

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY IN/FROM LATIN AMERICA (LAS 6938)

Fall 2023 | Class No. 29021

Center for Latin American Studies

University of Florida



INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Luis Felipe Lomeli

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CLASS SESSIONS: Grinter Hall 376, Friday 12:50 pm – 3:50pm

OFFICE HOURS: You can email me to arrange a more convenient time to meet, either via zoom or in person.

OBJECTIVES: This course is designed for graduate students from any discipline—humanities, natural sciences, social sciences—and at all stages of their graduate program. It is an interdisciplinary introduction to philosophy and sociology of science and technology from a Latin American perspective. Throughout the course, we will use canonical philosophical texts alongside fictional short stories, films and other cultural products from Latin America to analyze the production, socialization, and implementation of knowledges in specific societies. **At the conclusion of this course you will be able to:**

1. Identify the main historical lines of thought in philosophy of science.
2. Ponder the social aspects of the creation, articulation, and dissemination of knowledges in Latin America.
3. Describe the key pros and cons of each main line of thought in philosophy of science.
4. “Translate” the main epistemic proposals to the Latin American setting.
5. Analyze the construction of knowledge as a context-dependent enterprise.
6. Recognize the presence and associated bias—in Latin American short stories, films, and other cultural products—of the main ideologies concerning knowledge production.
7. Articulate the major ethical considerations regarding the implementation of science and technology.
8. Explain the scope and limits of science and technology as cultural products.
9. Explore the concepts of science and technology *as* ideological artifacts and *as* heuristic tools in their own research fields.
10. Develop a deeper understanding of the philosophical principles and social implications that underlie their own research work.

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 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: I believe that the best method to understand a philosopher's proposal is to imagine ourselves in a play, performing a particular role—the philosopher's role, the protagonist. Each of our regular sessions will be dedicated to a single philosopher. Each regular session will have a student—or a pair of students, depending on the classroom size—performing as class facilitator. During the first third of our sessions, the class facilitator will expose the main ideas of the philosopher, and this presentation will lead us to the discussion around that particular worldview in the Latin American context. During the second third, the class facilitator—the same student or another one—will analyze the assigned short story, or cultural product, to show the presence and translation of the philosopher's worldview in it. During the final third of each of our regular sessions, we will switch our roles from the protagonist to the antagonist(s) to scrutinize the philosopher's ideas and reflect on their problematic aspects.

The non-regular sessions will be dedicated to students' presentations. In Week 6 we will have short presentations by each student (time length will be agreed upon during the first weeks). In these presentations, each student will select a Latin American cultural product—poem, short story, research paper, institution, film, play, telenovela—and analyze it using the theoretical tools already seen through the course. In Week 14 and Week 15 we will have the final presentations. Each final presentation will be a sort of a dress rehearsal of the final essay—this is the moment to explore the audience's reaction to your most audacious ideas! The final essay will consist in a 5,000-word paper. The essay must be in conversation with the course topics and materials but should ultimately advance each student's reflection on their own individual research and work. Specific guidelines and rubrics for class presentations and final essay will be on the course Canvas page.

COURSE MATERIALS: There are no required textbooks for this course. Nevertheless, it is strongly advised that the student, based on their own research interests, will get a print copy of at least one of the books listed with a "1" in the "Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments" section, and make a detailed and reflexive reading of the whole text. All readings will be provided on the course Canvas page. Films will not be screened during class time.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation: 10%
 Class Facilitations: 20%
 Midterm short presentation: 20%
 Final presentation: 20%
 Final Essay: 30%

Guidelines and rubrics for each one of the above-mentioned items will be provided on the course Canvas page.

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.

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>. 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

- **Academic Honesty:** As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*" You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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.*" It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you

should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

- **Services for Students Requiring Accommodations:** The Disability Resource Center (0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *I want you to do well in this class and will gladly work with you to implement any necessary accommodations.*
- **Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via www.ufl.bluera.com/ufl/.
- **Student Privacy:** There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.
- **Campus Helping Resources:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.
- **Food Insecurity.** The Pantry is a resource on the University of Florida campus committed to eradicate food insecurity (<https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>). Food insecurity is not having a reliable access to nutritious foods for yourself on a regular basis. If you, or anyone you know is experiencing food insecurity, the Pantry is a resource to visit.
- **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. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
- **Sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in this course:** UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>
- **Gender Equity Statement.** Gender-based discrimination and violence are antithetical to the university's mission and values, violate university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. The Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity is here for anyone who has been affected by gender-based discrimination and violence. If you or someone you know has experienced gender-based discrimination or violence, please contact the Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity to get support and information about your rights and reporting options. You can learn more about university protections, supportive resources, response processes, and prevention efforts by visiting www.titleix.ufl.edu The University Title IX Coordinator is located in the Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity and is responsible for providing support to anyone affected by gender-based discrimination or violence. If you would like to report gender-based discrimination or violence affecting our community, please contact Russell Froman, Assistant Vice President for Accessibility and Gender Equity and ADA and Title IX Coordinator at (352) 273-1094, or by e-mail at rfroman@ufl.edu. You can also submit a report using the online portal: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofFlorida&layout_id=20
- **Video or Audio Recording of Class Lectures.** Students may record video or audio of class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the University, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation delivered by faculty (including any individual hired or appointed by the University to conduct classroom, teaching activities)

