

INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (LAS2001)

Spring 2026 | Class No. 12864



INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Ariadna Tenorio

CONTACT INFO: Grinter Hall 368 | email: an.tenoriolopez@ufl.edu

CLASS SESSIONS: Anderson Hall 013, Tuesday 01:55 – 02:45 am & Thursdays 01:55 am– 3:50 pm.

OFFICE HOURS: W & F 11:45 am to 2:45 pm. You can email me to arrange a more convenient time to meet, either via zoom or in person.

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT: This course is General Education International, and accomplishes the current [General Education](#) objectives of the corresponding subject area.

A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.

OBJECTIVES: This course offers a panoramic introduction to that astonishingly immense variety of cultures and societies that we—mysteriously—group together under the concept of “Latin America.” Using topics such as food, clothing, music, and art as a pretext, we will explore historical, cultural, political, socioeconomic, and other relevant issues in this region of the world. Throughout the semester, we will read articles, passages of books, and engage in conversations with invited guests. **At the conclusion of this course, you will:**

1. Gain a panoramic understanding of fundamental topics, shared characteristics, and distinctions among the variety of societies that live in “Latin America” to develop global and cultural awareness (GE-N objective).
2. Examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize contemporary Latin America (GE-N objective).
3. Acquire a deeper understanding of the trends, challenges and opportunities that inspire your own academic interests in “Latin America” (GE-N objective).
4. Critically analyze how regional dynamics in Latin America intersect with broader international and cross-cultural forces, evaluating how global structures shape local experiences. (GE-N objective).
5. Develop research skills and analytical tools to examine how individuals and communities in Latin America navigate transnational, intercultural, and global contexts. (GE-N objective).
6. Strengthen communication and presentation skills through the discussion of internationally relevant issues and the articulation of cross-cultural perspectives. (GE-N objective).

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials. Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this

***Santiago de Chile, Skyline. Photograph by Marianna Ianovska.**

course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

COURSE FORMAT: Due to our unique schedule (50 min. on Tuesdays and 115 min. on Thursdays) our course will have a mixed format. Our short sessions on Tuesday will usually have a **lecture** format with lots of participation from your part. This means that I will rarely arrive with a Power Point presentation, and I will never talk uninterruptedly for 40 minutes. Instead, we will build the class together. I will be asking questions to you and you will be discussing—with the whole class or in small groups and aided by assigned readings—the pros and cons of possible answers and approaches to the topic of the day.

On our long Thursday meetings or **workshops**, the session will be usually divided in two. We will have, approximately and subject to change, nine guests. In our sessions with guests, during the first half we will have an informal conversation with our guest: sometimes they would be sharing an article in advance with us and sometimes they would just arrive to chat with us and answer our questions. During the second half it would be your turn on the stage. We will have short and mini-presentations (the time lapse of these will depend on the number of enrolled students) where you will present your research, data, and thoughts on a particular topic and engage in a critical discussion with your classmates. Accordingly, if we don't have a guest, workshop sessions will have longer presentations and we will dedicate some time to conduct research during class time. Thus, our workshops will cover the three main branches of academic research: 1) discussion with experts, 2) research presentation and discussion, and 3) teamwork research. Details for each workshop will be posted on Canvas.

Why will we have so many presentations? Because there are so many different societies in that thing we call "Latin America" and the best way to cover most of them is working together and sharing our knowledge (i.e. if each student specializes in one country, and we are 20 in the classroom, at the end of the semester we will all know, at least, about 20 countries). Thus, research/presentations and participation in class comprise the largest share of your final grade. The two other components will be the midterm essay and the final essay.

Finally, some readings and topics on this syllabus may change according to the interests of the group and the availability of our possible guests.

COURSE MATERIALS: There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings will be available on Canvas or in "reserve" at the library.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation: 20%
Workshops/Presentations: 50%
Midterm Essay: 15%
Final Essay: 15%

Assignments align with [SLOs designated areas](#) of International. **Content:** Through participation, workshops, presentations, and the midterm and final essays, students will demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, and analytical frameworks used to examine Latin American topics in international and cross-cultural contexts. Coursework will help students recognize and explain the cultural, economic, political, and historical forces that shape Latin American societies within a broader global landscape (International SLO). **Critical Thinking:** During seminar and workshop sessions, as well as in written assignments, students will analyze texts, films, and other cultural materials from international and comparative perspectives. They will evaluate how global and transnational processes influence local realities and use evidence-based reasoning to interpret diverse viewpoints and cultural expressions across Latin America and its diasporas (International SLO). **Communication:** Through class discussions, presentations, and written essays, students will develop their ability to clearly and effectively communicate ideas, interpretations, and arguments about international issues and cross-cultural experiences in both oral and written forms (International SLO).

