

HIS 4930

***GENDER, GENOCIDE & SEXUALITY
IN LATIN AMERICA***

Introduction:

Sexuality, like gender, is both intensely individualistic and intimate. Still, no individual expression or understanding of either is ever genuinely free of the framework of "honor" (code of cultural valorization) or power structure that surrounds us. Honor forms the fabric of daily life in different socio-political systems of power that reward conformity in both symbolic and material ways. This course defines gender as a central, fundamental way of signifying relations of power and ascribing not just meaning, but value and importance to sexual difference and ways of being. Similarly, this course defines sexuality as an active, rather than passive, means of expressing identity, creating an individual's place in social units like the family and connecting to imagined concepts of community such as empire and nation.

This seminar assumes that neither gender nor sexuality is a palpable reality but an individually and collectively invented idea that we constantly construct in our daily lives and interactions. The same can be said of the nation. A nation can be understood as the process by which different groups of people, often with conflicting interests and radically different goals, imagine a sense of belonging to a larger "whole" and then, proceed to develop criteria for limiting, policing and admitting new members to that whole.

Without understanding how pre-colonial and colonial gender identities developed in relationship to racial hierarchies and empire, we cannot understand what changed with Latin American independence or the legacies of change in the contemporary period. Consequently, this course looks carefully at the honorific cultures of the colonial period as well as the role of gender in political struggles that such factors as Spanish Catholicism, monasticism, African and indigenous resistance generated. We then turn to the Nineteenth Century's transition to nationhood and discover how new ideologies such as Liberalism, modernity, and progress effected contradictory forms of liberation for women and men, especially in terms of class. We will analyze how Latin American officials, intellectuals and elites often considered issues of "morality" (i.e. gender roles and sexual norms) crucial to the success or failure of their efforts to build a nation. Policies that attempted to stop political and social change were often promoted as a means for "saving the nation." Finally, we will study how revolutionary challenges and the rise of Communism in Cuba during the Cold War polarized everyday life, identity, politics and sexuality in Latin America from the 1960s to the 1990s. Considering how violence can take the form of poverty, state terror and homophobia, we will ask how much racialized systems of patriarchy have evolved from colonial times.

A constant theme throughout will be the ways in which genocidal policies laid the foundations in colonial times for the continuation and expansion of the ideologies responsible for them. Specifically, we will explore evolving beliefs in the racial and cultural superiority of all Europeans as well as beliefs in the need for patriarchal systems of control through European-descended white, heterosexual males.

Approach of the course:

This course focuses on the experience of Latin American non-white majorities, that is, the very groups of people whom modernizing elites have often seen as problematic members of their nations and whom they have most wanted to "fix". These include not only people of African, indigenous or mixed descent, but specifically prostitutes, the urban poor, single women, workers, social activists and homosexuals.

In the course of our study, race will inevitably become a critical part of how we understand the workings of gender, sex and sexuality. Indeed, the "morality" of these groups was often called into question on racial terms, that is, white prostitutes were seen as having been "blackened" by their "dishonor". Black women were often seen as "potential" prostitutes because their "nature" was inherently dishonorable, regardless of what they did for a living, their marital status or proximity to cultural forms ascribed to whites. Yet, even as we study the experience of Latin American majorities, we will often do so through the testimonies and oral histories of individuals, making our discussions both deductive and dynamic as we work to link smaller realities to our own historical views of the "big picture."

Evaluation of student performance:

Discussion & Oral Presentations 30%; Four Short Essays 40%; Final Research Paper 30%.