or guest lecturer, as part of a University of Florida course, intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the faculty or guest. 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 to be 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, or leaflet. 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.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- **University Counseling & Wellness Center:** 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575, www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/ (Counseling Services, Self-Help Library, Groups and Workshops, Training Programs, Outreach and Consultation, Community Provider Database).
- **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1161.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- **E-learning technical support:** (352) 392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.
- **Career Resource Center:** Reitz Union, (352) 392-1601. www.crc.ufl.edu/. Career assistance and counseling.
- **Library Support:** <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> General study skills and tutoring.
- **Writing Studio:** 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

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

Week 1: What's science? What's technology? What's Society? Why Latin America?

1. Borges, Jorge Luis. "On Exactitude in Science." *A Universal History of Iniquity*. Penguin Classics, 2004. [Selected page].
2. **Deadline:** By the end of the week, every student must have signed the class facilitation schedule.

Week 2: What's *normal* Science?

1. Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 1962. The University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 1 - 66.
2. Labatut, Benjamín. *When We Ceased to Understand the World*. Pushkin Press, 2020. [Selected pages].

Week 3: What's technology?

1. Basalla, George. *The Evolution of Technology*. Cambridge University Press, 1988. pp. vii – 25.
2. Kranzberg, Melvin. "Technology and History: Kranzberg's Laws." *Technology and Culture*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1986, pp. 544-560.
3. García Márquez, Gabriel. "Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon." *Latin American Short Stories*, edited by Roberto González Echeverría, pp. 383-389.

Week 4: Science and technology as a social construction.

1. Hacking, Ian. *The Social Construction of What?* Harvard University Press, 1999. pp. VII – 36.
2. Machado de Assis, Joaquim Maria. *The Alienist*. 1882. Melville House Publishing, 2012.
3. **Deadline:** By the beginning of this session, every student must have submitted the abstract for the midterm short presentation. We will dedicate a brief time of this session to share and discuss each proposal.

Week 5: Technology as revolution.

1. Gallo, Rubén. *Mexican Modernity: The avant-garde and the technological revolution*. MIT Press, 2005, pp. 1-28, 117-167.
2. Huidobro, Vicente. *Altazor*. Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Week 6: Midterm short presentations.

Preliminary readings may be forwarded by each presenter.

Week 7: No class.

Week 8: Ideology and science.

1. Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An introduction*. Verso, 1991, pp. xi-32.
2. Arreola, Juan José. "The Switchman." *Latin American Short Stories*, edited by Roberto González Echeverría, pp. 312-317.
3. Araujo, Helena. "Asthmatic." *Short Stories by Latin American Women: The Magic and the Real*, edited by Celia Correas de Zapata, Arte Público Press, 1990, pp. 17-29.

Week 9: The limits of science.

1. Popper, Karl. *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. Routledge & K. Paul, 1963. pp. 43 - 78.
2. Mendoça Filho, Kleber and Juliano Dornelles (dirs.) *Bacurau*. CinemaScópio Produções, 2019.
3. Castellanos, Rosario. "Cooking Lesson." *Latin American Short Stories*, edited by Roberto González Echeverría, pp. 345-353.

Week 10: Sociology of science and technology.

1. Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Harvard University Press, 1987. [Selected pages].
2. Avsky, Joseph. *Infinity Ends Soon*. Mouthfeel Press, 2023.
3. **Deadline:** By the beginning of this session, every student must have thought about the main topic of their final presentation and essay. We will dedicate a brief time of this session to share and discuss each proposal.

Week 11: Anything goes in science and technology?

1. Feyerabend, Paul. *Against Method*. 1975. Verso, 2010. pp. vii – 23.
2. Barrera, Ave. *The Forgery*. Charco Press, 2022.
3. **Deadline:** By the beginning of this session, every student must have penned the preliminary scheme or structure of their final presentation and essay. We will dedicate a brief time of this session to share and discuss each proposal.

Week 12: No class.

Week 13: Post-normal science.

1. Funtowicz, Silvio O. and Jerome R. Ravetz. "Science for the Post-Normal Age." *Futures*, vol. 25, no. 7, 1993, pp. 739-755.
2. Cortázar, Julio. "The Southern Thruway." *All Fires the Fire and Other Stories*. Pantheon Books, 1973.
3. **Deadline:** By the beginning of this session, every student must have signed the final presentation schedule.

Week 14: No class.

Week 15: Final presentations.

Preliminary readings may be forwarded by each presenter.

Weeks 16-17: Final essay submission.