Additional guidelines and rubrics for each one of the above-mentioned items will be provided on Canvas.

Evaluation: Final grades will be assigned on the following scale (based on percentage points out of the total): **A:** >93% **A-:** 92-90% **B+:** 89-87% **B:** 86-83% **B-:** 82-80% **C+:** 79-77% **C:** 76-73% **C-:** 72-70% **D+:** 69-67% **D:** 66-63% **D-:** 62-60% **E:** 59% and below.

A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.

Attendance and Make-Up Work: Because this is a discussion-based course, students' attendance and active participation is required for the course's functioning and the mutual enrichment of all its participants. Requirements for class attendance and coursework are consistent with university policies found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#illnesspolicytext>

Assignments will be subject to the following reduction of points if turned in late: within 24 hours of the posted date and time, the assignment will be docked 25% of the total possible points; 24-48 hours late will result in 50% loss of total possible points. Assignments will not be accepted beyond 48 hours past the due date. Let me know as soon as possible if you need to miss an assignment due date for any reason (e.g., conference, illness, family emergency).

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES

STUDENTS REQUIRING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the "Get Started With the DRC" webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UNIVERSITY HONESTY POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

IN-CLASS RECORDING POLICY

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Student Success Initiative, <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>.

[Field and Fork Pantry](#): Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity.

[Dean of Students Office](#): 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. Among other services, the DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises).

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Subject to change based on the research interests of students enrolled in the course and the availability of invited speakers

Week 1: What is “Latin”? What is “America”? Why did they put these two words together?

Lecture: Course introduction, main concepts, and basic geography.

Workshop: What makes America unique?

- a. **Read:** Fuentes, Carlos. *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1999, Chapter 6.
- b. **Optional reading:** O’Gorman, Edmundo. *The Invention of America: An inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1961.

Objectives: Each student will propose a working definition of “Latin America.” Discuss the concept of utopia as a singular feature of Latin American societies.

Week 2: The invasion(s) of (Latin) America and the new socioeconomic order.

Lecture: The invention of capitalism, Part I.

Read: Moore, Jason W. "The Capitalocene Part I: On the nature and origins of our ecological crisis." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2017, pp.- 594 – 630.

Workshop: Food intertwining.

- a. **Guidance reading:** Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1997, pp. 85-92.
- b. **Homework:** Choose a Latin American country from the list and write your name after it (no more than one student per country). Select one culinary dish. Investigate its history, geographic origin of the ingredients (use Diamond's text for guidance), technological features of its preparation, cultural value, and/or any other interesting issue you may want to address to underline this early globalization phenomenon turned into "tradition." Make a short presentation.

Objective: Analyze how "capitalism" transformed the societies and nature of an entire continent.

Week 3: Connecting the world.

Lecture: The Pacific Ocean and the Americas: The Invention of "Capitalism," Part II.

Read: Mann, Charles C. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. New York, Knopf, 2011, pp.- 118 -163.

Objective: Analyze and explain the historical processes, cultural implications, and global trade webs that produced the diversity of cultures across (Latin) America.

Week 4: The Construction of America.

Lecture: The translators.

Read: Dodds Pennock, Caroline. *On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe*. New York, Knopf, 2023, pp.- 74 – 93.

Objective: Discuss the ideas of "pluriverse" *vs.* "universe" in the construction of an empire and the act of understanding each other.

Week 5: The Latin American Communities.

Lecture: Being "Latino": Law & performance.

Read: Hooker, Juliet. *Theorizing Race in the Americas*. Oxford University Press, 2017, pp.- 5-11.

Workshop: Clothing and self-fashioning.

- a. **Read:** Lipovetsky, Gilles. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Princeton, Princeton UP, 1994, pp. 203-225.
- b. **Homework:** Choose one traditional and/or contemporary clothing trend or attire in a (Latin) American community (from the list, etc...), investigate the designs' origin, cultural value, and technological features. Make a short presentation.

