

Spring 2015

Stony Brook University

Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature

College of Arts and Sciences

**HUS 254 Latin America Today**

M, Wed 2:30-3:50, Library W4550

This course satisfies the DEC category J

This course satisfies the SBC category GLO, HCA

Course Instructor: Joseph M. Pierce

Section: 01

Office Hours: M 1–2 PM and Wed 4-5 PM

Instructor contact information: Melville Library N3013, joseph.pierce@stonybrook.edu

Course TA: Anay Rodríguez

Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30 Library N4074; T 12-1 Writing Center Library N3065

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to a continental perspective of 20th-century Latin American culture. Latin America's political, historical, and cultural developments of this century are studied.

### Latin America | Today

This course proposes to study the events of today by tracing the social, political and economic structures of the past. On the one hand, the region under study is comprised of a dramatic variety of cultures, geographies and politics. On the other, it shares a history of colonization from “discovery” to independence to modernity based on its particular geographic and historical location. In order to interrogate this conjunction, we will pay special attention to the social groups that are often marginalized from the pages of “the official history”: Indigenous communities, Afro-Latin organizations, gay, lesbian, and trans activism, immigrant groups. We will pay special attention the discourses of belonging and (dis)identification that mark their relationships with the region, as well as the ways in which “Latin” America becomes a concept in relationship with these groups in the context of globalization. Thus, race, class, gender, sexuality, and coloniality are some of the central concepts that we will utilize; we will draw on historical, journalistic, artistic, and literary works that help us theorize not simply what Latin America is, but why it is, and how it has become that.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to the diverse histories, cultures, societies, economies and political systems of modern Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to developments in Europe and the U.S.
- Drawing on a variety of literary, historical, journalistic, and documentary and fiction film sources we will seek to understand some of the most challenging issues facing the region and the world today.
- Explore the historical, cultural, literary, and visual representations of diverse Latin

American populations.

- Analyze literary and cultural texts about these populations to learn how literature and visual representations, as objects of study of the Humanities, convey information that enriches and adds complexity of meaning to our understanding of a given object or social/ historical event.
- Learn how fiction constructs a world of its own to be analyzed in its own terms, at the same time that it relates to, comments about and influences the society it belongs to.

Required Texts (available at Stony Brook Bookstore):

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*

Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School*

Additional readings available on Blackboard in .pdf format.

Attendance: Consistent attendance and thoughtful participation are crucial to your success in this class. Arriving late causes a disruption, and will reflect negatively on your participation grade. After three absences your grade will be lowered by a half point and so on successively for further unexcused absences. If you have more than 6 absences, your final grade will be an F.

Participation: This is a large class, but it will be run as if it were a smaller seminar. To receive an A for participation you must have excellent attendance, come prepared, and participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions. If you rarely participate in class, you will receive a C; if you hardly contribute, are distracted, and often miss class, you can expect an F in this category.

Exams and assignments: There will be an in-class midterm and a take-home final exam. The Midterm will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer-type questions. The final will involve short answer and essay questions and will be turned in electronically. There will be announced short quizzes and written assignments (4-6 in total) to ensure that students follow the readings and to stimulate critical analysis. Assignments will be given in writing and will ask students to analyze, connect, or add to course readings. No make-ups will be granted.

Electronic Course Packet: The readings for each class will be available on Blackboard.

Film discussions: Films will be made available through Blackboard and should be watched in their entirety before the assigned class day. We will only watch selected clips, focusing on discussing and analyzing the films in class.

Evaluation criteria:

In-Class Midterm: 30%

Take-Home Final: 35%

Quizzes: 15%

Participation: 10%

Assignments: 10%

Grading System

100-93	A	79-77	C+
92-90	A-	76-73	C
89-87	B+	72-70	C-
86-83	B	69-67	D+
82-80	B-	66-60	D
		59-0	F

#### DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/>. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities/asp>.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

#### CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

### Part I: The Concept and Origins of Latin/America

- January 26** Introduction. Discussion: “What is *Latin America*?” “What is *Today*?”
- January 28** Overview: Latin America: “Discovery,” Coloniality  
Walter Mignolo. *The Idea of Latin America*. pp. 1-50.
- February 2** From Independence to “Nuestra América”  
John Charles Chasteen. *Born in Blood & Fire*. “Independence,” pp. 86-114.
- February 4** Esteban Echeverría, “The Slaughterhouse” in *The Argentina Reader*, pp. 107-114.
- February 9** Miguel Samper, “Bogotá in the Nineteenth Century” in *I Saw a City Invincible*,  
Eds. Joseph and Szuchman. pp. 103-117.  
Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Heart that Bleeds*, “Bogotá, 1989” 3-22.
- February 11** José Martí, “Our América” (10 pgs.)  
José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (selections, 11 pgs.)

### Part II: Immigration & Nationalism

- February 16** *Fin-de-siècle* Buenos Aires: Immigration and Multitudes  
Oreste Sola, “Making it in America” in *The Argentina Reader*. pp. 188-192.  
José María Ramos Mejía, “The Modern Crowd” in *The Argentina Reader*. pp. 182-187.  
David Rock. *Authoritarian Argentina*. “Rule by the Capable” pp. 55-86.
- February 18** Contemporary Immigration  
Ken Ellingwood, *Hard Line: Life and Death on the U.S.-Mexico Border*, “Sitting on an X” pp. 9-25.  
Maria Amelia Viteri, “Citizenship(s), Belonging and Xenophobia.” *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 3:1 (2014), 121-135.
- February 23** *Paraíso Travel* (film, watch before class)

### Part III: Revolutions

- February 25** John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*. “Revolution” pp. 253-283  
Fidel Castro, “Words to The Intellectuals” (20 pgs.)
- March 2** Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (1/3, pp. 1-63)
- March 4** Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2/3, pp. 64-188)

**March 9** Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (3/3, pp. 189-end)

**March 11** **MIDTERM IN CLASS**

**March 16** **SPRING BREAK**

**March 18** **SPRING BREAK**

**Part IV: The Politics of Family, Gender, and Sexuality**

**March 23** Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1/3, pp. 1-71)

**March 25** Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (2/3, pp. 72-154)

**March 30** Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (2/3, pp. 155-281)

**April 6** James N. Green, “Who is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?": Male Homosexuality, Revolutionary Masculinity, and the Brazilian Armed Struggle of the 1960s and 70s,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92:3 (August 2012): 437-69.

**April 8** Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School* (1/2, pp. 1-66)

**April 13** Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School* (2/2, pp. 67-142)

**April 15** *La historia oficial* (film, watch before class)

**Part V: Neoliberalism, New Directions, Long Histories**

**April 20** John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*. “Neoliberalism” pp. 319-340.  
Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Heart that Bleeds*. “Mexico City, 1990” 47-67.  
Javier Auyero, “We Are All Cursed” in *The Argentina Reader* pp. 509-518.

**April 22** *I, Rigoberta Menchú. An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. (selections)

**April 27** Peter Wade, “Afro-Colombian Social Movements.” In *Comparative Perspectives on Afro-Latin America*, edited by Kwame Dixon and John Burdick (Gainesville: University Press of Florida): 135-155. 2012.

**April 29** Shawn Schulenberg, “The Construction and Enactment of Same-Sex Marriage in Argentina.” *Journal of Human Rights* 11 (2012), pp. 106-125.

**May 4** Current Events

**May 6** Current Events, Review  
**FINAL EXAM:** To be submit electronically