

# SOC 149-19: Latin American Society

Department of Sociology  
Tufts University  
Spring 2019

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**Class Meeting:** T/Th 10:30-11:45am  
**Class Location:** Eaton 202  
**Office Hours:** Mon 5-6pm; Tues 3-5pm

## Course Description

Although colonial rule over Latin America officially came to an end nearly two centuries ago, its people continue to suffer from high rates of poverty, oppression, corruption, and violence. At the same time, communities across Latin America continue to resist inequality through a range of political, social and cultural practices and discourses. After reviewing the larger historical trajectories that led to contemporary realities, this course will examine many key themes that traverse the populations who inhabit Latin America. Some of the core questions we will explore include: How do colonial legacies continue to play out in contemporary political, economic and social structures? How do these interact with race, class, gender and sexuality to produce uneven relations of power? What are the consequences of globalization and neoliberalism on Latin America's poor? And finally, what forms of resistance do marginalized populations employ to survive or subvert forces of domination? By focusing on ethnographic case studies of several countries across Central and South America we will draw upon a range of examples and theoretical frameworks to consider the changes and continuities across Latin American society.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define and provide examples of core concepts affecting the historical and contemporary economic, political, and social systems in Latin America and reflect on their inter-connectivity;
2. Identify and discuss the multiple spheres of power that produce inequality in Latin American Society;
3. Describe the connections between the colonial past and its contemporary renditions;
4. Identify the effects of macro-level forces on the localized experiences of groups and individuals;
5. Identify the multiple forms of violence and resistance that operate across Latin American history, society and geography;
6. Apply the analytical tools gained during the class to current events, policies, and issues.

## Required Texts

1. Wade, Peter. 2009. *Race and Sex in Latin America*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
2. Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. University of California Press.

3. Pine, Adrienne. 2008. *Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras*. University of California Press.

## **Classroom Policies**

### **Respect and Inclusivity in the Classroom**

Classrooms are spaces for learning. For this to happen, we must first and foremost respect the humanity of all students, instructors, and anyone else in the classroom. Therefore, no discriminatory remarks towards members of any individual based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc will be tolerated. Students are encouraged to treat the classroom as a space for learning about and working through multiple perspectives, and are encouraged to reflect critically on their own views and experiences and the dynamics that engender alternative perspectives.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions by critically engaging with the material and with key concepts, themes, and stories. Questions or comments that challenge traditional assumptions or normative values are encouraged, though these should always be provided in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

### **Technology in the classroom**

Studies consistently show that the use of technology is distracting and contributes to students' low performance. Therefore, you should refrain from using laptops in class. If your reading materials are on your computer or tablet, you may refer to these during class discussions. However, the use of Facebook, email, Amazon, or any other such sites is NOT permitted. I also reserve the right to look at screens or to ask you to put away your laptop if it appears to be distracting. Cell phones should be on silent at all times, and students should not check their phones during class.

### **Food**

Remaining engaged in class—alert, attentive, and participative—will make the class more interesting and productive for all of us. Students are therefore welcome to bring food and drinks, as these can be helpful to remaining alert. However, please do not be late due to waiting in lines to purchase food.

### **Plagiarism & Academic Integrity**

Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask me for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.

The general rule on plagiarism is that you should cite any fact that is not widely known and any idea that is not your own—which will be much of what you write! Keep track of what you are

reading and where you are obtaining your information, and become comfortable with including the authors' last name(s) and dates of publication after each "borrowed" fact or idea. Citing what you have read not only prevents you from inadvertently committing plagiarism, but also demonstrates to your reader that your writing is well-researched.

As part of this course, I will utilize TurnItIn in the Canvas learning management system to help determine the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of websites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work.

## **Sources**

We now suffer from an over-abundance of information, and it is easy to get overwhelmed by these sources and not know how to find them or which ones are credible. We will discuss this in greater detail in class, but students should be thoughtful about the credibility of each source. As a general rule, these sources are valid: books, scholarly articles, news articles by a mainstream newspaper, and reports issued by the government or major NGOs. You can find many of these on scholar.google.com. Invalid sources include: Wikipedia, blogs, and websites not affiliated with a credible organization.

## **Diversity and Accessibility**

The diversity of students' experiences, perspectives, and abilities is essential to an informed and holistic classroom learning environment. Students with unique learning needs or who require special accommodations should speak to me at the beginning of the semester so provisions can be made accordingly. Please also contact the Student Accessibility Services office at [Accessibility@tufts.edu](mailto:Accessibility@tufts.edu) or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an SAS representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that, per Tufts University guidelines, accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

## **Communication**

Please email me or stop me after class for any questions or concerns or to talk further about the course material. I will be happy to provide you additional ideas and resources relevant to your areas of interest. While out-of-class communication with me is not required to get a good grade, students who actively email or talk to their instructors are much more likely to understand the assignments, gain greater insights into the topics, and perform well.

