Course Description:

This course surveys the contemporary trajectory of Latin American history. As Spanish and Portuguese colonies transitioned to republics (some later than others), the long and tumultuous process of nation building began to shape a hemisphere. What would independence from European monarchs mean for more than two dozen new countries? What would the new governments look like? And importantly, who would be allowed to officially shape them? Latin American countries have diverse roots and pursued equally diverse routes in governance. Tides of liberalism, conservatism, and neoliberalism influenced the political and economic life of contemporary Latin America, as did ideologies from Marxism, communism, the military, the Catholic Church, and even technological advances.

While establishing political entities and stabilizing economies figures prominently in this survey, so do the social and cultural landscapes of Latin America. As John Charles Chasteen questions for us in Born in Blood and Fire, “Whose accent, whose music, whose cuisine, whose skin tone gets to represent the whole nation?” (Chasteen, 328) These issues preoccupied the minds of presidents, dictators, revolutionaries, urban dwellers, international artists, and rural farmworkers. For the majority of Latin Americans disenfranchised by socio-economic and cultural exclusion, protest served as a tool for recognition and resolution. However, not all voices were/are valued and the state (sometimes backed by the U.S.) violently suppressed student protestors with “disappearances,” massacred “guerillas” from indigenous communities demanding land rights, and militarized the police to keep favela residents from “disrupting” tourism (think the World Cup 2014 and the Summer Olympics 2016).

In four units, this course offers the broad narrative of more than two hundred years of history. The first unit outlines the conquest and colonization of Latin America in order to discuss the trajectory of the second unit, which focuses on the nineteenth-century wars of independence in Spanish America and the less revolutionary transition to independence in Brazil. Unit two will also cover the political fluctuations and international influences on notions of nationhood during this time period. Unit three emphasizes twentieth-century social history and allows us to explore, through case studies, the impact of “rule” on oppressed populations and their responses to assert agency and their own identities. Unit four allows us the opportunity to make the historical connections to work through more contemporaneous issues affecting Latin America.

No prior knowledge of Latin American history is required.
Course Objectives:

1. Introduce students to the history of contemporary Latin America.
2. Challenge students to interrogate the multiple meanings of governance, representation, and disenfranchisement.
3. Enhance students’ ability to identify, comprehend, and critique historical arguments.
4. Introduce students to methodological approaches to written and visual primary sources.
5. Expose students to relevant theoretical and historiographical developments.

Learning Activities:

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

 Attendance & Participation: 15%
 Map Quizzes - 10%
 Midterm – 15%
 First Response Paper: 10%
 Second Response Paper: 15%
 Short Paper – 15%
 Final - 20%

***Friendly Reminder of the Honor Code:*** You are expected to write/type and sign the Honor Pledge on all graded academic exercises. The pledge reads: “I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” I will not evaluate work that does not include the pledge.

**Participation & Attendance** are keys aspects of your evaluation, so please be mindful that active engagement in class discussions will affect your final grade. You cannot expect to do well if you do not attend class regularly, contribute to class, and participate in the discussion groups. Please see me if you are having difficulty contributing to class discussions so that we may discuss class preparation strategies.

**The map quiz** comprises contemporary delineations of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It will be periodically administered. Please review the list of countries on Blackboard.

**The mid-term** will assess knowledge related to the first half of the semester.

**The first paper (2 pages)** will focus on interrogating a primary source from the colonial period. The assigned sources for Weeks 2 and 3 are widely read and cited sources from a variety of people who claimed to have dramatic and personal experiences during the conquest and early colonial periods. You will use this opportunity to exercise the tools of a historian by questioning primary sources, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and assessing whether the producers of the sources have an “agenda” or are generally impartial (or finding the ways they may vacillate between the two).

**The second response paper (4 pages)** will ask you to engage with a historiographical debate, the influence of liberal thought in Mexico. For this paper, you will identify the argument(s) of the scholars and critically explore the strengths and weaknesses of the sources presented.

**For the short paper (5 pages),** you will engage with themes of alienation (both locally and nationally) from *Child of the Dark: The Diary Of Carolina Maria De Jesus.* You will supplement the actual diary entries
with Levine, “The Cautionary Tale of Carolina Maria de Jesus” (pp. 55-83) and Paulino Bueno, “Carolina Maria de Jesus in the Context of ‘Testimonios’: Race, Sexuality, and Exclusion,” pp. 257-284. A detailed prompt will be available on Blackboard.

