

LAH 6938: Seminar in Modern Spanish America

Spring 2021

Wednesday, 3-6pm (Periods 8-10)

[This class will meet on Zoom only]

Dr. Heather Vrana

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Office hours: Tues., 2-4pm and Weds. 1:30-3pm

/ By appt. (encouraged)

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Course Description

This course will explore political, social, and cultural developments in modern Spanish America, with particular focus on Central America, Mexico, and the Southern Cone (and largely excluding the Caribbean). We will examine complex changes within the region in the post-independence period while emphasizing historiographic developments in the field over the last twenty years *alongside* earlier foundational works. Among the topics the course will explore are revolutions and social movements and their causes; crime and policing; gender and sex; culture exchange and contestation; political violence, historical memory, and transitional justice; the evolution of concepts of race, ethnicity and, social class; and environment and technocratic expertise. This course is designed to give you coverage in modern Spanish America (excluding the Caribbean). In addition to reading and participating actively in classroom discussions, you will complete several written assignments that will prepare you as academics and practitioners in the humanities and social sciences.

You will:

- learn and assess new directions in Modern Spanish American history and theory
- learn and assess foundational works in Modern Spanish American history and theory
- prepare for your qualifying exams or MA non-thesis option

The format of the class will be largely discussion-based, with regular student presentations and occasional lectures. Presentations will review the previous class material and present the current week's material.

Students are expected to attend and participate actively in every seminar. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic presents unexpected challenges for all of us. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know in advance.

For a basic overview, read the following, especially if you have little background in Modern Spanish America and historiography:

- Tulio Halperín Donghi, *La Historia contemporánea de América Latina* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988) / *Contemporary History of Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)
- John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016) [NB. This is a very basic undergrad-level book]
- Florencia E. Mallon, "Time on the Wheel: Cycles of Revisionism and the "New Cultural History" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 79, No. 2, Special Issue: Mexico's New Cultural History: Una Lucha Libre (May, 1999), pp. 331-351
- Hilda Sabato, "Historia latinoamericana, historia de América Latina, Latinoamérica en la historia," *Prismas* (2015), No. 19, pp. 135-145

- Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina,” *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales*, Edgardo Lander, ed. (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2000)

Readings

In general, each week’s readings pair a classic text with another text that takes up a similar question, topic, or methodology. Generally, these are article-monograph pairings. As should be clear, the course covers a vast chronology and distance. Texts reflect cultural history, social history, oral history, environmental history, economic history, the history of medicine, ethnography, memory studies, and more. By the end of the course, you should have a clear understanding of the major questions shaping the field, how these questions have changed, and how your research interests might contribute to them.

Assignments (see last page for more detail):

1. Presentation (10% x 2)
 1. Twice in the semester, you will be responsible for starting discussion. In your presentation, you will summarize the previous week’s discussion and introduce the current week’s material, concluding by posing some questions to start discussion. You should also meaningfully engage the readings’ footnotes! Your presentation should be about 20 minutes in length.
2. Book Reviews (15% x 2)
 1. The reviews should be 4-5 pages in length. Reviews are due on the date that we discuss the book under review. One must be completed before Week 6.
3. Weekly Response Papers or Discussion Videos (20%) [NB. We will discuss this assignment on the first day of class.]
 1. Use this assignment to summarize the main questions that emerge in the readings, how they speak to one another, how they speak to previous weeks’ readings and discussions. Papers will be max. 2 pgs. in length/videos no more than 4 mins. This assignment should help you to prepare for class discussion—make it work for you—and must be emailed to me (hvrana@ufl.edu) or posted by 9am on Wednesday.
4. Final Paper (30%)
 1. This paper will be based on original archival research on a topic of your choice related to Modern Spanish America. Since many archives are likely to remain closed for the duration of the semester, you will need to be resourceful with online archives and to craft research questions/topics that you can answer with available resources. You must meet with me to discuss your final paper topic. The final paper should be about 6,000 words in length. It is due on April 30, 2021.

All of these assignments will be given a letter grade (with + or -, as relevant), which is weighted according to its percentage of the final grade. You will receive detailed comments on all of your work.