I will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends and holidays. Feel free to email again if I have not responded within that time frame (and you need a response right away), as sometimes things fall through the cracks.

## **Office Hours**

I hold regular office hours and all students are encouraged to attend. If you have class during those times, come speak to or email me and we can find another time.

While it is not necessary to visit all professors all the time, getting into the habit of talking to your professors outside the classroom is very important and will, in the long run, contribute to your relationships with faculty, your own thinking and reflection, and your overall success as a student. Good reasons to come to office hours include: (a) there was something about the class you didn't understand or have additional thoughts you'd like to discuss; (b) you would like to talk about your class project and brainstorm ideas; (c) you are having personal challenges and are afraid they might impact your participation in the class; or (d) you would like to discuss any other academic/research/work issues that fall within my areas of study or experience.

## **Grades**

Please note that all grades are given with careful consideration, based on the description of the project and the rubric. Comments will also be provided to explain your grade. If, however, you feel like your grade does not reflect your performance, you may request that I review your grade. Please keep in mind that a revision of your assignment could result in your grade staying the same, rising, or potentially even going down. Please note that I will not review your grade because you are applying to Medical or Law school, as I do not give grades: you earn the grade you receive.

Below is the conversion scale I use when calculating final grades. Please note that I will round up for scores that end in 0.5 or higher.

A+ 98-100  
A 94-97  
A- 90-93  
B+ 87-89  
B 84-86  
B- 80-83  
C+ 77-79  
C 74-76  
C- 70-73  
D+ 67-69  
D 64-66  
D- 60-63  
F 59 or below

## **Assignments:**

Attendance and Participation	15%
Current events presentation	10%
Art Reflection	10%
Take-Home Exams (3)	45% (15% each)
Final Paper	20%
Total	100%

### **Late Policy**

All written assignments should be uploaded to Canvas BY MIDNIGHT on the due date. **Late assignments will be docked 5% for each day late.**

- Exceptions may be allowed for major issues (severe illness, family emergencies, etc), but only if you get permission at least 24 hours before the deadline. **I will not reply to requests for an extension on the day the assignment is due.**
- Exceptions will NOT be granted for minor illnesses, travel, events, games, etc.
- Please speak to me ASAP if you have ongoing issues (i.e. chronic mental or physical health conditions) so we can put a plan in place BEFORE project deadlines.

### **Attendance and Participation (15%)**

Discussion is critical to our best learning—and “unlearning.” You are therefore expected to attend every class and to come prepared. A good grade depends on your (a) arriving on time, (b) not missing more than two classes, (c) paying attention during class and participating (aim for at least two comments per class), (d) making contributions that demonstrate you’ve done the readings and reflected on them, and (e) completing short class assignments. Please email me before class if you will be absent.

### **Current Events Presentation (10%)**

Each student will be responsible for presenting on 1-3 current event(s) in a country of their choice. These presentations will be on a pre-selected date during the semester. The presentation must identify the most relevant events related to that country and to the topics we’ve discussed in class so far. Each presentation will be approximately 10 minutes in duration, with five minutes for discussion. The presentation must include a description of the issue(s), some brief history, the most pertinent debates or perspectives, and a set of explanations or take-aways. The presentation must also use class themes and concepts to help make sense of the event.

### **Art Reflection (10%)**

After our visit to the MFA, each student will prepare a 5-6 page double-spaced paper that provides a reflection on four pieces of art you enjoyed. The paper should include pictures of your four pieces of art, a description of what they are, and your own analysis of what they tell us

about domination and resistance in Latin American society. The paper should also have an introduction and conclusion that identifies the main themes you took from the project.

Art reflections will be due on 4/21.

### **Take-home Exams (3 exams, 15% each= 45%)**

Each student will complete three take-home exams, which will consist of two essays (selected from three possible questions). You will be expected to write 2-3 pages for each question (double-spaced). Questions will be posted by midnight on Thursday and will be due by midnight on Sunday. The goal of the questions will be to assess your understanding of the key themes of the readings and course discussion. No outside research will be necessary.

Take-home exams will be due on 2/10, 3/10 and 4/14.

### **Final Paper (20%) Due 5/6**

In lieu of a final exam, each student will submit a paper of 10-12 pages double-spaced on a current issue in Latin American society. The topic may be the same as the presentation, or different. **The goal of the paper is to demonstrate the student's ability to apply ideas learned in class to current issues in Latin America.** The paper should include (a) a description of the research question or topic and why it is important/interesting; (b) a historical overview of the issue; (c) information about the social, political, and economic factors that affect the issue; and (d) your own sociological analysis that draws from course themes, theories, and concepts. The paper should cite 6-8 academic sources (i.e. peer-reviewed journals or books), 6-8 course readings, and additional sources as needed (i.e. news articles, etc).

