The History of Cuba and Puerto Rico

Introduction:

When the U.S. military invaded the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898, the U.S. government promised to grant them liberation from Spanish colonial rule as well as to respect their right to political independence. As Cubans and Puerto Ricans quickly discovered, however, U.S. intervention into their political and economic affairs did nothing of the kind. As Puerto Rico became an official "territorial possession" of the United States ruled by U.S.-appointed governors for most of the Twentieth Century, Cuba saw its political evolution shaped by repeated U.S. military occupations and diplomatic "mediations" meant to protect U.S. investments in Cuba. In both cases, protecting the expansion and rights of U.S. business interests came at the cost of the local citizenry's right to make and enforce its own laws and state agendas.

Cubans and Puerto Ricans reacted to foreign domination in divergent ways: by the mid-Twentieth Century, Cuba had launched a stridently anti-imperialist socialist revolution that ruptured all ties to the United States while Puerto Rico accommodated to a U.S.-conceived model of political and social dependence. Similarly, despite their radically divergent historical paths—Puerto Rico toward greater dependence on the United States, Cuba toward greater isolation from the United States—both experiences prompted a massive exodus to the United States in nearly the same period (1950s to the 1970s). One million Cubans would arrive in the United States between 1959 and 1980. By the early 1980s, the same number of Puerto Ricans would live in the United States as lived on the island. Yet, Cubans and Puerto Ricans are, in many ways, equally "nationalist", just as U.S. approaches to their societies, whether political, economic or cultural, are equally imperialist. Moreover, in each case, both the diasporic and the national communities on the island are deeply relevant to U.S. domestic and foreign policy-making.

In part, these differences were due to Cuba and Puerto Rico’s distinctive colonial paths of development from the 16th centuries through the mid-nineteenth: while Cuba’s emergence as a fabulously wealthy sugar colony in the late 18th century ensured it would become the jewel in the Spanish Crown by the 19th, Puerto Rico maintained its character as a colonial backwater, even after it experienced a relative degree of prosperity thanks to booms in both sugar and coffee. Yet, as we will find, Cuba’s legendary image as the “rebel” and Puerto Rico’s reputation for political “passivity” have less to do with issues of culture or national character than with the degree to which local elites were able to repress and discredit equally radical movements for social change—both before and after the US invasion of 1898. The story of Cuba and Puerto Rico’s internal struggles (over race, class rights and the role of imperial power) is the primary focus of this course.
Goals
The primary goals of this course are three. First, this class seeks to transform the way students understand concepts that they take for granted, helping them to recognize the relevance of historical, often violent social struggles over definitions of freedom, "nation", national sovereignty, economic justice and equality to their daily lives. Second, this course will provide a deep knowledge of the complex realities of Cuban and Puerto Rican societies, helping to reveal how the past (especially slavery and imperialism) affected what was—and is—politically and economically possible to achieve in these countries. Finally, this class promises to challenge students at every level, honing their intellectual creativity and forcing them to use it.

Course Requirements:
Participation: Attendance, in-class discussion of readings and films: 15%
Two analytical papers (each 5 pages in length) on readings: 30%
In-class midterm exam: 25%
Final exam: 30%

Pedagogical Approach & Evaluation of Students:
Professor Guerra will teach most aspects of the course, acting as discussion leader and lecturer. As the class activity schedule conveys below, this class combines regular lectures, in-class discussion of readings as well as film viewings and group analysis of primary documents.

As with all history classes, this class should be relevant to explaining the events, culture, distribution of power and popular ideas of the present day. What you learn in the class should be surprising, enjoyable, challenging and not easily forgotten.

1. Class Attendance and Lectures: Attendance is (obviously) mandatory since most of the information, analysis and building-blocks for the class are acquired live and in person.
   • Lectures are particularly important for two reasons: first, because they provide the framework for understanding the chronology and historical struggles at play; and second, because students learn how to write good papers and make strong arguments from listening to good lectures and practicing their own skills.
   • Because students have different styles of learning, Professor Guerra uses a variety of teaching methods and materials that will serve the strengths of some students one day and those of other students another.

2. Discussions of Readings, Films & Participation Grade: Much of the success of this class will depend on the willingness of students to engage issues raised in the readings as well as each others’ perspectives in the time allocated for discussion and collective reflection on complex or politically challenging subjects.
Class Mtgs: Tues 10:40-11:30  Prof. Lillian Guerra
Thur 10:40-12:35
Location:  Flint 105  Office: Grinter Hall #307
Grader:  Alexa Baldacci

- **Discussion:** Professor Guerra’s evaluation of student participation, however, will depend less on the quantity of each student’s intervention and more on their quality. That means that students who are unaccustomed to public speaking or simply uninspired to talk spontaneously in a few discussions will not be duly punished. On the other hand, while “chattiness” will not guarantee you an A for participation, silence will definitely not serve you (after all, how can Prof. G know that you have even read that week’s assignment if you don’t speak?).