Part I: Discussion of Readings and Oral Participation (30%)

DISCUSSION: This is primarily a reading and research seminar. That means our primary activity will be reading and analysis (both written and oral) of the reading that we do. The goal will be to discover new methods for interpreting history and new views of how history "works" as dialectical process between past and present. **Attendance at every class meeting is mandatory. Coming to class, doing the reading and having something relevant to say in class discussion will earn a grade of C, or average. Earning a higher participation grade requires the following:**

- intellectual engagement of the material and others' comments
- analytical creativity
- willingness to listen and learn from others to reformulate or expand one's own thoughts
- the desire to take risks in questioning or criticizing the research methods and arguments of the authors in order to develop your own approach
 - **ADVICE:** *After 22 years of teaching at the university level and leading discussions of undergraduate students, I can guarantee that students who use print and hard copies of assigned readings rather than relying on digital copies DO MUCH BETTER in all aspects of the course.* Downloading materials, printing them and buying the books allows you to take notes in the margins, stick post-its on key parts with comments and learn what stands out as well as how to come up with an original analysis of it.

Doing all of your thinking "aloud" in formal discussion is not the goal. A student's ability to do well in the course will not only depend on doing the reading, but on being able to demonstrate that she has prepared for discussion by thinking through the concepts and arguments presented in the reading on her own, before class. Nor is the goal to present only your ideas in the class to show that you have done the work and have organized your own interpretation. **The goal is to create a community of thinkers—one that doesn't necessarily achieve consensus, but that learns from exchanging and revising one another's views.** Students should expect that when they leave the class, they will have gained a new way of thinking about the material and learned

from the process of debate in which they participated.

REGULAR IN-CLASS ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

The first day of class, students will sign up to write four essays on readings assigned for subsequent class meetings. [Instructions and requirements for the essays appear below.]

- *On those weeks, students who wrote essays will be expected to “warm up” class discussion by speaking for 5 minutes or so on a certain aspect of the reading that they found surprising, enlightening or with which they disagreed.*
- *Presenters should also bring in a hard copy of a question or two for potential use in that class’s general discussion in addition to the essay that s/he wrote. Please provide Prof. Guerra with these at the start or end of the class.*

Part II: Short Analytical Essays (40%)

Students will sign up on the first day of class to write a 900-1200 word essay on four different readings. Essays are due at the start of class on the day that the selected reading is assigned and will be discussed.

- **All papers must be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font; only hard copies will be accepted.**
- Essays should respond to the reading assigned on the day it will be discussed in a critical, analytical manner. That means that **students should not summarize the readings, but rather point out how a historian** (or more than one historian if we are reading articles or book chapters in an anthology) **approaches his/her argument and evaluate the evidence the historian has used.**
- Although students may adopt a personal voice in writing, **essays must be have a clearly identifiable thesis statement and cohesive argument that cites and discusses examples.**
- Footnotes or parenthetical citations (especially useful when only a single-authored book is cited) are required.

The purpose of these essays is to help students refine their analytical writing skills and learn how “historiography” differs and itself changes over time to reflect the changing methods, values and narratives of time in which historians work.

- Students are encouraged to criticize the authors’ approach, use of evidence or argument; they are also encouraged to use the authors’ evidence to make their own, entirely independent case.

Part III: Final Research Paper(30%)

A fundamental goal of this course will the presentation of a formal paper that investigates a gendered aspect of history during a particular a period of history in a specific Latin American country, the United States or Europe in relationship to Latin America.

- Students who do not read Spanish will find that they must engage topics whose sources are largely in English.
- It is strongly recommended that students select topics that emerge out of the assigned readings themselves—this way, even if a student has never taken a course on Latin American history before, s/he will not be “lost” and forced to start from scratch, working on a country or a phenomenon we have not discussed and studied in depth. It is also strongly recommended that students choose topics that are sharply focused, well

documented and not wildly ambitious: remember, this is practice for a senior essay, not the real thing.

