

Peoples and Cultures of Latin America

Anthropology 162A || International Studies 177J || Chican@/Latin@ Studies 120
University of California, Irvine
Summer Session II 2016

Instructor: Dr. Taylor C. Nelms, Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine
Meeting time: Tuesday & Thursday, 9-11:50am
Meeting location: Donald Bren Hall, Room 1300
Office hours: Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30pm at the Merage School of Business courtyard
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§ Course description

Sex. Drugs. Zombies.

News about Latin America is often sensationalist, advertising poverty and violence. But such representations ignore the cultural diversity of the people living in the region and the political and economic histories that have shaped their lives and livelihoods. This course introduces students to the geographic region now known as “Latin America” (to which is often appended “the Caribbean”), investigating what unites and divides the people and cultures across the hemisphere. We will focus specifically on North-South patterns of economic circulation through which particular forms of value—commodities, technologies, ideas, even human beings—are extracted, produced, exchanged, transformed, and consumed. From silver mining to oil extraction, narcotrafficking to ideas of security, zombie movies to models of economic development, we will explore the economic past, present, and future of Latin America and the ways the economy has shaped social and political life there. Through a cross-section of anthropological research conducted in the region—supplemented by films, lectures, class discussion, and writing assignments—this course is designed to provide students with the framework and resources to understand contemporary Latin America and the Caribbean in historical and sociocultural context.

§ Course objectives

- 1) To offer a survey of research and debates in anthropology about the diverse peoples and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on questions of economy, politics, and value;
- 2) To introduce important problems and issues affecting life in Latin America and the Caribbean today, emphasizing poverty, inequality, and development;
- 3) To foster a critical understanding of how the region’s history has impacted contemporary living conditions, social and cultural forms, political debates, and imaginations of the future;
- 4) To develop the skills to find, evaluate, comprehend, and analyze primary and secondary research materials, written and otherwise, and to construct evidence-based arguments on the basis of those materials; and
- 5) To cultivate a sensitivity to and understanding of sociocultural difference, historical conditions, and power inequalities, including those of race, gender, and class.

§ Course requirements

Students in this course will be evaluated on the basis of their regular attendance and participation, in-class free-writing exercises and quizzes/reading responses on assigned readings, and a final research project with several components: a proposal, annotated bibliography, class presentation and an 8-10-page paper.

- 1) Your **attendance** at all class sessions is mandatory and expected. You are required to complete all readings and assignments before coming to class the day for which they were assigned. Attendance also requires that you remain attentive in class.
- 2) The success of this course depends on your **participation**, which means informed speaking and listening, as well as finishing group work, in-class presentations, and other in-class assignments, as requested on a weekly basis. I expect you to have completed the readings and come to class ready to engage your fellow classmates respectfully and generously.
- 3) At the beginning of each class, I will ask you to take 5-10 minutes to **free-write** on a question or set of questions related to the readings assigned for that meeting. I will collect this writing for proof of attendance/participation, but it will not be graded. However, two times during this five-week course, I will ask you to respond to the readings by answering a few questions about them instead of free-writing. These brief **quizzes/reading responses** will require you to reflect on the readings in the context of the themes of the course. Based on your responses, you will be graded on whether or not you did the readings.
- 4) This course will build towards a final research project: a **cultural biography of a commodity**, which investigates, from production to consumption, the social and cultural meanings of a particular Latin American form of value. The project has four components: a **1-page project proposal**, an **annotated bibliography**, a **class presentation** to be delivered the last week of class, and an **8-10-page final paper**. Assignment details will be given separately.

§ Evaluation

Grades for this course will be assigned as follows:

Attendance and participation	20%
In-class quizzes/reading responses	10% each (20% total)
Project proposal	10%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Class presentation	20%
Final paper	20%

§ Readings

You are required to purchase one book for this class. It is:

Mintz, Sidney W. (1985). *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.

§ Diversity and accessibility

All of us learn in different ways, and I am committed to providing a learning environment that is equitable, inclusive, and conducive to the education of all students. Please talk to me about your individual learning needs and how this course can best address them.

Students with disabilities or students who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Center as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

§ Academic honesty

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, contact me directly.

§ Course schedule

Tuesday, August 2—Beginnings: Colonialism, Then and Now

Film: “When Worlds Collide” (Rubén Martínez, 2010)

Thursday, August 4—Gold, Silver, and Tin

Readings:

- Galeano, Eduardo (1997 [1973]). *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Selections: pp. 18-37.
- Nash, June (1993 [1979]). *We Eat the Mines, and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*. New York: Columbus University Press. Selections: 18-21, 170-209.

Tuesday, August 9—Sugar and Zombies

Readings:

- Mintz, Sidney W. (1985). *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books. Selections: Introduction and Chapter 2 (“Production”), pp. xv-xxx, 19-73.
- Hurston, Zora Neale (1990[1938]). *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. New York: HarperCollins. Selection: “Zombies,” pp. 179-198.
- Dayan, Joan (1995). *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Selection: from Part 1 (“Rituals of History”), pp. 3-5, 29-38

Read in class:

- Seabrook, William (1929). *The Magic Island*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. Selection: “... Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields,” pp. 92-103.
- Davis, Wade (1984). The Pharmacology of Zombies. *Harpers Magazine*, April: 23-24.
- McAlister, Elizabeth (2012). Slaves, Cannibals, and Infected Hyper-Whites: The Race and Religion of Zombies. *Anthropological Quarterly* 85(2): 457-486. Selection: “Capturing, Enslaving, Feeding, and Dressing Zonbis in Haiti,” pp. 462-469.
- Willentz, Amy (2011). Response to “I Walked with a Zombie.” <http://amywilentz.com/from-the-newsstands/response-to-i-walked-with-a-zombie/>.
- LaMonica, Paul R. (2009). Dawn of the Dead Banks. *CNN Money*, February 18. <http://money.cnn.com/2009/02/18/markets/thebuzz/index.htm>.

