Introduction to This Course:
In October 1974, CBS news anchorman Dan Rather concluded a report on Cuba’s expanding healthcare, school system and housing construction with the statement, “Cuba is a Communist dictatorship [but] from all outward indications, at least, the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people want it that way. They are proud of their accomplishments in economic improvement and social reform.” In making this assessment, Dan Rather echoed a growing, pragmatic view being voiced among U.S. politicians, reporters and policy-analysts at the time. Recognizing that U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba and support exile- and CIA-led covert operations against the Castro government only seemed to backfire, many observers and U.S. officials were coming to believe that the Cuban Revolution’s legitimacy and the popularity of Fidel Castro showed U.S. policies of destabilization to be not only futile, but naïve. Rather than continue such policies, then Secretary of State to the Nixon administration, Henry Kissinger, went so far as to declare in 1975 that the U.S. was “prepared to move in a new direction” in its relations with Cuba, and suggested an end to the trade embargo.¹

The Nixon administration’s short-lived proposal has become emblematic of a pattern in Cuba-U.S. relations during and after the Cold War: despite the emergence of numerous opportunities for dramatic change, hostility and stalemate between the US and Cuba are still the order of the day. At the same time, the apparent contradiction that Dan Rather pointed out when describing Cuba’s political situation remains equally compelling: after nearly five decades of revolution, Cuba is as much defined by totalitarian forms of rule as by the apparent absence of internal dissent.

This class interrogates the accuracy of these two deeply inter-related arguments about the Cuban Revolution by asking and exploring answers to the following questions:

- How was the “millenarian” character of the Cuban Revolution rooted in the democratic political culture of the 1940s? How did the struggle against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s deepen Cubans’ longstanding belief in martyrdom, messianism and Cuba’s unique role in the world?
- Why did the vast majority of Cubans—over 90% according to the US State Department—support Fidel Castro and his decision to “postpone” elections from 1959-1960?
- To what degree did the unconditionality of so many citizens’ foundational support shape or even create the authoritarian system that was yet to come after 1961?

• How has US hostility and stagnant policy toward Cuba affected the political system of the Cuban state?
• How did/does US policy affect the everyday experience of average Cuban citizens? How has Cuba's one-party, one-leader state used US policy to justify authoritarian, Communist rule?
• What forms did dissent take under the Revolution? To what extent have they succeeded in subverting the power of the state? To what extent have they failed (and why)?
• How did Cubans experience and interpret “Communism” in the 1970s and 1980s when Soviet influence was at its height?
• How has the post-Soviet/post-Communist era (1993-present) evolved in terms of its economic and political policies? How has or will the establishment of US diplomatic relations with Cuba affect the power of citizens over their government—or disempower them even more?

Goals: Until recently, study of the Revolution has mostly focused on top-level political players in the Cuban and US governments, an approach that leaves the majority of the Cuban people in the role of by-standers to their own history and reduces the fascinating cultural and social history of Cuba in the last half-century to political calculations alone. This class seeks a different path to understanding the Revolution in three ways.

• First, we will examine the role and impact of Cuban anti-imperialist nationalism on radicalizing the Revolution in the early years by looking back at its origins in the 1940s and the 1950s movement against Batista. In addition to the anti-corruption, intellectual-led Orthodox Party of the 1940s, we will also look at a variety of anti-Batista organizations, including that of Fidel Castro. We also study the initial, broad support of the middle class in laying the foundations for radical (not moderate) forms of social change.

• Second, as we earn about the consolidation of a one-party Communist state in the midst of confrontations with the US, we will study how Fidel and other top leaders crafted heroic myths about themselves and the uniquely "redemptive" power of the Revolution. These myths not only galvanized support in the 1960s but endure (mostly outside of Cuba) today.

• Third, we will explore the nature and limits to liberation that the Revolution's adoption of state Communism offered women, blacks, gays, peasants and others through examples of cultural struggle, humor and creativity such as film and protest music (including Nueva Trova, rap, hip-hop and reggaetón).

