

Latin American Thought (LAS 4935/LAS 6938/PHI 4930)
Spring 2025 | Class No. 27401/26387/25831 | Sec. LF00/LFG1/4201
Center for Latin American Studies **University of Florida**

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Luis Felipe Lomeli

CONTACT INFO: Grinter 319F, 352-273-4714, email: luisgomezlomeli@ufl.edu

CLASS SESSIONS: 3 hour sessions, **Friday 9:35 – 12:35**,

OFFICE HOURS: M-Th 9:00 – 10:30 am. You can email me to arrange a more convenient time to meet, either via zoom or in person.

OBJECTIVES: This course has been designed as a seminar for students from any discipline—humanities, natural sciences, social sciences—and at all stages of their programs to cover the most important proposals of Latin American thinkers and their connections with scholars, philosophers, and movements from other parts of the world.

At the conclusion of this course you will be able to:

1. Identify some of the most important philosophical Latin American proposals across history.
2. Critically analyze different philosophical currents and texts.
3. Ponder the impact and importance—locally and globally—of different Latin American voices.
4. Establish connections among several currents of thought.
5. Advance in your close-reading analytical skills.

COURSE FORMAT:

This is a discussion-based seminar, not a history of philosophy course. Thus, every week we will read group of philosophers and try to understand the world through their worldview. Then, during class time, we will discuss the consequences and impacts of conceptualizing the world according to the reading. Consequently, it is unpredictable where the whole-class discussion will take us, but all sessions will have the following elements:

1. Presenting the main reading.
2. Contextualizing the reading (author's biography, socio-historical context, intended original audience, author's influences and author's influence, etc.)
3. Connecting the reading with the other readings.
4. Imagining the world through the main reading.
5. Discussing, dissecting, and criticizing the main reading.

COURSE MATERIALS: There is no textbook, up to this date, that can be used in this course to keep it sufficiently updated and, at the same time, that could offer a comprehensive syllabus on the broad spectrum of Latin American Thought. Although, these titles are recommended to serve as a guide:

-Gracia, Jorge J. E. (Ed.) *Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Man, Values, and the Search for Philosophical Identity*. Amherst, Prometheus Books, 1986.

-Gracia, Jorge J. E. and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Eds.) *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century: The Human Condition, Values, and the Search for Identity*. Lanham, Prometheus Books, 2004.

-Kamugisha Aaron (Ed.) *Caribbean Political Thought: The Colonial State to Caribbean Internationalists*. Kingston, Ian Randle Publishers, 2013.

-Mendieta, Eduardo (Ed.) *Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003.

It is strongly advised that students, based on their own research interests, will get a print copy of at least some of the books listed in the bibliography. Most readings will be provided either through UF's library access or on Canvas,

but students will need to do their own research on the social, historical, and personal contexts of the authors. This course does not require additional fees.

EVALUATION, ASSIGNMENTS, AND GENERAL POLICIES

Participation: 25%
Weekly assignments: 35%
Midterm essay: 10%
Final project: 30%

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.

Participation 25%: This is a discussion-based seminar. Graduate students will have one or two, more specialized readings per week and will be in charge of presenting these to undergraduate students.

RUBRIC FOR PARTICIPATION

The concept of participation includes the punctual attendance to all sessions, showing to have read all the required texts for each and all sessions, and asking and answering meaningful and acute questions regarding each topic during whole-class discussion.

- The student arrived to all sessions before the class began, volunteered at least once to present the main reading and the author's context, showed to have read all the required texts, and actively engaged in asking and answering questions in all sessions..... 25%
- The student arrived to almost all sessions before the class began, volunteered at least once to present the main reading and the author's context, showed to have read almost all texts, and actively engaged in asking and answering questions in almost all sessions... 15-20%
- The student arrived late or did not arrive to more than 2 sessions, volunteered at least once to present the main reading or the author's context, showed to have read around half of the required texts, and sometimes engaged in class discussion..... 10-15%
- The student arrived late or did not arrive to more than 2 sessions, did not volunteered at least once to present the main reading and/or the author's context, showed to have read less than half of the required texts, and sometimes engaged in class discussion..... 5-10%

Weekly assignments 35%: We will have two kinds of weekly assignments: Visual takes and journal.

Visual takes: For each reading, students will need to prepare—and show during class time—their “visual take” of the reading. A visual take is a graphic critical summary of the reading which highlights both the aspect that the student considered to be the most important part of the reading and the student's critical stance to that statement.

Journal: Students need to write a journal of 11 to 12 entries during this semester; or one entry per each time we read and discuss an author, which, roughly, will be once per week. In each of these entries, and from a personal point of view, students will need to address our reading/discussion of the week. Each entry can be a reflection on how it made the student to rethink a particular life experience, it can be an explanation or an interpretation of anything that happened on their daily life through the lenses of that particular author or theory, it can also be a discussion of how that philosophical stance could help to understand a particular social issue. Or it can be a rant too, a poem, a cynical and satirical short essay.

Both the Visual takes and the Journal entries will be graded on a submitted/no-submitted basis.

Midterm essay 10% (written paper 8%, in-class presentation 2%): Present a comprehensive, critical review of the authors covered in class so far.

Undergraduate students expected essays' length: 1,500 – 2,000 words. Graduate students expected essays' length: 5,000 – 6000 words.

Both graduate and undergraduate students will also need to do a 15-minute presentation of their essays on the assigned date.

Final project 30% (written paper 20%, in-class presentation 10%): The topic of the final essays should be discussed with and approved by the instructor (it can be, for example, a critical comparison of another Latin American or Western thinker, not seen in class, with the authors covered in the seminar; the proposal of a new philosophical system nurtured by the authors seen in class; a detailed critical dissection of a Latin American author's work, et cetera).