The final will assess knowledge related to the second half of the semester.

***The penalty for a late paper 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). PAPERS MUST BE TURNED IN AT THE START OF CLASS ON THE DAY THEY ARE DUE. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12pt., 1-inch margins, and in Times New Roman.

Schedule of Graded Work
Feb 19: Map Quiz
Feb 26: Response Paper
March 14: Map Quiz
March 16: Midterm
March 28: Map Quiz
April 6: Response Paper
April 22: Short Paper
May 4: Map Quiz
TBA: Final

Attendance & Participation:
Attendance and participation are required. 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 decision of students to observe religious holidays, but please send me an email notifying me of your absence. I respect and uphold college guidelines that prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, race, gender, or religious affiliation. For students who require accommodations for enhanced accessibility, please make an appointment with me to discuss the College’s options.
The audio and/or video recording of lectures (in whole or in part) is strictly prohibited without the professor’s express, written consent.

The use of technology in the classroom should be limited and used with great consideration to your fellow classmates. If your use of technology becomes a distraction, your use may become restricted to respect the learning objectives of others.

**Communication:**
Outside of office hours, my preferred mode of communication is email (dterrazas@oberlin.edu). I will answer emails within 48 hours of their receipt. I will not answer emails after 9pm.

**Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. I am required by College policy to report any instance of **verified or perceived** violation of the Honor Code.

You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism and any other violations of the honor code that affect your coursework. 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): using outside materials (paper or electronic) for a closed exam, 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](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.

**Required Books:**
The required book can be found On Reserve at Mudd Library
All articles and book chapters assigned in part are located on Blackboard.

**UNIT 1: DIVERSIFYING WORLDS**

**Week 1: Introduction**
M, Feb 1
Why Study Latin American History?
Review Syllabus, Handout Map Quiz Geography

W, Feb 3
Ryan, “What is ‘Latin America’?” pp. 487-492

F, Feb 5
* Born in Blood and Fire, Introduction pp. 1-9

**Week 2: Contact and Colonization **
M, Feb 8
* Born in Blood and Fire, Chapter 1, pp. 11-46

W, Feb 10
Primary Source: Bartolome de las Casas, “A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies,” pp. 7-12
Primary Source: Cortes’s Letters to Emperor Charles V, Selections from Letters 1, 2, 3 pp. 1-6
Primary Source: Bernal Diaz del Castillo, The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Dona Marina’s Story, pp. 66-68
***Discussion Groups: What can we believe?

F, Feb 12
***The article by Gray is from 1951 and while the language is dated (the term “Negro” in English is not an acceptable designation for a person of African descent), it is one of the earliest articles discussing the participation of Africans in the conquest of Spanish America.
Restall, “Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America,” pp. 171-205
***Discussion: What is historiography?

**Week 3: Colonization **
M, Feb 15
* Born in Blood and Fire, Chapter 2, pp. 49-84

W, Feb 17
Primary Source: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, “The First New Chronicle,” pp. 36-43
Rolena Adorno, “The Depiction of Self and Other in Colonial Peru,” pp. 110-118
***Discussion Groups: Guaman Poma de Ayala’s Illustrations and Narrative Tools

F, Feb 19
***Map Quiz
UNIT 2: AGE OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONSOLIDATION

**Week 4: Independence**
M, Feb 22  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 3, pp. 87-114

W, Feb 24  
Please watch before class: “War and Independence in Spanish America, 1810-1826”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6KzwvYAGfM (57 minutes long)  

F, Feb 26  
***Response Paper DUE: Colonial Primary Source***

**Week 5: The Aftermath of Independence**
M, Feb 29  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 4, pp. 117-147

W, March 2  

F, March 4  
Schmidt-Nowara, “Empires Against Emancipation: Spain, Brazil, and the Abolition of Slavery,” pp. 101-119  
Primary Source: Nabuco, “A Humane and Civilized Nation: Abolition,” pp. 87-96  
***Discussion Groups: Morality and the Persistence of Slavery***

