

**Department:** LAMS

**Course No:** 190/W

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Perspectives on Latin America

**Contact:** Tricia Gabany-Guerrero

**Content Area:** CA2-Social Sciences and CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

**Diversity:** CA4 -International

**WQ:** Writing

**Catalog Copy:** LAMS 190/W Perspectives on Latin America 3 units A multidisciplinary course including the geography, indigenous peoples, Colonization and nation formation; society, politics, economy, history and culture of contemporary Latin America and its place in today's world.

**Course Information:** The purpose of this course is to provide students with an interdisciplinary introduction to Latin America.

The course requires in-class participation, weekly quizzes on the readings, some group projects, and an essay-based final exam. Students are also required to prepare a research paper, presenting pieces of it to the instructor for feedback throughout the semester.

The course covers a range of topics, including economics, politics, cultures and histories of Latin America. Students will not only gain a basic understanding of these areas, but also an understanding of the interconnections between them, i.e. how culture is shaped by the economy, etc.

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed:** (1) Through in-class discussion, quizzes, and the writing assignments, students will gain experience articulating ideas.

(2) As an interdisciplinary course, students will attain a broad level of understanding Latin America that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Students will be introduced to ethics and concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism as applied to specific issues in Latin America, such as conquests, revolutions and human rights. The requirements for human subjects' research will be briefly discussed. Students will also be introduced to ideas about social science research in Latin America. An example might be about the ethics of research with respect to the Yanomamo as discussed in Darkness in El Dorado.

(3) Students will be required to think critically about problems in Latin America, their causes, and their possible solutions.

(4) Students will be introduced to concepts of race and ethnicity and how social constructions of these concepts vary throughout Latin America.

(5) The course will cover issues of U.S. influence in Latin America. Students will gain a better understanding of the impact of U.S. consumption (agricultural and industrial products) on people in Latin America.

(6) Students will gain a broader understanding of the differences in cultures and experiences within Latin America and between the U.S. and Latin America.

**CA2 Criteria:** 1. This course will introduce students to basic theories, concepts and methods in social science, such as: globalization and development, ethics in research and writing and library research methods. Students will be required to compare and debate contending theories and approaches to studying Latin America.

2. Students will study Latin American through a variety of methods beyond the textbook, including: personal testimonies, media representations, case studies, governmental reports, survey research, and quantitative data. Students will be encouraged to compare evidence obtained through different methods and consider might be more compelling and why.

3. Students will consider a number of social issues at various levels. One example might be how different groups of individuals respond differently to conservation, comparing indigenous groups to traditional business interests or governments concerned with economic development.

4. This course will focus on a range of social issues including poverty, human rights, development, environmental protection, health care, women's issues, indigenous issues, race and ethnicity. Students will be required to consider these issues at all levels, including the individual, societal, and international levels.

**CA4 Criteria:** A major component of this course will be studying the diversity of experience of Latin Americans, not just between the U.S. and Latin America, but within Latin America as well. The course will also emphasize that there are different approaches to life and living, and people in other parts of the world value things differently than we do in the U.S. Thus, a slower lifestyle is not necessarily a sign of laziness, but a sign of placing a higher value on spending time with family and friends. Students will also consider the factors that compel Latin Americans to migrate to the U.S., and help them to develop more sensitivity towards migrants.

**W Criteria:** 1. The whole writing component is 50% of the course grade. Students will be required to prepare a research paper on a topic of their choice related to Latin America. This research project will enable them to delve deeper into a topic from the course that they found engaging. Students will be required to write a minimum of 15 pages for the final research paper. Students will submit drafts throughout the semester, which will be graded and returned to the students at least three times.

In addition to the research paper, students will have bi-monthly quizzes that require them to

analyze the readings. Quizzes may require writing short essays as well as answering multiple choice questions. Essay questions will be graded both on the content and on the clarity of writing, thus permitting students to work toward improving their writing throughout the semester.

2. Students will receive written comments on all of their writing assignments to identify errors and make suggestions for clarity. If there are common problems, they will be discussed with the whole class. The instructor will meet individually with students who have major problems. Students will receive substantive written comments on drafts, and will be invited to discuss comments in detail with the instructor.

3. The grade for the research paper will be broken down into the submission of various drafts. This will require that students make revisions in order to receive the full grade for the research paper.

4. The syllabus will inform students that they must pass the "W" component of the course in order to pass the course.

**Role of Grad Students:** Ph.D. students in the dissertation stage may teach the course. M.A. students may serve as T.A.'s to assist with the course.