Thursday, August 11—Coca and Corridos

Due: Paper proposal

Readings:

- Mintz, Sidney W. (1985). *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books. Selection: Chapter 3 (“Consumption”), pp. 74-150.
- Allen, Catherine (1988). *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. Selections: Chapter 4 (“Coca Knows”) and Chapter 9 (“Coca and Cultural Identity”), pp. 125-136, 215-227.

Downes, Lawrence (2009). In Los Angeles, Songs Without Borders. New York Times, August 16. <http://travel.nytimes.com/2009/08/16/travel/16corridos.html>.

Listen:

“The Roots of the Narcocorrido” (Various artists, compiled by Arhoolie, 2004) Available through the UCI Libraries website <http://antpac.lib.uci.edu/record=b4721233~S7>

Tuesday, August 16—Bananas

Readings:

Mintz, Sidney W. (1985). *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books. Selection: Chapter 4 (“Power”), pp. 151-186.

Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer (1999 [1982]). *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Cambridge: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Selection: Chapter 5 (“The Overlord: The United Fruit Company”), pp. 65-77.

Bourgois, Philippe (1988). Conjugated Oppression: Class and Ethnicity among Guaymi and Kuna Banana Workers. *American Ethnologist* 15(2): 328-348.

Thursday, August 18—Oil

Readings:

Hellinger, Daniel (2000). Understanding Venezuela’s Crisis: Dutch Diseases, Money Doctors, and Magicians. *Latin American Perspectives* 27(1): 105-119.

Schiller, Naomi (2011). ‘Now That the Petroleum Is Ours’: Community Media, State Spectacle, and Oil Nationalism in Venezuela. In *Crude Domination: An Anthropology of Oil*. Andrea Behrends, Stephen P. Reyna, and Günther Schlee, eds. New York: Berghahn: 190-219.

Sawyer, Suzana (2008). Suing ChevronTexaco. In *The Ecuador Reader*. Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffler, eds. Durham: Duke University Press: 321-328.

Film: “Crude” (Joe Berlinger, 2009)

Tuesday, August 23— Dictatorship, Debt, and Development

Due: Annotated bibliography

Readings:

Letelier, Orlando (1976). Economic “Freedom’s” Awful Toll: The Chicago Boys in Chile. *The Nation*, August 28: 137-142. Reprinted in *Review of Radical Political Economics* 8: 44-52.

Nouzeilles, Gabriela, and Graciela Montaldo, eds. (2002). *The Argentina Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press. Selections: “State Violence,” “The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo,” pp. 395-397, 429-439.

Escobar, Arturo (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Selection: Chapter 2 (“The Problematization of Poverty: The Tale of Three Worlds and Development”), pp. 21-54.

Han, Clara (2011). The Work of Indebtedness: The Traumatic Present of Late Capitalist Chile. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 28(2): 169-187.

Background:

Roddick, Jackie. 1988. “Prologue” and “The Dance of the Millions” (pp. 1-17). In *The Dance of the Millions: Latin America and the Debt Crisis*. London: Latin America Bureau (Research and Action).

Read in class:

Williamson, John (1990). What Washington Means by Policy Reform. Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics. <https://piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/what-washington-means-policy-reform>.

Ostry, Jonathan D., Prakash Loungani, and David Furceri (2016). Neoliberalism: Oversold? *Finance & Development* 53(2): 38-41.
<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2016/06/ostry.htm>.

Thursday, August 25— Dollars, Tupperware, and Inca Kola

Readings:

Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi (2008). Globalization from Below and the Political Turn among Otavalo's Merchant Artisans. In *The Ecuador Reader*, edited by C. de la Torre and S. Striffler. Durham: Duke University Press: 377-384.

Ariel de Vidas, Anath (2008). Containing Modernity: The Social Life of Tupperware in a Mexican Indigenous Village. *Ethnography* 9(2): 257-284.

Alcalde, M. Cristina (2009). Between Incas and Indians: Inca Kola and the Construction of a Peruvian-Global Modernity. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 9(1): 31-54.

Tuesday, August 30—Security, Guns, and Democracy

Readings:

Caldeira, Teresa (1996). Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation. *Public Culture* 8(2): 303-328.

Goldstein, Donna (2007). Gun Politics: Reflections on Brazil's Failed Gun Ban Referendum in the Rio de Janeiro Context. In *Open Fire: Understanding Global Gun Cultures*. Charles Fruehling Springwood, ed. Oxford: Berg: 28-41.

Moodie, Ellen (2010). *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace: Crime, Uncertainty, and the Transition to Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Selection: Chapter 5 ("Democratic Disenchantment"), pp. 139-169.

Larkins, Erika Robb (2012). The Spectacle of Security in Olympic Rio de Janeiro. *Anthropology News*, July 6.

Thursday, September 1—Final presentations!

Due: Deliver your final presentation in class!

Tuesday, September 6—Final papers!

Due: Upload your final papers to the designated EEE dropbox by 5pm.