A one-page double-spaced abstract will be due on 3/3.

## Course Readings

\*\*Readings might change throughout the semester. Please check Canvas for announcements on changes.\*\*

Date	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
1/17	Welcome!
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Inequality at the Roots</b>
1/22	Wade, Peter. 2009. <i>Race and Sex in Latin America</i> . London: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 3: Race and Sex in Colonial Latin America.  Batalla, Guillermo Bonfil. 1996. <i>Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization</i> . Austin: University of Texas Press. Chapter 5.
1/24	Wade, Peter. 2009. <i>Race and Sex in Latin America</i> . London: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 4: Making Nations through Race and Sex.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Ties and Knots: From Colonialism to Neocolonialism</b>
1/29	Wade, Peter. 2009. <i>Race and Sex in Latin America</i> . London: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 5: The Political Economy of Race and Sex in Contemporary Latin America.
1/31	Wade, Peter. 2009. <i>Race and Sex in Latin America</i> . London: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 6: Race, Sex, and the Politics of Identity and Citizenship.  Begin “Even in the Rain” in class
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Spirals of Domination and Resistance</b>
2/5	Schiffler, Manuel. 2015. “Bolivia: The Cochabamba Water War and Its Aftermath.” in <i>Water, Politics and Money: A Reality Check on Privatization</i> , edited by M. Schiffler. New York, NY: Springer.  Finish “Even in the Rain” in class
2/7	Current Events Presentations, Group 1
<b>2/7-2/10</b>	<b>First Take-Home Exam</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Lives at the Intersections in Urban Brazil</b>
2/12	Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. <i>Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 1.

2/14	Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. <i>Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 2.
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>The Myth of Racial Democracy</b>
2/19	Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. <i>Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 3.  Caldeira, Teresa P. R. and James Holston. 1999. "Democracy and Violence in Brazil." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 41(04):691–729.
2/21	No class, Monday schedule
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Race, Poverty &amp; Sexuality</b>
2/26	Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. <i>Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 4: No Time for Childhood.
2/28	Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. <i>Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown</i> . University of California Press. Chapters 6 & 7.
<b>3/3</b>	<b>Final paper abstracts due</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Gender and Politics in Contemporary Venezuela</b>
3/4	Extra credit opportunity: "I, A Black Woman, Resist." A documentary by Sharrelle Barber and panel on the transnational Black feminist movement
3/5	Fernandes, Sujatha. 2007. "Barrio Women and Popular Politics in Chávez's Venezuela." <i>Latin American Politics and Society</i> 49(3):97–127.
3/7	Current events presentations, Group 2
<b>3/7-3/10</b>	<b>Second take-home exam</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Violence and Empire in Central America</b>
3/12	Pine, Adrienne. 2008. <i>Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras</i> . University of California Press. Introduction.  Bourgois, Philippe. 2001. "The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador." <i>Ethnography</i> 2(1):5–34.
3/14	Pine, Adrienne. 2008. <i>Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 1: Violence.
3/18-3/25	Spring Break

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Embodied Imperialism</b>
3/26	<p>Pine, Adrienne. 2008. <i>Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras</i>. University of California Press. Chapter 2: Alcohol.</p> <p>Grandin, Greg. 2006. <i>Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism</i>. Henry Holt and Company. Chapter 1.</p>
3/28	Pine, Adrienne. 2008. <i>Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras</i> . University of California Press. Chapter 3: Maquiladoras & Conclusion.
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Art as Politics</b>
4/2	Current events presentation, Group 3
4/4	10am-12pm: LAS Collection Tour at the Museum of Fine Arts, with Dr. Eulogio Guzman
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Migration and Transborder Lives</b>
4/9	Leon, Jason De. 2015. <i>The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail</i> . Oakland, California: University of California Press. Intro & Chapter 1.
4/11	<p>Stephen, Lynn. 2007. <i>Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon</i>. 2 edition. Durham: Duke University Press Books. Chapter 1.</p> <p>Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. <i>Borderlands (La Frontera): The New Mestiza</i>. Gloria Anzaldúa.</p>
<b>4/11-4/14</b>	<b>Third take-home exam</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Globalization and Social Movements</b>
4/16	<p>Cepek, Michael. 2012. <i>A Future for Amazonia: Randy Borman and Cofán Environmental Politics</i>. University of Texas Press. Introduction &amp; Chp 2.</p> <p>Watch "Crude"</p>
4/18	<p>Alvarez, Sonia E., Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar. 1998. <i>Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-Visioning Latin American Social Movements</i>. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press. Introduction.</p> <p>Finish watching "Crude"</p>
<b>4/21</b>	<b>Art reflection due</b>

<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Putting it all together</b>
4/23	Current events presentation, Group 4
4/25	Wrapping up
<b>5/6</b>	<b>Final papers due</b>