African Diaspora in Contemporary Latin America

Fall Semester 2015
HIST 347
Wednesday: 2:30-4:20pm

Instructor: Dr. Terrazas Williams

Office Hours: Monday 3-4pm
Office: Rice 309
Email: dterraza@oberlin.edu

Course Description:

For more than 500 years, Africans and their descendants have shaped the course of history in the Americas. It is estimated that there are 80-150 million African and African-descended people living in Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil serving as home to the largest number outside of Africa with nearly 90 million African descendants. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries offered new opportunities and equally daunting challenges for Latin America. In many countries, African-descended people fought in the wars of Independence but found that they rarely reaped the benefits that the newly established freedom from a European metropole offered to others. And yet, attempts at marginalization and disenfranchisement could not stifle the impact of the African Diaspora in modern Latin America. In the former colonies of Spain and Portugal, African descended people shaped and challenged politics, the media, labor movements, the cultural landscape, religion, and national identity formation, especially notions of *mestizaje*.

To navigate the vast literature on the African Diaspora in Latin America, the readings and discussions for this seminar course will focus on Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, and the Andean Region and will draw from literatures of other territories as points of comparison. The course is divided into four units and focuses on questions of gender, displacement (both figuratively in the body politic and literally in urban and rural areas), political engagement, and visibility. The first unit explores questions of citizenship and African-descended people’s efforts to confront early forms of social exclusion. The second unit focuses on contemporary political activism and community organizing. The third unit examines popular representations in media and identity formation through art and religious life. The final unit serves as a retrospective of the field. We will work with rich materials that include primary and secondary sources, documentaries, material culture, photographs, and musical artifacts. The topics covered will provide a broad knowledge of major contributions by Afro-Latin Americans and will allow for more in-depth exploration of themes of the students’ choosing.
Course Objectives:

1. Introduce students to the history and contributions of the African Diaspora in modern Latin America
2. Challenge students to interrogate discourses of race, ethnicity, and gender in four Latin American contexts (Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, and the Andean Region).
3. Enhance students’ ability to identify, comprehend, and critique historical arguments.
4. Increase students’ experience analyzing written and visual primary sources.
5. Improve students’ research, oral presentation, and writing skills.
6. Expose students to relevant theoretical and historiographical debates in the field of Afro-Latin American Studies.

Learning Activities:

Below is the breakdown of the weight of your final grade:

Class Participation - 20%
In-class Assignments - 15%
Guided Discussion - 10%
1st Paper: Response - 15%
Research Project Articulation & Preliminary Bibliography - 5%
2nd Paper: Annotated Bibliography – 15%
Final Paper - 20%

**Participation counts as much as the final paper**, so please be mindful that active engagement in class discussions will significantly affect your final grade. Participation is graded on a 1 to 10-point scale for each class session. Full credit (10 points) is assigned when there is clear evidence that the student has read and prepared for class and demonstrated active participation. Points are deducted for lack of preparation. You cannot expect to do well if you do not attend class regularly and participate in the discussions. Please see me if you are having difficulty contributing to class discussions so that we may discuss class preparation strategies.

**In-class Assignments** include a number of activities completed during the class period, such as map quizzes, mini-response papers, and smaller group exercises. Each assignment will carry varying point values that will account for a cumulative grade. In-class assignments can be made-up with an excused-absence only.
One of the in-class assignments will be a 5-minute mini presentation on the final day of class. Please bring in one newspaper article about a theme covered in class dated from this year. You are to present on the central argument of the article, the evidence used, and how the article enhances our understanding of a key course issue.

Every student will lead a 15-minute discussion session on specific themes that she/he identifies throughout one week’s readings. You must also create a handout that includes these themes along with three discussion questions, which will be graded.

The first paper is a 5-page evaluative response to the themes in Weeks 3. This is NOT a summary of the readings. Instead, your task is to identify the major argument(s) of the author(s) and then interrogate the evidence they employ to make their arguments. Do you see any commonalities in the types of evidence this group of scholars use? Which types of evidence appear to be the most convincing? Are there any limitations of the evidence? Are there common themes that the works address? Remember, this is not a research paper; you are responding to how these scholars take on that week’s theme. No outside reading is required.

Everyone will turn in a paper topic, a one-paragraph articulation of the research project, and a preliminary bibliography for a grade. The topic portion should be 2-3 sentences on the central issue that you would like to explore. It must be typed and turned in at the beginning of the assigned class period. The bibliography must be in Chicago Style.

The second paper is an annotated bibliography from the sources chosen for the final research paper. Each entry must include the Chicago Style citation, and a paragraph (approx. 150 words) describing the central argument of the work, the types of sources utilized, and a critique of its strength. For more resources on how to best organize and write an annotated bibliography, please visit: http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography

The final is a 10-page research paper. You must choose one of the themes of the semester and include at least 2 primary sources AND 6 books/articles of the body of literature. Of the required number of texts, you must include at least 2 books. The paper must include an introduction and a conclusion, have a clear and identifiable thesis, footnotes, and a bibliography in Chicago Style. In Week 14, there is an optional review of the progress of your final paper.

***The penalty for late papers is one half step down in grade for each day late (ie. B+ to a B for 1 day late, B+ to B- for two days).