Undergraduate students expected essays' length: 4,000 – 5,000 words. Graduate students expected essays' length: 9,000 – 11,000 words.

Both graduate and undergraduate students will also need to do a 15-minute presentation of their essays on the assigned date.

Attendance and Make-Up Work: Because this is a discussion-based seminar, 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://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/#text>. Once a deadline has passed, an assignment will not receive full credit. If you are experiencing issues, please consult the instructor to talk about other arrangements BEFORE the assignment is due. Communication with the instructor is key!

Students are responsible for monitoring their grades and missing assignments on Canvas. The instructor is not responsible for informing students about missing work. Check the Canvas site and email regularly for updates. This is the main form of communication for the course.

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES

Please visit: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS
Subject to change according to the group's interests

Week 1: Presentation and general introduction.

Week 2: Can or should there be a Latin American philosophy?: Augusto Salazar Bondy and Leopoldo Zea.

- Main readings: 1. Augusto Salazar Bondy: *The Meaning and Problem of Philosophy in Latin America*.
2. Leopoldo Zea: *The Actual Function of Philosophy in Latin America*.

Graduate students extra reading: Aaron Kamugisha: *The Responsibility of Caribbean Intellectuals*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 3: Pre-Independence Thinkers: Bartolomé de las Casas and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

- Main readings: 1. Bartolomé de las Casas: *In Defense of the Indians* (excerpts).
2. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: *Response to Sister Filotea* (excerpts) and Poem 92.

Graduate students extra reading: Sylvia Wynter: *New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de las Casas* (excerpts).

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 4: Independence Thinkers: José Martí and Simón Bolívar.

- Main readings: 1. José Martí: *Our America*.
2. Simón Bolívar: *Jamaica Letter and Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the Second National Congress*.

Graduate students extra readings: 1. The Haitian Constitution of 1805.
2. Jean Jacques Dessalines, *Liberty Proclamation*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 5: Latin American Conservative Thinkers: Antonio Caso, José Vasconcelos, and Samuel Ramos.

- Main readings: 1. Antonio Caso: *The Human Person and the State and Existence as Economy, Disinterest, and Charity*.
2. José Vasconcelos: *Todología* (excerpts).
3. Samuel Ramos: *Towards a New Humanism* (excerpts).

Graduate students extra reading: Octavio Paz: *Labyrinth of Solitude*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 6: Latin American Philosophical Anthropology: Carlos Astrada and Francisco Miró Quezada.

- Main readings: 1. Carlos Astrada: *Existencialism and the Crisis of Philosophy* (excerpts).
2. Francisco Miró Quezada: *Man without Theory* (excerpts).

Graduate students extra reading: Paul K. Feyerabend: *Against Method*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 7: The Nation and the People I: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Suzanne Césaire.

- Main readings: 1. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento: *Civilization and Barbarism* (excerpts).
2. Suzanne Césaire: *The Malaise of a Civilization*.

Graduate students extra reading: Emanuele Coccia: *The Life of Plants*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 8: Midterm Presentations and Midterm Essay Submission.

Week 9: The Nation and the People II: José Carlos Mariátegui and Walter Rodney.

- Main readings: 1. José Carlos Mariátegui: *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality* (excerpts).
2. Walter Rodney: *Statement of the Jamaican Situation*.

Graduate students extra reading: Elizabeth Burgos: *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 10: Philosophy of Liberation: Hélder Câmara.

Main readings: Hélder Câmara: *The Spiral of Violence*.

Graduate students extra reading: Hannah Arendt: *On Violence*.

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 11: Latin American Epistemology and Philosophy of Science: Silvio Funtowicz and Jerome Ravetz.

Main reading: Silvio Funtowicz and Jerome Ravetz: *Science for the Post-Normal Age*.

Graduate students extra reading: Thomas S. Khun: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (first 3 chapters).

- Other assignments: 1. Visual take.
2. Journal entry.

Week 12: Latin American Nature Thought: Leonardo Boff and Marta Lanza.

Main readings: 1. Leonardo Boff: *Respect and Care for the Community of Life with Understanding, Compassion, and Love*.

2. Marta Lanza: *Buen Vivir: An introduction from women's rights perspective in Bolivia*.

- Graduate students extra readings: 1. Enrique Leff: *Latin American Environmental Thought: A Heritage of Knowledge for Sustainability*.
2. Dipesh Chakrabarty: *The Climate of History, Four Theses*.

- Other assignments:
1. Visual take.
 2. Journal entry.

Week 13: Latin American Cultural Studies: Carlos Monsiváis and Edwige Danticat.

- Main readings:
1. Carlos Monsiváis: *Mexican Postcards* (excerpts).
 2. Edwige Danticat: *We are ugly, but we are here*.

Graduate students extra reading: Roberto Fernández Retamar: *Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America*.

- Other assignments:
1. Visual take.
 2. Journal entry.

Week 14: Globalization Era Thinkers: Beatriz González Stephan and Néstor García Canclini.

- Main readings:
1. Beatriz González Stephan: *On Citizenship: The Grammatology of the Body-Politic*.
 2. Néstor García Canclini: *Hybrid cultures* (excerpts).

Graduate students extra reading: Rita Segato: *A Manifesto in Four Themes*.

- Other assignments:
1. Visual take.
 2. Journal entry.

Week 15: Final Projects Presentations.

COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Segato, Rita. "A Manifesto in Four Themes." *Critical Times*, Vol. 1, Iss. 1, pp. 198-211.