Requirements (described below):
In-Class Discussion of Readings & Films 25%
2 Analytical Essays (min. 4-6 pages each) 30%
In-Class Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam scheduled by the college 25%
I. In-Class Discussion of Readings and Films: 25% of Final Grade

There is no part of this class more important than participation, especially each individual student's completion of weekly reading assignments. Having the reading under one's belt will ensure one's ability to understand—and enjoy!—themes developed in lectures, reflected in documents and represented in the plethora of interesting Cuban-made feature films that we will see together or discuss as a class.

Attendance and grading of participation: Students will be required to sign an attendance sheet every class meeting day. Professor Guerra and Ms. Gage will keep track of the number and quality of verbal interventions that each student makes in each class so as to ensure that the assignment of a participation grade is fair and not based on subjective concerns.

- Consistent with the policy of the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, repeated absences from the course may result in Professor Guerra preventing a student from attending the class or dropping the student from the course with a failing grade.
- Professor Guerra reserves the right to hold “pop quizzes” on the readings whenever it may be needed to assess class members’ completion of assignments.

Course Materials: There are 5 required books for the class, all of which are available for purchase from the UF Bookstore, through an on-line retailer of your choice and on 2-hour reserve at Library West. It will benefit you immensely to have your own copy as you will return time and again to the same books for your essays and exam preparations. The readings are also enjoyable enough that you might want to keep them and loan them in the future! Unless otherwise indicated, other essays, documents and articles assigned for this course are available electronically through links to Canvas UF’s on-line course website, and when necessary, through Professor Guerra’s Dropbox account by invitation to the entire class. The materials provided through these latter electronic means are either out of print books, portions of one (new) book that was ordered late or short documents for discussion. Required books for purchase are listed in order of discussion:

1. Michelle Chase, The Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962 (UNC Press, 2015). Note: Ordering of this book was delayed. We will make a scanned copy of the assigned first half available if it has not arrived to the bookstore on time.
4. Elizabeth Sutherland, The Youngest Revolution (Dial Press, 1969). Note: This book is out of print and available only through used copy. Professor Guerra has ordered several additional copies for reserve and encourages you to buy your own used copy through Amazon, etc. It is a great, great (and once bestselling) memoir!
Films: There are several films assigned for viewing before class. While they will be on reserve at the library from the start of the semester, beware that there are only one or two copies available of each. You must make plans to watch the films in small groups or in advance of the day on which a film is scheduled for discussion. See below.

II. Two Analytical Essays: 30% of Final Grade
Because this class seeks to be both intensive as well as intense on an intellectual and emotional level, students will be asked to analyze the myriad of ideas, knowledge and diverse historical sources we will use. There are three topic options and deadlines listed below for the handing in of these essays. Based on the question given in the schedule below, members of the class will write an original argument drawing on the readings for their sources but creating an original argument in each case. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any case and any plagiarism will result in failure of the course.

Students are encouraged to be critical of authors and to use these authors’ own primary sources by citing them properly. That is, students are encouraged to find different meanings or outcomes from the secondary works they are reading according to each student’s critical perspective. Reproducing an author or the professor’s own arguments from a secondary-source book or from lecture will get you nowhere: studying history requires discovery of new knowledge and more importantly, new ways of understanding that knowledge. Your job here is to express both—your acquisition of new knowledge and how you interpret the data, documents, short- and long-term implications of actions, ideas and events.

Essays should conform to the following criteria:

• Essays should NOT be written in a "stream-of-consciousness" fashion but clearly provide an underlined thesis statement and supporting evidence cited from class-derived sources alone. Citation method should rely on parentheticals (the social science method) or footnotes.
• They must be a minimum of 4 to 6 pages in length, double-spaced, typed in 12-point font and submitted in hard copy form, either in class the day that an essay is due, to the Center for Latin American Studies, to Professor Guerra’s office or in some other arrangement.