Format

This course is a seminar that depends on your active engagement by reading, note taking, research, and participation before and during class. Three hours of seminar is grueling, however, and we will take frequent breaks and explore material in innovative ways in order to keep our focus.

You will find that the most memorable moments in our course will happen in class. Class meetings are also relatively few in number. It is also true that we are living through a pandemic with an uncertain

outcome; at the same time, we are living through a reckoning with our nation's past and future in ways that feel unprecedented for many people. If you need to miss class, do so. You do not owe me detailed health information. Of course, you are welcome to talk with me and I will help if I can. Please do your best. I have worked to set up a syllabus and to create a class atmosphere based on principles of equity and justice, but I cannot anticipate everything. So please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have concerns. We will discuss accessibility and adapt throughout the course of the semester.

Like any and all classes in a graduate program, the assumption is that you are here to learn from the material, the professor, and your classmates. Disagreement and lively debate are to be expected—please be thoughtful about the effect of your actions and words on others.

Finally, a significant portion of your grade will be determined by individual research. I set deadlines in order to keep you and our course on track, including providing timely feedback to you on your work. If you need a deadline extension, please ask for one. You can frame your request like this: “Dear Professor Vrana, I am not going to meet the deadline for our upcoming assignment. May I have an extension?” Please ask for this extension before the deadline, not after. Bear in mind that missing some deadlines may impact the quality of feedback that you receive. I will assess your engagement with the reading by the quality of your contribution to class discussion and response papers (or video posts, see above).

Accessibility and accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 or www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter, which you will send to me when requesting accommodation. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. If you have questions or concerns about this process, please be in touch!

We will work together to make this classroom and syllabus accessible. Please let me know how I can support your learning. I, too, will proactively seek opportunities to make assignments, discussion, the classroom itself, and technologies more accessible.

The default in our class Zoom meetings will be camera- and audio-ON. I understand that sometimes—and for a variety of reasons—this is not possible.

Cell phones & other distractions

Cell phone usage during class is distracting, as are online shopping and developing your social media presence. **It can be especially hard to focus when classes are online.** In our class, please allow yourself to enjoy distraction-free thinking. We will have class breaks during which you can freely catch up on anything you missed.

Honor Code & Pledge

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an [honor code](#) and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

[Note: I will update the syllabus if necessary through the course of the semester. If changes are made, the updated syllabus will be announced in class, by email, and on the course Canvas site.]

Schedule of Readings and Discussion

Week 1: Modern Spanish American History: For Whom and Why? (January 13)

- Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* [Available online through UF Libraries as an ACLS Humanities E-Book]

Week 2: Power, Hegemony, Agency (January 20)

- Raymond Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]
- James C. Scott, Chapters 3 (“The Public Transcript as a Respectable Performance”) and 6 (“Voice under Domination: The Arts of Political Disguise”) in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]

Week 3: Scale: Comparative, Transnational, Global, and Micro (January 27)

- Jason Borge, *Tropical Riffs: Latin America and the Politics of Jazz*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]
- Micol Seigel, “Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn,” *Radical History Review* 91 (2005): 62-90. [Available online through UF Libraries]

Week 4: Hearing/Seeing Empire/Nation (February 3)

- Deborah Poole, “An Image of “Our Indian”: Type Photographs and Racial Sentiments in Oaxaca, 1920-1940,” *HAHR* (2004) 84 (1): 37-82 [Available online through UF Libraries]
- Amy Kaplan, “The Birth of an Empire,” *PMLA* 114, no. 5 (1999): 1068-1079. [Available online through UF Libraries]
- Jason Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]

Week 5: Oral Histories and Fugitive Speech (February 10)

- José Rabasa, “Thinking Europe in Indian Categories, or “Tell Me the Story of How I Conquered You,”” in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]
- Lauren Robin Derby, “Beyond Fugitive Speech: Rumor and Affect in Caribbean History,” *Small Axe* 44 (July 2014): 123-140. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]
- Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Die in This Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]

Week 6: Medicine and Health (February 17) – LAST WEEK FOR BOOK REVIEW 1 SUBMISSION

- Ann Zulawski, *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]
- Virginia Garrard-Burnett. "Indians Are Drunks and Drunks Are Indians: Alcohol and Indigenismo in Guatemala, 1890–1940." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 19, no. 3 (2000): 341–356. [Available online through UF Libraries]
- Stefan Pohl-Valero, "La Raza entra por la boca': Energy, Diet, and Eugenics in Colombia, 1890-1940," *HAHR* (2014) 94 (3): 455-486 [Available online through UF Libraries]

Week 7: Post/Colonies & Nationalism (February 24)

- Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257-337. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]
- Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. [Available online through UF Libraries and ACLS Humanities E-Book.]