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and participation are REQUIRED and are weighed heavily in your final grade. Excused absences include family emergences, religious holidays, and illness
with doctor’s note. **Five unexcused absences will result in a FAIL FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.**

**General Course Policies:**

You are responsible for participating in a supportive and stimulating communication dynamic with your classmates and professor. In addition to adhering to the college standards for student conduct and honor code, you are also expected to become aware of the ways in which your participation (or lack thereof) affects the classroom. Students are responsible for fostering a generous and supportive intellectual community where others are able to explore their ideas and engage with them in intellectual dialogue and debate.

The highest standards involve actively fostering respectful dialogue and debate in the pursuit of academic goals and to participate in creating an academic community within our classroom throughout the term where all students are free to share and explore their ideas as part of engagement with course materials.

**Other Policies:**

I respect the observation of religious holidays. I uphold college guidelines that forbid discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, race, gender, or religious affiliation. I ensure assistance to those students who may need extra accommodations due to physical handicap or visual or hearing impairment. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me with any assistance they may require.

**Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. Oberlin College’s Honor Code outlines plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Please review the following site: [http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/concepts.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/concepts.html)

Examples of plagiarism include (but are NOT limited to): copying from published or unpublished materials or electronic sources without proper citations, paraphrasing someone else’s work without proper citations, buying and using a paper that is already written, recycling your own work (wholly or in part) from another class without previous permission granted from both me and the other instructor, and citing materials you have not reviewed. For a more detailed explanation of plagiarism and its consequences, please consult the Honor Code. Violators will face sanctions in accordance with the college’s protocol.
Please review information on avoiding plagiarism: http://www.oberlin.edu/library/avoiding-plagiarism.html

Reading Schedule:

Please bring assigned reading materials to class. All readings are to be completed the day they are assigned in order to actively participate in class discussions. All articles and book chapters assigned in part are located on Blackboard. All readings that follow the heading “ADDITIONAL READINGS” are not required but you may find them useful if you choose to do more in-depth exploration of that topic for the final paper.

Required Books:
  - Also available online via Oberlin Library ebook
  - Also available online via Oberlin Library ebook

UNIT 1: INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALITY

Week 1, September 2
Racial Discourse in Latin America: Questions of Race and Color
* Introductions, Review of Syllabus, Map Quiz
* George Reid Andrews, Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000, Introduction – Chapter 1, pp. 3-52
* Group Exercise: “Exterminating Bolt of Lightning”

Week 2, September 9
Early Nation Building
Andrews, Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000, Chapter 2-6, pp. 53-202
* Object Activity
* How to write a history research paper. Working with different sources. Primary, secondary, and tertiary? How to correctly use Chicago Style:
  http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
Week 3, September 16
National Identity Politics

Week 4, September 23
NO CLASS, YOM KIPPUR

Week 5, September 30
Gendered Nationhood and Racialized Sexuality
*** Paper Topic DUE

Week 6, October 7
***Please review the Hamilton Document on how to write a history research paper
***Class session with History Librarian, Jenn Starkley
Please bring laptops. We will be meeting in the library
***FIRST PAPER DUE: Response
UNIT 2: POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Week 7, October 14
Capitalizing Black Bodies
* Erica Loraine Williams, *Sex Tourism in Bahia*, Introduction-Conclusion, pp. 1-168
***Research Project & Preliminary Bibliography DUE

FALL BREAK, OCT 17-25

Week 8, November 4
Displacement, Community Building, and Communal Support
The Case of Brazil
Please watch the following films BEFORE class:
* Film: “Running Out the Poor,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-e2Fms_hq4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-e2Fms_hq4)
* Film: “Brazil Cleaning Up Favelas ahead of World Cup,”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfV6C7lg8Z4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfV6C7lg8Z4)
The Case of Colombia
* Film: “Forced Displacement in Colombia,”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGk11EAbtX4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGk11EAbtX4)

Week 9, October 28
* Film: “Favela Wars: Life in Brazil’s Urban Killzone,”
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqO3qCgyFJ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqO3qCgyFJ0)

Week 10, November 11
Grassroots Movements and Identity Politics
* Caldwell, Kia Lilly. *Negras in Brazil*, pp. 1-182
* Film: Benedita da Silva – “I was born a Black woman” (NATSI MULHER NEGRA)
Week 11, November 18
Education: Problems of Access and Implementation
***Annotated Bibliography DUE***

Week 12, November 25
Con’t. Education: Problems of Access and Implementation
NO CLASS, BUT please watch this film
* Film: “Brazil in Black and White,” racial quotas in the Brazilian university education
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g29P3-xj7GQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g29P3-xj7GQ)

THANKSGIVING BREAK, NOV 26-29

UNIT 3: COMPLEX VISIBILITY

Week 13, December 2
* Angela N. Castañeda, “Performing the African Diaspora in Mexico” in *Comparative Perspectives on Afro-Latin America*, pp. 93-113.
***Optional: Final Paper Draft Review***

Week 14
* Mini Presentations
* Evaluations

FINAL PAPER DUE: December 18th by 5pm, to be emailed to me: dtterraza@oberlin.edu