- **Required Film Viewing:** Students will write a one- to two-page analytical reflection on "Passport Cuba", the documentary inaugurating this year's Latino Film Festival. Details provided below.

3. Short analytical papers: *The paper required for this class must be at least 5 pages long, double-spaced and typed in 12-point.* Intended to help you reflect on and process the readings, the paper will respond to one of a variety of questions, by providing an argument that takes a position and substantiates its validity through documented evidence and original interpretation.

  - A set of thematic questions from which students will choose to answer one will be provided one to two weeks before each paper is due.
  - Evidence for the argument in each paper should derive exclusively from course materials, especially from the readings assigned.
  - Students **required to underline their thesis statements** so that there will be no problem in determining the argument’s clarity.

*All papers must be placed under Prof. Guerra’s door or in her mailbox at Grinter Hall in hard copy form. (Please do not email me your paper!) Late papers will be penalized by half a grade for every day they are overdue, unless an extension has been requested in advance and granted.*

  - **FIRST PAPER DEADLINE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 8 BY 4:00 PM**
  - **SECOND PAPER DEADLINE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19 BY 4:00 PM**

4. Midterm and final exam: Midterm and final exams will follow the same format, although the former will obviously be much shorter than the latter. Each exam will consist of a blank map with historically relevant locations for the student to mark, a set of historical items for the student to fully identify (to be explained in greater length as we approach the midterm), and one to three questions to be answered in essay form.

  - Tu 30 Oct 10:40-11:30 IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION
  - Th 11 Dec 5:30 PM-7:30 PM FINAL EXAMINATION

**Course Materials:** Books for this course are available at the UF Bookstore or through on-line book providers. Unless otherwise indicated, specific readings that do not derive from these books will be available through SAKAI, the e-learning website for this class and, if necessary, through the class's Drop Box account. Other materials, such as some primary source documents, Cuban hip-hop songs and Puerto Rican slam poetry, will also be made available through the SAKAI e-learning website for this class and/or Drop Box.
Class Mtgs:  Tues 10:40-11:30  
           Thur 10:40-12:35  
Prof. Lillian Guerra  
Office Hours: Th 2:00-4:00 PM  
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Grading Scale:  
93-100  A  89-87  B+  79-77  C+  69-67  D+  Below 60 Failing  
92-90  A-  86-83  B  76-73  C  66-63  D  
         82-80  B-  72-70  C-  62-60  D-  

Letter Grade with GPA equivalent:  
A  4.0  
A-  3.67  
B+  3.33  
B  3.0  
B-  2.67  
C+  2.33  
C  2.0  
C-  1.67  
D+  1.33  
D  1.0  
D-  0.67  
E  0  

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES  

Attendance is a must, as students who do not attend lectures will fail to comprehend the individual histories of each country studied or the chronological order of events that drives the process of change connecting these countries as a region. Students who have an unexcused absence and do not attend discussions on Thursday (when attendance is taken at the beginning of class) will receive a failing grade for that week's participation. 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.  

Note-taking is also a must. Knowledge of key events, locations, historical figures, organizations and movements is the basis of all historical analysis. History in this course (as in any course offered by UF's history department) is not the study of generalizations but contingences: being able to explain why something happened is as important as explaining what happened. One cannot be achieved without the other.  

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

**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/

**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 websurfing, 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.

**Unit I. From Colonial Backwaters to Imperial Meccas: Cuba & Puerto Rico in the 15th to 19th Centuries**

**Th 23 Aug 10:40-12:35 Lecture 1:** Why Study Cuba and Puerto Rico? An Introduction


**Tu 28 Aug 10:40-11:30 Lecture 2:** Cultures and Counter-Cultures of Early Colonial Cuba, 15th Century to 1760s

**Th 30 Aug 10:40-12:35 Discussion of Columbus reading and Lecture 3:** The Cuba that Might Have Been and the Cuba that Was: From Tobacco & Free Labor to Sugar and Slavery, 1710s to 1830s

**Reading for discussion next week:** “The Costly Colony”, “Criollos and Blancos” and “The Xivaros” in *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History.* Kal Wagenheim and Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim, eds. Maplewood, NJ: Waterfront Press, 1973, pp. 27-44. [Made available through SAKAI and/ or Drop Box.]

**Tu 4 Sept, 10:40-11:30 Lecture 4:** From Fortress Frontier to Royalist Refuge: Puerto Rico from the 15th Century to 1840s
Th 6 Sept 10:40-12:35 Discussion of PR documents and Lecture 5: Cuba, 1844: Sugar, Slavery, Free Coloreds, Planter-Aristocrats and the Year of the Lash
Reading for discussion next week: Franklin Knight, Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970, two chapters to be assigned. [Made available through SAKAI and/or Drop Box.]