Week 8: Social History (March 3)

- Josh Savala, "Ports of Transnational Labor Organizing: Anarchism along the Peruvian-Chilean Littoral, 1916-1928." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2019): 501-31. [Available online through UF Libraries.]
- Ernesto Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism." In *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*. London: NLB, 1977. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]
- Matthew B. Karush and Peter N. Stearns, "Five Decades of Social History: An Interview with Peter Stearns." *Journal of Social History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 488-499.
- Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yauru Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. [Available online through UF Libraries and ACLS Humanities E-Book.]

Week 9: Violence and Historical Memory (March 10)

- *The Pinochet Case*, dir. Patricio Guzmán. 2001; Brooklyn, NY: Icarus Films, 2015.
- Excerpts from Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Clio's Laws: On History and Language*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019. [Available as a PDF on our course Canvas site.]
- Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998*. Duke University Press, 2004. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]

Week 10: Borders (March 24)

- Américo Paredes, *Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexico Border*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- CJ Alvarez, "Police, Waterworks, and the Construction of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1924–1954." *Western Historical Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (Autumn 2019): 233-256. [Available online through UF Libraries.]
- Alexandra Minna Stern, "Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930." *HAHR* 79, no. 1 (1999), 41-81. [Available online through UF Libraries.]

Week 11: Cultural History (March 17)

- Matthew B. Karush, "Blackness in Argentina: Jazz, Tango Race Before Perón." *Past & Present*. 216 (August 2012): 215-245.
- Maurice Rafael Magaña, *Cartographies of Youth Resistance: Hip-Hop, Punk, and Urban Autonomy in Mexico*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. [Available online through UF Libraries & ProQuest E-Book Central.]

Week 12: Drug History (March 31)

- Paul Gootenberg and Isaac Campos, "Toward a New Drug History of Latin America: A Research Frontier at the Center of Debates," *HAHR* 91, no. 1 (2015): 1-35. [Available online through UF Libraries.]
- Lina Britto, *Marijuana Boom: The Rise and Fall of Colombia's First Drug Paradise*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. [Available online through UF Libraries & ProQuest E-Book Central.]

Week 13: Technology & Infrastructure (April 7)

- Marixa Lasso, *Erased: the Untold Story of the Panama Canal*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019. [Available online through UF Libraries & ProQuest E-Book Central.]
- Casey Walsh, "Mineral springs, primitive accumulation, and 'new water' in Mexico." *Regiones & Cohesion* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 1-25.

Week 14: New Cold War Histories (April 14)

- William A. Booth, "Rethinking Latin America's Cold War," *The Historical Journal* (2020): 1-23. Access online here: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/historical-journal/article/rethinking-latin-americas-cold-war/438677174CA5BE6096C214BA90C3EDAE>
- Gilbert M. Joseph, "Border Crossings and the Remaking of Latin American Cold War Studies." In *Itineraries of Expertise: Science, Technology, and the Environment in Latin America's Long Cold War*, Andra B. Chastain and Timothy W. Lorek, eds. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. [Available online through UF Libraries and ProQuest E-Book Central.]
- Anne-Emanuelle Birn and Raúl Necochea López, *Peripheral Nerve: Health and Medicine in Cold War Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020. [Available online through UF Libraries and Duke UP E-Books]

Week 15: Post- (April 21)

- Jason de Leon, *The Land of Open Graves*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015. [Available online through UF Libraries & ProQuest E-Book Central.]
- Heather Gies, "Dispossession, Resistance, and Solidarity in Central America." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 52, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 355-357. Access online here: <https://nacla.org/news/2020/11/05/dispossession-resistance-solidarity-central-america>