III. Midterm Exam (20% of Final Grade) & Final Exam (25% of Final Grade)
Administered in class as determined in the schedule below for the midterm or by the college during final exam period, both the midterm and the final will consist of three, straightforward sections. Students are required to bring 2 blue books for the exam:

• a map quiz in which students will locate 8 out of 10 items of extremely important historical significance on a map of Cuba (for example, Havana, the Sierra Maestra, etc.)
• an identification section in which students will completely describe and explain the historical significance of 3 out of 5 items in short sentences (for example, the 26th of July Movement) for the midterm and 4 out of 6 items for the final.
• **a short essay section** in which students will write one interpretive analysis of the historical processes they have been studying. *Students will receive possible essay questions in advance of the exam and will choose one for preparation by the date of the exam.* Students will write only one essay for the midterm using their memory alone and without the use of notes or an outline. *Because the final exam is double the length with regard to time, students will write two essays, rather than one. An outline for each essay will be allowed for the final exam.*

**Grading Scale:**

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Letter Grade with GPA equivalent:

**Other Course Policies**

**Prerequisite for Summer A (May 6-June 18, 2017) Study Abroad Course in Cuba:** Professor Guerra has been working diligently to create a new summer course based in Cuba, starting in May 2017. Either this class or enrollment in **“The History of Cuba & Puerto Rico”**, another class taught by Professor Guerra, will be required for application to the summer course.

**Excused Absences:** Students who will not be able to take an exam at the scheduled time, need an extension of the due date for a paper or were unable to attend class due to illness must provide medical documentation of their condition at the time. Students who have other conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete an assignment on time must notify Professor Guerra in advance and discuss whether or not the extension or make-up exam is merited. Students must also notify Professor Guerra if they will incur absences due to UF-sanctioned activities (such as participation in UF teams, etc.).

**Academic Honesty:** Violations of academic honesty standards include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, bribery, conspiracy and fabrication. The criteria for assessing whether student behavior meets one or more of these violations as well as the sanctions imposed may be reviewed at the website: [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm)

**Students with disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to Professor Guerra when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resource Center through their website: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)
Make-up Policy and Extra Credit: There is no extra credit. There is no way to make-up for missing discussions of the weekly reading assignment. These will normally take place before or after lecture on Thursdays, unless otherwise noted below in the course schedule. Unexcused absences from discussion will result in a participation grade of zero for that week. Evaluation of oral participation in discussion is based on the criteria described immediately below this section.

Other Course Policies: All cell phones must be turned to vibrate at the beginning of class. Internet web-surfing, texting, checking of email, or other tasks unrelated to note-taking during lecture, discussion or other classroom activities is not permitted. Professor Guerra will confiscate the cell phone or laptop of any student found engaging in these activities during class and s/he may be asked to leave the classroom. A second violation will result in disciplinary sanction.

Course Calendar and Assignment Schedule

UNIT I:
Democracy vs. Dictatorship in the Context of US Imperial Control, 1940s-1961

Tu Aug 23rd. Lecture. Cuba's Radical Traditions, US "Plattismo" & This Course

Th Aug 25th. Lecture & Film Workshop. Cuba on the Verge: Citizen Mobilization, El Partido Ortodoxo and the “Martyrdom” of Eddy Chibás, 1940s-1951
In-class film viewing and discussion: "Fidel Castro" (USA, 2005), dir. Adriana Bosch.
Note: Read documents and WATCH film “The Forgotten Revolution” (USA, 2016) assigned below for next Thursday 9/01, on reserve at Library West and on Netflix.

Th Sept 1st. Lecture, Discussion of Assigned Reading & Film Workshop. Early, Forgotten Movements Against Batista and the Birth of the 26th of July Movement

2. VIEWED BEFORE CLASS for discussion: “The Forgotten Revolution” (USA, 2016), dir. Glenn Gebhard. AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX and library course reserves.
Note: Read section of Chase’s The Revolution within the Revolution for next Thursday 9/08.

Tu Sept 6th. Lecture. Clandestinos, the 26th of July Movement & the Guerrilla Messiah, 1956-1958.
Th Sept 8th. Lecture & Discussion of Assigned Reading. David vs. Goliath: Cuba’s “Greek Democracy” and the Power of the People to Found a State in 1959
Reading for discussion: Michelle Chase, The Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962, Intro, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, pp. 1-104. [reading—hopefully!—available for purchase, on reserve, and if not yet available at bookstore, this section will be scanned and provided through Canvas and/or Dropbox]
Note: Read section of Guerra’s Visions of Power in Cuba for next Thursday, 9/15.
UNIT II:
"In a war, there can be no neutrals": Nationalist to Communist Revolution & the Role of the United States, 1959-1969