Objective: Explain the historical processes, cultural implications, and performance of traditional and contemporary self-fashioning across (Latin) America through clothing.

Week 6: Conservatives vs Liberals.

Lecture: National struggles during the 19th century (and beyond).

Read: Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1997, pp.- 173-204.

Workshop: Independence fighters and national models during the 19th century.

Homework: Study the life, ideals, and accomplishments of a (Latin) American independence fighter. Make a short presentation about that person.

Objective: Analyze and classify the different national models proposed in the independence movements.

Week 7: (Latin) American modernity.

Lecture: What does it mean to be “modern”?

Read: Gallo, Rubén. *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 2005, pp.- 169-200.

Wrap-up of previously discussed topics.

Midterm essay: Handwritten **in-class essay**. You’re welcome to bring all handwritten notes, physical books, printed articles, and other non-electronic aids you may find useful.

Week 8: A Nation of a Thousand Nations.

Lecture: Modernity *vs.* variety.

- a. Read: Ngugi wa Thiong’o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Great Britain, James Currey, 2011, pp.- xiv- 33.

Workshop: Languages & worldviews.

Homework: Choose an indigenous (Latin) American culture and study its language, history, territory, and worldview. Prepare a short presentation.

Objective: Reflect on the conflict between the idea of progress and the idea of diversity of languages and worldviews.

Week 9: Revolutions of the 20th Century.

Lecture: Populism.

Homework: Read: Milanese, Natalia "A Man Like You: Juan Domingo Perón and the Politics of Attraction in Mid-Twentieth-Century Argentina." *Gender & History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, April 2014, pp.- 84 – 104.

Workshop: Utopia, interrupted.

No general reading today. Select a Mexican revolutionary figure from the list and find a) ideals and/or political/economic agenda, b) geographical range of military operations, c) armies he fought against, d) death (killed by...)

Objective: Analyze, classify, and explain the origins, goals, and aftermaths of the diverse revolutionary movements across (Latin) America.

Week 10: Spring Break!

Week 11: Art & Revolutions.

Workshop: Latin American guerrilla fighters

Homework: Select a (Latin) American guerrilla movement and research its origins, social demands, actions, and outcomes. Prepare a short presentation to discuss in small groups. Important: Choose a single point of view for your presentation and declare it at the beginning (i.e. the government's point of view or the guerrilla fighters' point of view).

Workshop: Art as ideology and/or resistance.

Read: Camnitzer, Luis. *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias*. Austin, U. of Texas Press, 2009, pp.-63 – 75.

Homework: Select a Latin American painting/sculpture/performance/etc. and prepare a short presentation on how it reflects or rejects hegemonic Latin American ideologies.

Objective: Same objective as last module plus the use (Latin) American art to reflect on natural, social, and ideological aspects.

Week 12: Latinx on the Borderlands.

Lecture: Borderlands, cartels, and migration.

- a. **Suggested reading:** Huntington, Samuel P. "The Hispanic Challenge." *Foreign Policy*, 28 Oct. 2009.

Workshop: Latino voices.

- a. **Read:** John Box speech. 1928.
- b. **Possible In-class screening:** [*Why Americans are relocating to Mexico City for a better life*](#). CNBC Make it, October 12, 2023.

Objective: Reflect and discuss how the different cultural components of the Latin American communities in the US (and vice versa) contribute to the melting pots.

Week 13: Music across the Americas.

Lecture: Music and propaganda.

Read: Fosler-Lussier, Danielle. *Music on the Move*. United States of America, Univ. of Michigan Press, 2020, Chapter 5: "Music and Media in the Service of the State."

Workshop: Music.

- a. **Read:** African influence in Brazilian music, by Welton Tremura.
- b. **Homework:** Choose one Latin American song and reflect about how that song—and the genre or artist of your choice—reflects cultural variety, and its intertwining across history, in that country.

Objective: Discuss, through the understanding of musical expressions, the impact of migration on the political transformation and cultural intertwining of Latin America.

Week 14: Free Session & visit to the Harn Museum.

Lecture: To be defined.

Workshop: Visit to the Harn Museum.

Week 15: Final thoughts.

1. **Discussion:** What can the world learn from Latin America?

Final essay.

No textbooks are required to buy for this course.