Unit II. Crucibles of Nation in Cuba & Puerto Rico Before 1898

Tu 11 Sept 10:40-11:30 Lecture 6: Cuba’s "Abolitionist Planters"? The Tropical Wing of Manifest Destiny and the Ten Years’ War, 1840s-1870s

Th 13 Sept: 10:40-12:35 Discussion of Knight and Lecture 7: El Grito de Lares and the Rise of Accommodationist Politics in Puerto Rico

REQUIRED EVENT: This year’s "PASSPORT CUBA", a documentary by Cuban-American fashion designer and film director Nicole Di Rocco, will inaugurate the Latino Film Festival at the Harn Museum. Interactive fashion show and reception begins at 6:00 PM. All students are required to attend and sign attendance sheet provided by Lexi (our heroic grader) or Professor Guerra by 6:15 PM. Fashion show, film and question & answer session will end by 9:15 PM. For more information on the Gainesville Film Festival, see http://latinawomensleague.org/portfolio/2012-gainesville-latino-film-festival/

Note: Students will write a one- to two-page, 12-point font, double-spaced analytical reflection, commenting on any or multiple aspects of the film "Passport Cuba" and related activities at the inauguration of the Latino Film Festival. This reflection will be due in class on Tuesday.

Tu 18 Sept 10:40-11:30 Lecture 8: “More than Black or White”: Independence, José Martí & the Making of Revolutionary Cuba, 1880s-1890s
HAND IN ONE-TO-TWO PAGE REFLECTION.

Unit III. The Age of Americanization, 1898-1930s


Th 27 Sept 10:40-12:35 Discussion of Clark, Findlay and Lecture 11: Poverty, Imperial Pacts and the Paradox of the Political System in Puerto Rico, 1920s-1930s


Th 4 Oct 10:40-12:35 Discussion of Carrasquillo, Film Clip from “The War of 1898” Lecture 13: Stillbirth or Rebirth of the Cuban Republic? 1906-1912
FIRST PAPER DUE ON MONDAY, 8 OCT BY 4:00 PM TO PROF. GUERRA.

Tu 9 Oct 10:40-11:30 Lecture 14: Renewing the Republic and Reviving Revolution in Cuba, 1912-1933
Th 11 Oct and Tu 16 Oct NO CLASS: Prof. Guerra & Ms. Baldacci will be in Cuba. [Class time lost was made up for with attendance at the Film Festival, 6:15-9:15 PM.] Reading for discussion Th 18 Oct: Helg, Our Rightful Share, pp. 141-226. [Required book]

Reading for discussion next week: James L. Dietz, Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institutional Change and Capitalist Development. (Princeton Paperbacks, 1983), Chapters 3 and 4 [Made available through SAKAI and/or Drop Box.]

Tu 23 Oct:40-11:30 Lecture 16: From Batista to Batista, 1933 to 1952


Tu 30 Oct 10:40-11:30 IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Unit IV. Anti-Imperialism, the United States and the Struggle for Revolutionary Change in Cuba, 1933-1989
Class Mtgs: Tues 10:40-11:30  
Prof. Lillian Guerra  
Office Hours: Th 2:00-4:00 PM  
Thur 10:40-12:35  
Office: Grinter Hall #307  
Location: Flint 105  
Grader: Alexa Baldacci

**Th 1 Nov 10:40-12:35 Lecture 17: Making Revolutionary Cuba, 1952-59**


**Reading for discussion next week:** Cuban hip-hop songs [Made available through SAKAI and/or Drop Box.] and *Capitalism, God and a Good Cigar: Cuba Enters the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Lydia Chávez (Duke University Press, 2005), selections tba. **[Required book]**


**Th 15 Nov 10:40-12:35 Discussion of Chávez, hip-hop songs and Lecture 21: Cuba in the Special Period: Capitalist Communists and the Legacies of Fidelismo**


SECOND PAPER DUE, MON 19 NOV BY 4:00 PM TO PROF. GUERRA.

**Unit V. Dependent Development in Puerto Rico and the “None of the Above” Nation**

**Tu 20 Nov 10:40-11:30 Lecture 22: The Crisis in Operation Bootstrap and the Failure of the Campaign for a “Jíbaro State” in the 1990s**

**NO CLASS 21 NOV-24 NOV FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY. READING FOR NEXT WEEK:**

**Tu 27 Nov 10:40-12:35 Lecture 23: "Cultural Nationalism” vs. Corporate Capitalism in Puerto Rico, 1990s-the Present**

**Unit VI. Dependent Development in Revolutionary Cuba and Americanized Puerto Rico**

**Th 29 Nov 10:40-11:30 Discussion of Santiago and Lecture 24: Reclaiming the Nation: Unarmed Guerilla Warfare in Today's Cuba and Puerto Rico**

**Tu 4 Dec 10:40-12:35 (Final) Lecture 25: Final Thoughts: Why Study Cuba and Puerto Rico?**

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, 11 December, 5:30-7:30 PM. Location to be announced.
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