Tu Sept 13th. Lecture. Standing up to Empire: The Power of the People, the Defeat of the United States and the End of Democracy in Cuba, 1959-1960

FIRST ANALYTICAL ESSAY OPTION, DUE TU SEPT. 20th: Before and after 1959, many have argued that of the 26th of July Movement was the only truly "revolutionary" option among an array of anti-Batista alternatives that, even when armed, were reformist at best. Based on just the readings and material assigned this week, to what extent would you agree? Was the 26th of July Movement "revolutionary"? Did it become so after 1959? If so, what was responsible for this radicalization process? (Confrontations with the United States, Cuban citizens’ expectations for the state or Fidel Castro and a small group of leaders themselves?)
Note: You must write 2 essays out of a total of 3 essay options. This is the first option of 3.

Th Sept 22nd. Film Workshop. One-Man, One-State Rule & its Discontents
In-class film viewing and discussion: "Fidel" (USA, 1969), dir. Saul Landau.

UNIT III:
Self-Styled Revolutionaries, Marginalizing the Marginalized & the Consequences of Dissent in an “Institutionalized” Revolution, 1968-1970s

Tu Sept 27th. Discussion of Assigned Reading.
Reading for discussion: Michelle Chase, The Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962, Chapters 5-6, pp. 135-208. [reading available for purchase and on library reserve]
Th Sept 29th. Lecture & Archival Film Workshop.
Archival Film Workshop: What was it like to grow up in a Communist state? Views from the Archive of David C. Stone. Original selected clips, edited, translated and subtitled by Professor Guerra from the Cuban Revolution Collection, Yale University Manuscripts & Archives.
Note: Read section of Benson's Antiracism in Cuba for next Thursday, 10/06.

Tu Oct 4th Lecture. Race, the Rehabilitation of Prostitutes and the Case of Artemisa
Th Oct 6th. Lecture & Discussion of Assigned Reading.
Lecture: Victims of Salvation? Former Slum-dwellers & The Lewis Project in Late 1960s Cuba
Reading for discussion: Devyn Benson, Antiracism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution, Intro, Chapters 2, 4, and 5, pp. 1-29; 72-121; 153-230. [reading available for purchase and on library reserve]
Note: Read Sutherland's The Youngest Revolution for next Thursday, 10/13.

Th Oct 13th. Lecture & Discussion of Assigned Reading.
Lecture: Centralized Decentralization, Rehabilitation as a Way of Life & Hidden Civil Wars
Reading for Discussion: Elizabeth Sutherland, The Youngest Revolution, whole book [reading will be scanned since it is an out-of-print book] and provided through Dropbox; it is also on library reserve.
Note: WATCH the full-length feature film “Portrait of Teresa/Retrato de Teresa” (Cuba, 1979), dir. Pastor Vega, on reserve at Library West. Because there are only two copies of this film, you need to make plans to see it with peers from the class or well in advance. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.

SECOND ANALYTICAL ESSAY OPTION, DUE TU OCT 18TH: It has often been argued that the Cuban Revolution transformed what was possible for women and other marginalized groups like blacks and peasants to achieve, even if the state did little to transform gender roles. What limits did the Cuban state's approach to liberation impose? Could women, blacks and other groups contest those limits? If so, how? If not, why not?
Note: You must write 2 essays out of a total of 3 essay options. This is the second option of 3.

Tu Oct 18th. Lecture. Sexuality, Sex Education and the Limits of Gender Liberation in the New Cuba
Th Oct 20th. Film Workshop. VIEWED BEFORE CLASS for discussion: “Portrait of Teresa/Retrato de Teresa” (Cuba, 1979), dir. Pastor Vega, on reserve at Library West.


Tu Oct 25th. Lecture. “We Are Happy Here”: The Mariel Boatlift & The Theatre State Revealed
Th Oct 27th. In-class MIDTERM EXAM. Bring 2 blue books. You have the full class period.
Note: Read sections of Bengelsdorf’s The Problem of Democracy in Cuba for discussion next Thursday, 11/03.

