HIST 115: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

- Department of History, Ohio Wesleyan University
- Spring Semester, 2008; MWF 11-11:50 AM
- Jeremy Baskes, Elliott 1st Floor, ext. 3638
- Office Hours: just stop by as I’m usually in the office.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a general survey of the history of Latin America from pre-Hispanic to modern times. While the majority of the course concentrates on the region’s twentieth century, an understanding of Latin America’s early history is crucial. Thus, the first third of the course is dedicated to the pre-conquest and colonial periods.

BOOKS REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE: The student is required to obtain and read the following books.


COURSE ESSENTIALS:

- **Examinations**: There will be three exams. The first exam will cover the materials from the first four weeks. The second will cover weeks 5 through 11. The third exam will cover the materials from weeks 12-15. Consult the syllabus for exam dates.

- **Book Essays**: Each student will prepare a 1000 word (4 pages) essay on one of the following books read during the semester: 1) *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*; 2) *The Rebellion of the Hanged*, 3) *The Little School*, or 4) *Massacre at El Mozote*. See attached guidelines for further details. Due dates for all of the papers are as indicated in the syllabus. Papers submitted after the deadline will be marked down one full grade per day. (From A to B for example). Papers will be evaluated on the quality of both the content & the writing. Students may elect to write 2 of the book essays in which case their lowest grade will be thrown out.

- **Class Participation**: Attendance is mandatory, and class participation is expected of all students. The grades of students with excessive absences will be lowered.

- **Plagiarism**: Plagiarism and cheating are taken seriously. Students caught will be failed for the course and reported to the dean of students.

GRADES: Final grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance/participation 12%
- Exam #1 22%
- Exam #2 22%
- Book essay 22%
- Exam #3 22%
WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS:

WEEK 1: (Monday 1/14) AMERICANS & SPANIARDS BEFORE 1492
Keen, pp. xix-xxi; ch. 1-2.

WEEK 2: (Monday 1/21) EUROPEAN EXPANSION AND THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS
Keen, pp. 51-69
Restall, Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest, chapters 1-4

WEEK 3: (Monday 1/28) THE COLONIAL HERITAGE OF MODERN LATIN AMERICA
Restall, Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest, 5 – epilogue.
Keen, ch. 4-5

WEEK 4: (Monday 2/4) LATE COLONIAL ERA AND INDEPENDENCE
Keen, ch. 7-8.

• Wednesday - Book essay on Restall, Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest, due in-class. (see attached guidelines)

WEEK 5: (Monday 2/11) SEARCH FOR ORDER IN EARLY INDEPENDENT LATIN AMERICA

• Wednesday: EXAM # 1
Keen, pp. 180-198 (after exam)

WEEK 6: (Monday 2/18) ORDER & PROGRESS IN LATIN AMERICA
Keen, pp. 217-230; 251-59
B. Traven, The Rebellion of the Hanged, pp. 3-122.

WEEK 7: (Monday 2/25) MEXICO'S REVOLUTION & ITS LEGACY
Keen, ch., 12

WEEK 8: (Monday 3/3) OLIGARCHS, DEPRESSION & NEW POLITICAL FORCES

• Monday - Essay on B. Traven, The Rebellion of the Hanged, due in class (see attached guidelines)
Keen 268-274; & ch.. 13

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: (Monday 3/17) POPULISM & INDUSTRIALIZATION

Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark. Read preface & read/skim pp. 32-127.
WEEK 10: (Monday 3/24) THE MILITARY IN POWER

Reread Keen 334-338.

Keen 352-363


WEEK 11: (Monday 3/31) THE DIRTY WARS

Monday- Book Essay on Partnoy, *The Little School*, due in class. (see attached guidelines)

- Friday – Exam #2

WEEK 12: (Monday 4/7) 1st COLD WAR CHALLENGE TO US HEGEMONY: GUATEMALA 1944-54

Keen, 454-63; & 477-90.

Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*, ch. 1-4

WEEK 13: (Monday 4/14) THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

Keen, ch. 17.

Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*, ch. 5-7

WEEK 14: (Monday 4/21) CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE 1980s

Keen 463-77; 594-96


- Friday – Book Essay on Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*, due in class. (see attached guidelines)

WEEK 15: (Monday 4/28) LATIN AMERICA TODAY

Keen ch. 21.

Final Examination: Monday May 5 at 7:30PM
Guidelines for Book Essays

During the semester, you will write a 1000 word (4 pages) essay discussing one of the following required books, 1) Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*; 2) B. Traven, *The Rebellion of the Hanged*; 3) Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School*; or 4) Mark Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote*.

To help guide you, I have provided questions for you to address. All essays should directly address the question below and be written clearly and cohesively. State your “thesis” (what you consider to be the answer to the question) in the opening paragraph. The rest of the paper should develop your thesis providing direct evidence from the book. Be sure to cite the location of your evidence, whether direct quotations or merely factual references. Please use parenthetical citations, e.g. (Traven, 127). Direct quotations should be used to support your arguments but should be kept brief, a sentence or two at the longest. Your concluding paragraph should reiterate your thesis and make a general statement about the book’s treatment of the issue.

Students may elect to write 2 of the book essays in which case their lowest grade will be thrown out.

**Essay on Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest***

Why has so much of the history of the Spanish Conquest been shrouded in myth? Provide explanation for the pervasiveness and survival of this mythology basing your arguments on at least several of the myths identified by Restall.

**Essay on B. Traven, *The Rebellion of the Hanged***

What means of social control did the elites in this novel employ to maintain their dominance over the peasantry.

**Essay on Alicia Partnoy, *The Little School***

How did Alicia Partnoy and the other prisoners of the “Little School” resist the efforts of the guards to dehumanize them?

**Essay on Mark Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote***

How and why did the United States respond to the events at El Mozote? Be certain to base your assertions on specific material evidence provided from the book.

Learn the Map of Latin America. It will appear on tests.