

Latin American Revolutions (HIST 391)
The CIA Files

*“In this part of the world the possibility is almost totally gone
for there to be a peaceful transition to socialism.”*
- Ernesto “Che” Guevara (1963)

Spring 2020, Truman State University
MC211, TR 10:30-11:50
Office: MC 227

Marc Becker
marc@truman.edu
Office Hours: typically TR 1:30-2:30
Phone: x6036

Description

This course presents a critical comparative analysis of twentieth-century revolutionary theories and movements in Latin America. We will examine the socio-political conditions that led to a revolutionary situation and the differing responses to those conditions. We will interrogate what those revolutions sought to accomplish and what were the outcomes of those revolutionary changes. We will examine those events through the lens of those who participated in them. In addressing these issues, we will emphasize the themes of nationalism, state formation, imperialism, agrarian reform, leadership strategies, and citizenship. A goal of this class is to acquire a more complex understanding of the nature of exploitation, oppression, and exclusion in Latin America and of continuing struggles for a more equal and just society.

This semester we will study Latin American revolutions through the lens of CIA and other US government documents, not to critique the tendency of US government officials to undermine liberal democratic forms of governance and replace them with rightwing military dictatorships but rather to see what unique insights they might shed on the revolutions themselves.

See the syllabus addendums on Blackboard for additional class policies.

Readings

This will be a discussion-based course based on the daily assigned readings and will assume knowledge of the information contained in the text *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions*.

Recommended:

Becker, Marc. *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. ISBN: 9781442265875

Required:

Cullather, Nick. *Secret History: The CIA's classified account of its operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. 2nd ed. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006. ISBN: 9780804754682

- Kornbluh, Peter. *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The secret CIA report on the invasion of Cuba*. New York: The New Press, 1998. ISBN: 978-1-56584-494-0
- Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-59558-912-5
- Kovalik, Dan. *The Plot to Overthrow Venezuela: How the US is orchestrating a coup for oil*. New York: Hot Books, 2019. ISBN: 9781510750722
- Randall, Margaret. *Sandino's Daughters Revisited: Feminism in Nicaragua*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994. ISBN: 978-0-8135-2025-4

Assignments and grades

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
CIA book (Jan 23)	200 pts
Daily discussion (10pts each)	250
Participation (10pts each)	150
Research paper	220
Final exam	180

The CIA. Select and read one book on the CIA (see the list at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pRWW5YYf1RQsZBng_ZGTpi6-O1LQfBGScs9wR3AuMw/edit?usp=sharing). Write a 3-page essay summarizing the book's contents and critiquing the author's assumptions. The essay must be typed, double-spaced, and include citations and page numbers. Add a short annotation of that book to the bibliography (listed above) that briefly outlines the perspectives, strengths, and shortcomings of the book for an uninitiated reader. The essays are due in class on January 23 where we will discuss the readings (be sure to bring the book you read to class that day). 200pts.

Discussion posts: By 9a.m. for each daily reading, post one question or discussion topic related to the readings to the discussion board on Blackboard. 10pts each, 250pts total.

Participation: By midnight on Friday of every week of the semester, post a short essay to the discussion board on Blackboard that outlines what contribution you have made to the classroom, either by speaking up in class discussions, participating in small group activities, or thinking about and applying something we have talked about in class to another part of your life. 10pts each week, 150pts total.

Research paper: Write a research paper that primarily uses CIA or other government or primary source documents to examine an event or topic related to a Latin American revolution. Summarize what light those sources shed on that event or topic, and analyze its relative strengths and limitations in lending a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of Latin American revolutions. The paper should be about 10 pages long, typed, double-spaced, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. While logically and appropriately these papers will build on assigned readings in this class, logically the research should extend significantly beyond them. The format should follow Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A pocket guide to writing in history*. Due

April 30. 220pts.