**Week 6: “Progress”**
M, March 7  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 5, pp. 149-179

W, March 9  
Yeager, “Religion, Gender Ideology, and the Training of Female Public Elementary School Teachers in Nineteenth Century Chile,” pp. 209-243  
***Discussion Groups: Ideal Womanhood, Marianismo, and the State***

F, March 11  
Thomson, “Popular Aspects of Liberalism in Mexico, 1848-1888,” pp. 265-292  
***Discussion Groups: Historiographical Debates, Why and how did liberalism gain traction in Mexico?***
**Week 7**  
M, March 14  
Midterm Review  
***Map Quiz  

W, March 16  
**MIDTERM**  

F, March 18  
**Neocolonialism**  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 6, pp. 181-200  

**SPRING BREAK, MARCH 19-27**  

**UNIT 3: ECONOMIC TRIALS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL UPHEAVAL**  

**Week 8: con’t. Neocolonialism**  
M, March 28  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 6, pp. 200-215  
***Map Quiz  

W, March 30  
Augusto dos Santos, “Historical Roots of the Whitening of Brazil,” pp. 61-82  
Primary Source: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “Civilization versus Barbarism,” pp. 112-113  

F, April 1  
Jingsheng, “Chinese Emigration to Mexico and the Sino-Mexico Relations Before 1910,” pp. 75-88  
***Discussion Groups: Historiographical Debate, The Impact of Immigration  

**Week 9: Nationalism**  
M, April 4  
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 7, pp. 217-251  

W, April 6  
Nodin Valdes, “Mexican Revolutionary Nationalism and Repatriation during the Great Depression,” pp. 1-23  
Primary Source: Diego Rivera’s Murals (in-class)  
*** Response Paper DUE: Why Liberalism in Mexico?  

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F, April 8
Santamaria-Delgado, “Tango’s Reterritorialization in Medellin, Gardel's Myth and the Construction of a Tanguero Local Identity,” pp. 177-209
***Group Discussion: Creating National Identity Through the Arts

**Week 10: Revolution**
M, April 11
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 8, pp. 253-283

W, April 13
Selections from *Child of the Dark: The Diary Of Carolina Maria De Jesus*
Translators Preface, v-xv
Primary Source: Diary Entries Year 1955, 3-20

F, April 15
“On Celebrating the Cuban Revolution,” pp. 5-16
Please watch before class: “Memories of Underdevelopment” (1968),
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37PS0A_chbc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37PS0A_chbc)
***Discussion Groups: Understanding Revolution

**Week 11: Reaction**
M, April 18
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 9, pp. 285-316

W, April 20
Belucci, “Childless Motherhood, Interview with Nora Cortinas, a Mother of the Plaza de Mayo, Argentina,” pp. 83-88
Bejarano, “Las Super Madres de Latino America, Transforming Motherhood by Challenging Violence in Mexico, Argentina, and El Salvador,” 126-150
***Discussion Groups: Who gets to be political?

F, April 22
Primary Source: Please watch before class: “Lost and Found,”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5ZhfmmpYz4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5ZhfmmpYz4) (23 minutes)
***Short Paper DUE: Alienation in *Child of the Dark*
UNIT 4: 21ST-CENTURY CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS

Week 12: Neoliberalism and Representation
M, April 25
*Born in Blood and Fire*, Chapter 10, pp. 319-340

W, April 2
Magallanes-Blanco, “Video as a Tool for Change, Gender Discourse in Zapatista Indigenous Communities,” pp. 106-114
Primary Source: Please watch before class: “We are Equal: Zapatista Women Speak,”
https://vimeo.com/45615382 (18 minutes)
***Discussion Groups: Social Movements and Goals for Social Change

F, April 29
***The author quotes the national coordinator for the MNU and she uses racial epithets to make a point about how language derives from a racist culture. Please consider her assertion and think about the whether this is specific to time and place.
***Discussion Groups: Is Culture A Problem?

Week 13: Group Discussions of Current Events and Review
M, May 2
Current Debates in Current Events
***Discussion Groups

W, May 4:
Final Review
***Map Quiz

F, May 6
Final Review and Evaluations

FINAL: TBA