Tu Nov 1st. Lecture. Reconciliation & Estrangement: US-Cuba Relations from Carter to Reagan and Beyond
Th Nov 3rd. Discussion of Assigned Reading & In-Class Film Workshop.
Reading for Discussion: Carolee Bengelsdorf, The Problem of Democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, pp. 99-180 [reading available for purchase and on library reserve].
In-class film viewing: clips from "Mas allá del Mar/Beyond the Sea" (2004) dir. Lisandro Pérez Rey and “In Their Own Words” (1980), US National Archives.

Note: WATCH the full-length feature film “Barrio Cuba” (Cuba, 2005), dir. Humberto Solás. on reserve at Library West. Because there are only two copies of this film, you need to make plans to see it with peers from the class or well in advance. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.

Th Nov 10th. Film Workshop and document discussion. Political Rights as Human Rights and the Paradox of Cuba vs. the United States' Stance on the International Declaration of Human Rights
In-class film viewing of portions of: "Nobody Listened" (Spain, 1989), dir. Nestor Almendros.
**Class Meeting Times:** Tu 10:40-11:30 & Th 10:40-12:35  
**Class Location:** Flint 0105  
**Office Hours:** Th 1:00-3:00 PM & by appt.  
**Graduate Student Teacher & Grader:** Elyssa Gage

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**Prof. Lillian Guerra**

**Document for discussion:** United Nations, *International Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)  
[reading available in scanned form through Canvas and/or Dropbox]

**Tu Nov 15th. Lecture.** Shock and Awe: The Start of the Special Period, 1993 and Beyond  
Lecture includes a clip from “Sin Embargo: Nevertheless” (USA, 2008).  
**VIEWED BEFORE CLASS for discussion:** “Barrio Cuba” (Cuba, 2005), dir. Humberto Solás.

**Tu Nov 22nd. Lecture.** Subverting Perfection: Music of the Special Period.  
**THURSDAY NOV 25th NO CLASS. HAPPY THANKSGIVING.**  
**Note:** Read the articles by Fernandes (“Fear of a Black Nation”); Baker (“¡Hip Hop, Revolución!”) and WATCH music videos and song lyrics by Escuadrón Patriota, composed by Raudel for discussion on Thursday, 12/01.  
[article available through electronic download through JSTOR and music videos as well as lyrics available on Canvas and/or Dropbox:  
"Decadencia / Decadence" 2009; "No Discriminación / No Discrimination" 2010; and "Madre" 2011.]

**Tu Nov 29th. Lecture.** Cuba under Raúl: Prospects, Promises and Betrayals of “Papá Estado”, 2006-2014  
**Th Dec 1st. Discussion of Assigned Reading and Hip-Hop and Rap Workshop.**  
**Reading for discussion:**  
[electronic version available through JSTOR]  
**Music videos and song lyrics by Escuadrón Patriota, composed by Raudel for discussion:**  
"Decadencia / Decadence" 2009  
"No Discriminación / No Discrimination" 2010  
"Madre" 2011

**THIRD ANALYTICAL ESSAY OPTION, DUE TU DEC 6th:** Many island Cubans and recent arrivals to the United States from Cuba often say that it is too difficult for non-Cubans to understand why the revolutionary state has survived for so long. They also say that it is too difficult to explain, that Cuba’s government is not a “traditional” dictatorship but a uniquely hegemonic one. How do you explain the longevity and, more importantly, the stability of the Revolution? Do different factors—such as popularity, change and legitimacy in the 1960s—explain its staying power in different periods? As the state evolved, did the reasons for its stability evolve as well?

**Note:** You must write 2 essays out of a total of 3 essay options. This is LAST OPTION.

**Tu Dec 6th. Final Lecture.** Cuba “After Obama” and Cubans Today.

**READING PERIOD DECEMBER 7-9th.**  
**FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED BY COLLEGE FOLLOWING READING PERIOD. DATE, LOCATION AND TIME T.B.A.**
Prof. Lillian Guerra
307 Grinter Hall
Office Hours: Th 1:00-3:00 PM & by appt.

Class Meeting Times: Tu 10:40-11:30 & Th 10:40-12:35
Class Location: Flint 0105
Graduate Student Teacher & Grader: Elyssa Gage