

LAS 6938/4935 ANG 6930

Ethnographies of the State in Latin America

Spring 2022

Tuesdays 1:55-4:55

Professor Carmen Martínez Novo

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Course description:

There are abundant references to the state in the social sciences, but the state is often reified, taken for granted, and seldom carefully investigated. The concept of the state often contains unexamined assumptions and is rather opaque. This course will explore theoretical, methodological, and empirical questions about the state through a Latin American and ethnographic lens: What is the state? Where is it located? Who is the state? How are public decisions made? What are the effects of the state over populations? How do people, and more specifically colonized/racialized populations, experience and understand the state? To what degree can some Latin American states be called “failed states”? What is corruption and what is the “normal” functioning of the state? The ethnographic approach will allow us to “see” state power as embodied in individuals and institutions, while also paying attention to the importance of ideas and discourses.

Class materials:

Tanya Katerí Hernández. 2013. *Racial Subordination in Latin America. The Role of the State, Customary Law and the New Civil Rights Response*. Cambridge University Press.

Isaías Rojas-Perez. 2017. *Mourning Remains. State atrocity, exhumations, and governing the disappeared in Peru*. Stanford University Press.

Bret Gustafson. 2020. *Bolivia in the age of gas*. Duke University Press.

Leonardo Cardoso. 2019. *Sound Politics in Sao Paulo*. Oxford University Press.

These books will hopefully be on electronic reserve at Smathers Library automatic reserves (ARES). The rest of the articles will be made available to students through canvas.

Components of course grade and value of each activity:

1. Class attendance and participation 10 %
2. Mid-term essay 35 %
3. Final essay 35 %
4. In class presentation of assigned readings for one day 20 %

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

D 63-67

D- 60-63

E 0-60

Course schedule:

1/11 Introduction to the class

1/18 Some theoretical elements for the study of the state

Max Weber. 1921. "Bureaucracy."

Philip Abrams. 1977. "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State."

1/25 Theoretical elements continued

James Scott. 1998. "Cities, People and Language."

Wendy Brown. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State."

2/1 The state of "racial regulation" in Latin America

Tanya Katerí Hernández. 2013. *Racial Subordination in Latin America: The Role of the State, Customary Law, and the New Civil Rights Response*.

Chapter 1, "Racial Innocence and the Customary Law of Race Regulation," Chapter 3, "Brazilian Jim Crow: The Immigration Law Whitening Project and the Customary Law of Racial Segregation."

2/8 State and "racial regulation" continued

Racial subordination... Chapter 4, "The Social Exclusion of Afro-Descendants in Latin America" and Chapter 5, "Afro-Descendant Social Justice Movements and the New Antidiscrimination Laws."

2/15 State violence and human rights

Isaías Rojas-Perez. 2017. *Mourning Remains. State atrocity, exhumations, and governing the disappeared in Peru*. Introduction and chapter 2 "Malamuerte, governing death in the Andes."

2/22

Mourning remains, chapters 3 "Excavating State Atrocity", 4 "the Cry: Memories of the Present"

Questions for mid-term paper distributed.

3/1 **Midterm due. No class.**

3/8 No class. Spring Break.

3/15 The state of natural resources

Bret Gustafson. 2020. *Bolivia in the age of gas*. Chapter 1 Gaseous state, Chapter 3 "Las nalgas of IPFB"

3/22

Gustafson Chapters 4 "Gas lock-in" and 9 "quarrel over the excess"

3/29 **State corruption/dissolution**

Oswaldo Zabala. 2021. "Dispossession by militarization. Forced displacement and the neoliberal drug war for energy in Mexico." From *Liquid Borders*, edited by Mabel Moraña.

Luis Astorga. 2012. "Organized Crime Politics and Insecurity."

4/5

Margarita López Maya. 2014. "Venezuela: The political crisis of post-chavismo." *Social Justice* 40(4), pp. 68-87.

César Montúfar. 2020. "State-organized crime: A hypothesis on the institutionalization of corruption during the Revolución Ciudadana. "

4/12 **New/alternative ways to look at the state**

Leonardo Cardoso. 2019. *Sound politics in Sao Paulo*. Introduction "the noise multiple" and Chapter 2 "Of ears and norms"

4/19

Sound politics in Sao Paulo, chapters 4 "administrative flows" and 5 "legal channels."

Questions for final paper distributed

4/26 **Final paper due**

COURSE POLICIES

-Students should be familiar with canvas and should check their UF e-mail for instructor's messages. Instructor will be sending class announcements through the canvas system.

-Students should read the texts assigned for the day before attending online or face to face classes. 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.

-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 starting late or leaving early. This includes online classes.

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 according to the instructions and by the deadline. Students may be given extra time to complete assignments when 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](#) 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 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](#), 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling.
 - Student Mental Health, [Student Health Care Center](#), 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.

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE

APENDIX

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IN CLASS DISCUSSION 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?
6. Criticisms of the reading: What is unclear in the reading? Point to inconsistencies and contradictions in the argument. What do you disagree with and why?
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.