

Latin America During the National Period (HIST 140): Panama Perspectives

“Poor people inhabit rich lands”
- E. Bradford Burns

Spring 2010, Truman State University
VH 1400, TR 1:30-2:50
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Description

This course surveys the history of Latin America with a particular emphasis on Panama. We will examine a variety of issues including economics, democracy, racism, class structures, gender, ethnicity, human rights, globalization, and popular movements. Rather than analyzing Latin America from a North American point of view, we will examine how Latin Americans view themselves and how their culture, economics, and politics have developed in different directions than the United States and Europe.

This course fulfills the history mode of inquiry in the Liberal Studies Program. In this mode, students will study a broad topic or major geographic area over an extended period of time and will demonstrate competence in one or more of the following areas, which characterize the work of historians:

1. thinking in terms of causation, change over time, contingency, context, and chronological frameworks;
2. the content and methodologies of humanistic and social-scientific disciplines to study and interpret the past;
3. analyzing the interplay between choices individuals have made and developments societies have undergone; and
4. understanding the social and aesthetic richness of different cultures.

Requirements

Our goal in this class is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of history, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation are also necessary. Please drop me a note if you are unable to attend, or if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

Readings

Following are the required books for this class. Read the assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class. Lectures and discussions will complement the readings and assume the base level of knowledge which they present, so it is critically important that you keep up with the readings.

Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 2d ed. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN: 0-393-92769-5

Conniff, Michael L. *Panama and the United States: The forced alliance*, 2d ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001. ISBN: 0820323489

Assignments and grades

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. Students can check their grades on the class Blackboard web page (there is a total of 1000 possible points in the class). Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and I do not accept “drop and run” papers. Grades on late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day that they are late. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Daily identification terms (5 pts ea.)	100 pts
2 primary source analyses (200 pts ea.)	400
Midterm exam (Feb 11)	100
Book review and presentation	200
Final exam	200

Daily identification terms. We will begin each class period with identifying and giving the significance of one identification term drawn from a list posted to the Blackboard web page for each chapter of the two assigned books. These will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5 points. One point means that you are present, 2 points indicate that something was fundamentally wrong with your response, 3 points indicate a rote response from the text, 4 points represent analytical thought, and 5 points are for responses that reveal critical thought that extends significantly beyond the text and places the term in a broad historical context.

Primary source analyses. Analyze two primary sources on Panamanian history. The first one must be a written source. Good places to start looking are the Latin American history microfilm collection (http://library.truman.edu/microforms/subject_list.htm#Latin%20American%20History; for example, see <http://lance.missouri.edu/search~S6/o46773238>), Foreign Relations of the United States (<http://lance.missouri.edu/search~S6/o1768341>), the National Security Archive (<http://www.nsarchive.org/>), and the Human Relations Area Files (see <http://lance.missouri.edu/search~S6/o51249682>). The second source must be something that you find in Panama, and can be a document, an interview, a material object, or something broadly related to the history of Panama.

In both cases, first have me approve the primary source, and then write a paper analyzing the document and its historical significance. The essay should be three pages long, typed, double spaced, follow good essay form (have an intro, thesis, conclusion, etc.) and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. Attach a copy of the source to the essay. The essays are due at the beginning of class on February 4 and April 15. Questions to think about in reading and interpreting the source include:

1. What type of source is this?
2. What is known about who created it, when, and where?
3. Whom does the author consider the audience for this piece?
4. What views or perspectives are presented? Are other views silenced or challenged? How might these perspectives be explained?
5. What can the source tell a reader about an event or period in history? What are the limits to what it can reveal?
7. How does this source fit into a bigger historical picture or period? Does it challenge a bigger picture or narrative in any way?

Book review and presentation. Select one book on Panama (see a list of suggestions on the class website <http://air.truman.edu/panama/>), have me approve your selection, write an essay analyzing its argument, and present to the class what you learned from the book while we are in Panama. The essay should be three pages long, typed, double spaced, follow good essay form (have an intro, thesis, conclusion, etc.) and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers.

Exams. The midterm and comprehensive final exams will draw on the class readings, films, and discussions. The midterm will probably be an in-class essay exam (we'll decide the exact format in class). For the final, using the wiki on the blackboard webpage first as a class draft a prompt that reflects a key theme we have discussed this semester. Then, again as a class, answer the question. The final exam is worth 200 points, or 20 percent of the course grade. Half of the grade will be for your individual contributions, and the other half will be a group grade for the overall quality of both the prompt and final essay.

Class Schedule

Part 1: Latin America

Tues, Jan 12: Chasteen, ch. 1: First Stop, the Present

Thurs, Jan 14: Chasteen, ch. 2: Encounter

Tues, Jan 19: Chasteen, ch. 3: Colonial Crucible

Thurs, Jan 21: Chasteen, ch. 4: Independence

Tues, Jan 26: Chasteen, ch. 5: Postcolonial Blues

Thurs, Jan 28: Chasteen, ch. 6: Progress

Tues, Feb 2: Chasteen, ch. 7: Neocolonialism

Thurs, Feb 4: Chasteen, ch. 8: Nationalism; **First primary source analysis due**

Tues, Feb 9: Chasteen, ch. 9: Revolution

Thurs, Feb 11: Midterm exam

Part II: Panama (Feb 15 - April 10)

Reading: Conniff, *Panama and the United States*.

Part III: Reintegration

Tues, April 13 (research conference)

Thus, April 15: **Second primary source analysis due**

Tues, April 20

Thus, April 22

Tues, April 27

Thus, April 29