Some of the best sources for this assignment can be found at:

- National Security Archive (<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>)
- Digital National Security Archive (<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/> -- on campus only)
- CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room (<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/>), including material on the Guatemalan coup (<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/guatemala>) and Bay of Pigs invasion (<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/bay-pigs-release>)
- *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), online at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/> and <https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/frus/> and in print in the library (JX233.A3).
- *British Documents on Foreign Affairs--reports and papers from the Foreign Office confidential print* (General Collection - varies JX632 - JZ632)
- Pickler Library Microforms Collections (http://library.truman.edu/microforms/subject_list.asp#Latin%20American%20History)
- FBI Vault (<https://vault.fbi.gov/>)

Final exam: The final exam is comprehensive and cumulative. May 4, 180pts.

Extra Credit! Everybody loves extra credit, right? For extra credit, provide suggestions, corrections, revisions, or ideas for a revised edition of Becker, *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions*.

Class Schedule

Intro/Theory

Jan 14: Intro

Jan 16: Marxism 101.

Read: Becker, ch. 1 (“Theories of Revolution”)

Paul D'Amato, *The Meaning of Marxism* (Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books, 2006), ch. 3 “The Marxist view of history,” pp. 34-50 (on Blackboard).

Richard D. Wolff and Stephen A. Resnick, *Contending Economic Theories: Neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), introduction (4.1–4.1.2, pp. 133–140); definition of class (4.2.7–4.3.1, pp. 152–157); capitalists and workers (4.5–4.5.2, pp. 173–177); global capitalist development (4.6–4.6.1, pp. 189–192); crisis (4.6.3, pp. 195–200) (on Blackboard).

Jan 21: Was the Mexican Revolution a Revolution?

Read: Becker, ch. 2 (“Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920”)

Alan Knight, “The Mexican Revolution: Bourgeois? Nationalist? Or just a ‘Great Rebellion?’” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 4, no. 2 (1985): 1-37 (on Blackboard).

Jan 23: What is the CIA?

Assignment: CIA book report

Guatemalan Spring

Jan 28 **Read:** Becker, ch. 3 (“Guatemalan Spring, 1944–1954”)
Cullather, ch. 1

Jan 30 **Read:** Cullather, ch. 2

Feb 4 **Read:** Cullather, ch. 3

Feb 6 **Read:** Cullather, ch. 4

Feb 11 Why did the US intervene in Guatemala but support the MNR in Bolivia?

Read: Becker, ch. 4 (“Bolivia’s Nationalist Revolution, 1952–1964”)

Kenneth Lehman, “Revolutions and Attributions: Making Sense of Eisenhower Administration Policies in Bolivia and Guatemala,” *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 185-213 (on Blackboard).

Cuban Revolution

Feb 13 **Read:** Becker, ch. 5 (“Cuban Revolution, 1959–”)

Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, Introduction

Feb 18 **Read:** Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, Part I

Feb 20 **Read:** Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, Part II

Feb 25 **Read:** Kornbluh, *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, Part III-V

Feb 27 Guerrilla Warfare

Read: Becker, ch. 8 (“Guerrilla Warfare”)

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “Weekly Summary Special Report The Latin American Guerrilla Today,” January 22, 1971, CIA Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00875r001500030003-6> (another version is at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/0000637157>).

Chilean Road to Socialism

March 3 **Read:** Becker, ch. 6 (“Chilean Road to Socialism, 1970–1973”)

Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, chs. 1-2

March 5 **Read:** Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, chs. 3-4

March 17 **Read:** Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, chs. 5-6

March 19 **Read:** Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, chs. 7, epilogue, afterword

Sandinistas

March 24 **Read:** Becker, ch. 7 (“Nicaraguan Sandinistas, 1979–1990”)

Randall, Preface, Introduction

March 26 **Read:** Randall, chs. 2-5

March 31 **Read:** Randall, chs. 6-9

April 2 **Read:** Randall, chs. 10-13

Venezuela

April 7 **Read:** Becker, ch. 9 (“Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution, 1999–”)
Kovalik, Foreword, Preface, ch. 1

April 9 **Read:** Kovalik, chs. 2-4

April 14 Work on research papers

April 21 **Read:** Kovalik, chs. 5-7

April 23: **Read:** Kovalik, chs. 8-11

Conservative Restoration

April 28 **Read:** Becker, ch. 10 (“Socialisms of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries”)
TBA

April 30 Research papers due

Final exam: Monday, May 4, 9:30-11:20