

History of Latin America (HIST 409)

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

Fall 2009, University of Ghana
JQB 19, Tues 11:30-1:30
Office hours: Tues 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Office no. 8, Department of History

Marc Becker
marc@truman.edu
028-9117396

Description

This course offers a survey of the history of Latin America from the pre-Columbian empires (Maya, Aztec and Inka) to the early 21st century. It deals with the imposition of Spanish and Portuguese colonial governments; settlement patterns; power of the church; mineral and agricultural exploitation; slavery and the slave trade; independence movements; 19th-century dictators; the 1910 Mexican revolution; British economic domination; the interference of the United States of America; the Venezuelan oil industry; socialist and capitalist industrialization; monarchic government in independent Brazil; the rise of coffee industry; growth of industrial cities; the agricultural basis of prosperity; land-owners and wage-earners; and the significance of revolutionary movements.

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 in class discussions 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. These books are available in the history library.

Keen, Benjamin and Keith Haynes. *A History of Latin America*, 8th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009.

O'Connor, Erin and Leo Garofalo. *Documenting Latin America: Gender, Race, and Nation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.

Assignments and grades

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. Papers are do at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned, 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.

Primary source analyses (25% each). Analyze one primary source from each of the two volumes of O'Connor/Garofalo's *Documenting Latin America: Gender, Race, and Nation*. Consider these questions:

1. Who created the document? What is the author's gender, race, and class status?
2. When was the document written?

3. To whom was the document addressed?

3. Why was the document created?

Using your own words, summarize the main points of the document, explaining what the document reveals, what it conceals, and how its contents were shaped by the experiences and perspectives of the author. Your analysis should be three to five pages long, typed, double-spaced, and include citations.

Examination (50%). The final examination will be an essay drawing on all of the material we have covered during the course of the semester.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (August 25) Introduction & Geography

Read: Jan Knippers Black, "Introduction: Understanding the Persistence of Inequity," in *Latin America, its Problems and its Promise a Multidisciplinary Introduction*, 4th ed., ed. Jan Knippers Black (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 2005), 1-20

Week 2 (Sept 1) Ancient America

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 1.

Week 3 (Sept 8) Conquests

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 3.

Week 4 (Sept 15) Colonialism

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 4.

Week 5 (Sept 22) Slavery

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 6.

Week 6 (Sept 29) Independence

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 8

Assignment: First primary source analysis due

Week 7 (Oct 6) Neocolonialism

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 11.

Week 8 (Oct 13) Mexican Revolution

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 12.

Week 9 (Oct 20) Cuban Revolution

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 15.

Week 10 (Oct 27) The Chilean Road to Socialism

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 17.

Week 11 (Nov 3) The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 19

Assignment: Second primary source analysis due

Week 12 (Nov 10) Inter-American Relations

Read: Keen/Haynes, ch. 22.