case of an emergency, dial **9-1-1**.

UF Health Shands Emergency Room & Trauma Center

For urgent medical care, visit the **UF Health Shands Emergency Room** at **1515 SW Archer Road** or call **352-733-0111**.