· *A requirement of the History Department is that all research seminar papers must be 25 pages in length, double-spaced and typed in 12-point font. Proper citation according to the footnote method is required for these papers; points will be deducted for improper methods of citation. Papers longer than the ascribed length and written in a different font or spacing will not be accepted.*

· *A topic and working bibliography of the research paper are due WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5th IN CLASS. Final proposals that include a paragraph or more description of the argument and bibliography are due WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19th IN CLASS.*

COURSE MATERIALS: Readings for this course are drawn from on-line library sources whenever possible. Prof. Guerra will also provide scanned versions of readings and provide them through CANVAS.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE ALL REQUIRED BOOKS. You must bring all assigned readings to the class or you will not be able to find examples, quote from the text to contribute to discussion and receive a failing grade for non-participation. All articles or book chapters Prof. Guerra provides as scanned items over CANVAS must be brought to class, preferably in hard copy. Having a copy of a book or a scanned shorter reading on your phone IS NOT acceptable. If you do not bring the reading in hard copy (ALWAYS THE BEST OPTION) and do so digitally, you must bring it on a laptop, digital reader or iPad.

Required books:

- Camilla Townsend. Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- Irene Silverblatt. Sun, Moon and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Lamonte Aidoo. Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power and Violence in Brazilian History. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020.
- Eileen Findlay-Suárez. Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Luisa Capetillo. A Nation of Women. New York: Penguin Classics, 2021.
- Gabriel García Márquez. Chronicle of a Death Foretold. New York: Vintage, 1983.
- James Green. Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Rachel Hynson. Laboring for the State: Women, Family and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1971. London: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Course Schedule & Assigned Readings for Seminar Discussion

8/24 Introduction to Gender, Genocide and Sexuality in Latin America

Sign up for four short essays on assigned readings in class.

8/31 Interpreting (or Imagining?) a Pre-Columbian Culture: The Aztecs

Scanned reading on CANVAS: Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15-44; 111-212.

9/7 Imperial Instrument, Survivor, Victim or Agent of Self-Emancipation? “La Malinche”

Required book for purchase: Townsend, *Malintzin’s Choices*, 1-108.

9/14 From Malintzin to Doña Marina, Tenochtitlán to Devastation: Conquest, Genocide and Race

Required book for purchase: Townsend, *Malintzin’s Choices*, 109-226.

9/21 Sex, Gender, Class: How Indians Became Indians in Peru

Required book for purchase: Silverblatt, *Sun, Moon and Witches*, 3-47; 81-147; 159-212.

9/28 Honor & the Origins of Racialized Colonial Patriarchy in Spanish America

Scanned readings on CANVAS: Lyman L. Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame and Violence in Colonial Latin America* (University of New Mexico Press, 1998), Introduction and essays by Burkholder, Spurling and Twinam, 1-102.

Ruth Behar, “Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism and Women’s Powers: Views from the Mexican Inquisition” in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 178-208.

10/05 Male Rape, Complicity and Power under Slavery in Brazil

Required book for purchase: Aidoo, *Slavery Unseen*, Introduction to Chapter 4.

A topic and working bibliography of the research paper DUE.

10/12 Modern Imperialism, Gender & the Rise of Working-Class Liberation Movements

Required book for purchase: Findlay-Suárez, *Imposing Decency*, 1-17; 77-201.

10/19 Rediscovering the Voice of a Revolutionary Feminist in Puerto Rico

Required book for purchase: Capetillo, *A Nation of Women*, assignment t.b.a.

Final proposal and bibliography of the research paper DUE.

10/26 Fiction and the Archives: A Case from “The Latin American Boom”

Required book for purchase: García Márquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. (It’s a novel! All)

11/02 A History of Homosexuality & Other Taboos of Modernizing Brazil

Required book for purchase: Green, *Beyond Carnival*, 17-147.

11/09 Revolution, Patriarchy, Sexuality & the Limits of Liberation in the Cold War: Part One

Required book for purchase: Hynson, *Laboring for the State*, 1-148.

11/16 Revolution, Patriarchy, Sexuality & the Limits of Liberation in the Cold War: Part Two

Required book for purchase: Hynson, *Laboring for the State*, 149-274.

11/23 THANKSGIVING BREAK.

11/30 AND 12/07 CONSULTATIONS W/ PROF. GUERRA. PAPERS DUE 12/12 BY 4 PM.