

Relations Between the United States and Latin America: An Overview

Instructor: Dr. Mariana Teixeira Marques-Pujol

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General Course Description:

The course is designed to introduce and examine U.S.-Latin American relations from an interdisciplinary perspective. By associating the discussion of scholarly articles in the fields of history, sociology, international relations and anthropology to the analysis of material from the media and the arts, this course will attempt to provide a multifaceted overview of inter-American exchanges since the 19th century and to highlight the contemporary outcomes of these relations.

Detailed Course Description:

The course is designed to combine the cultural and the academic perspectives to offer an all-round framework for the analysis of U.S.-Latin American relations from the 19th century up to now. We will rely on scholarly essays using different methodological and conceptual approaches, and explore their connections to films, newspaper articles, news reports and other materials with the aim of understanding how U.S.-Latin American relations are actively defined and redefined by the nations involved. This approach will allow us to investigate more specifically the ways in which North Americans and Latin Americans have envisaged these relations through the themes of displacement and work; culture and politics; racism and identities; stereotypes and anti-Americanism.

Objectives:

By the end of the semester, the students will have:

- Become familiar with the discussion on the “invention” of Latin America
- Been informed of the broad academic debates on the origins of the U.S.-Latin American relations
- Understood the multifaceted perspective of inter-American studies
- Developed critical reflection about what inter-American relations reveal about world history and historical processes
- Developed the ability to analyze cultural products in their relation to history and society
- Developed the ability to think critically about scholarly essays, the quality of their arguments, and their contributions to the broader field of U.S.-Latin American relations
- Enhanced thinking skills that reflect an ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while improving creative thinking and inquiry
- Developed a sense of intercultural competence and the ability to analyze transnational phenomena
- Practiced speaking skills mainly through their participation in roundtable discussions

Course Schedule:

Class & date	Content
<p>Week 1 – Jan 16 Course Introduction: “America”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Course objectives ○ The “invention” of “Latin America” – a Latin American identity? ○ What does it mean to analyze a cultural product? <p>Bibliography for this class: Todorov (1995), Chapter 8, “Fictions and Truths” Gobat (2013), “The Invention of Latin America”</p>
<p>Week 2 – Jan 23 Origins of the U.S.- Latin America relations</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bit of history: “Encountering Latin America” ○ Looking at U.S.-Latin American relations from the point of view of International Relations
<p>Week 3 – Jan 30 Displacement and Work (I)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Braceros Program and its consequences ○ Latino writers and displacement: “Fieldwork” ○ Discuss BBC video ““Life in the Shadow of US-Mexico Border Wall”
<p>Week 4 – Feb 06 Displacement and Work (II)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documenting undocumented stories ○ Discuss “Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis” (NYT documentary by Brent Renaud and Craig Renaud) ○ “How U.S. Policy Turned the Sonoran Desert Into a Graveyard for Migrants”. James Verini for <i>The New York Times</i> (Aug. 18, 2020)
<p>Week 5 – Feb 13 Culture and Politics (I)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The U.S. and the Cuba Revolution ○ U.S. intervention and the Operation Condor
<p>Week 6 – Feb 20 Culture and Politics (II)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u> Evaluation 1: Roundtable discussions</p>
<p>Week 7 – March 6 Racism and Identities (I)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race in the U.S. and in Brazil ○ News report - BBC video “Crossing Brazil’s racial and class divide”
<p>Week 8 – March 13 Racism and Identities (II)</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fighting racial inequality ○ Do “Black Lives Matter” in Latin America?
<p>Week 9 – March 20 Stereotypes and anti- Americanism in Latin America</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u> Forms of Anti-Americanism</p>

<p>Week 10 – March 27 Wrap-Up session: what next?</p>	<p><u>Contents:</u> What to expect from the United States? Discussion of the film “Bacurau”</p>
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Evaluation:

- 40% of the grade = Roundtable discussions (Week 6) OR Analysis of a cultural product Depending on the size of the group. More details on the first day of class!
- 60% of your grade = Final essay
You will write a 1,500-word essay on a topic of your choice among **three options**. A correction grid will help you plan and write your essay.

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Videos and films:

NYT Documentaries – "Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis" (Brent Renaud and Craig Renaud) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxF0t-SMEXA>

BBC - "Crossing Brazil's racial and class divide" - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-53484698> BBC - "Life in the Shadow of US-Mexico border Wall" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9Gd-axMMbM>

Loach, Ken. "11 September" - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x415e>

Vik Muniz, "Waste Land" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwXECdttdaE>

Other resources:

Yale University Library – History of U.S. – Latin American Relations: Digital Archives <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=296334&p=1976987>