

LACS 4911
Capstone Seminar in Latin American Studies
Spring 2009
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The Capstone Seminar in Latin American Studies is designed both to provide a suitable conclusion to your study of what the Colombian **pensador** Germán Arciniegas once called the “Continent of Seven Colors,” and to suggest the myriad ways in which Latin America has been explored and understood by Latin Americans themselves. This latter concern presents many challenges and requires that the student be open to various disciplines and ways of understanding Latin American reality. Some approaches that we will examine will be more attractive than others; all are worthy of your attention.

Format and Readings

The basic format of the course will involve meeting together during the course of each week to discuss both the assigned readings and general Latin American topics as determined by the instructor. There are four required readings. The Oxford Book of Latin American Essays, ed. by the Mexican-born writer Ilan Stavans, will provide the major focus of your reading, and includes essays written on a wide variety of topics by some of the most important Latin American philosophers, scholars, and literary figures since independence. Juan Pérez Jolote, by the late Mexican anthropologist Ricardo Pozas, is a classic interpretation of traditional Indian life in Chiapas, written as a faux autobiography. Child of the Dark is also autobiographical in character (though not faux), in this case composed as the personal diary of a Brazilian **favelada** in the late 1950s and which provides ample description of the underside of life in a developing country. Finally, A Guide to the Perfect Latin American Idiot is an iconoclastic work of some merit, written by three social commentators—one Cuban, one Peruvian, and one Colombian---that seeks to “shred the slavish political correctness” they see as dominating the Latin American intelligentsia.

Grades will be based on: (1) active participation in classroom discussion (to be conducted in Spanish and Portuguese as well as English)---15 percent; (2) a three to five page mini-essay that analyzes the argument of one or more authors whose work we have examined, due during the week of February 9th ---25 percent; (3) a second three to five page mini-essay of the same nature, due during the week of March 16th ---25 percent; and (4) a term paper of twenty to twenty-five pages on a topic to be decided in consultation with the instructor (but which will reflect one or more of the themes developed in the readings), due during the week of April 20th---35 percent.

Success in the course depends on sufficient time being dedicated to these eclectic readings and to participation in classroom discussion. Absences will definitely have an adverse effect on your grade. All academic work must meet the standards identified in UGA's Academic Honesty Policy and students must conform to the University Honor Code. Students are responsible for informing themselves about these standards before performing any academic work. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Week 1

Jan. 12 essays by Bello, Sarmiento, Montalvo, Hostos

Week 2

Jan. 19 essays by González Prada, Martí, Euclides da Cunha, Rodó, and Ortíz.

Week 3

Jan. 26 essays by Vasconcelos, Henríquez Ureña, Mistral, Oswald de Andrade, and Graciliano Ramos.

Week 4

Feb. 2 essays by Mario de Andrade, Mariátegui, Martínez Estrada, Ramos, Mañach, and Asturias.

Week 5

Feb. 9 essays by Borges, Cabrera, Freyre, Arciniegas, Guillén, Mallea.

Week 6

Feb. 16 essays by Cardoza y Aragon, Carpentier, Neruda, Uslar Pietri, Bianco, and Anderson Imbert.

Week 7

Feb. 23 essays by Caballero Calderón, Amado, Lezama Lima, and Bioy Casares.

Week 8

Mar. 2 essays by Cortázar, Paz, Roa Bastos, Monterrosa, Rodríguez Monegal, and Mutís.

Week 9

Mar. 9 SPRING BREAK

Week 10

Mar. 16 essays by Alegría, Donoso, Salazar Bondy, Castellanos, and Lispector.

Week 11

Mar. 23

essays by Rama, Fuentes, García Marquez, Ibarguengoitia, Cabrera Infante, and Fernández Retamar.

Week 12

Mar. 30

essays by Rojo, Rossi, Elizondo, Puig, Poniatowska, and Sánchez.

Week 13

Apr. 6

essays by Vargas Llosa, Sarduy, Ferré, Monsivais, Valenzuela, and Galeano

Week 14

Apr. 13

essays by Allende, Dorfman, Rodríguez Juliá, Subcomandante Marcos, and Menchú.

Week 15

Apr. 20

Ricardo Pozas, **Juan Pérez Jolote**; Carolina María de Jesus, **Child of the Dark**

Week 16

Apr. 27

selections from **Guide to the Perfect Latin American Idiot**

Week 17

May 4

some tentative conclusions