

Fall 2023 LAH 3931 Afro-Latin America

Instructor: Dr. Fernanda Bretones Lane | f.bretones@ufl.edu

Student Hours: T 12:30-1:30 pm & TR 1:30-3:30pm | GRINTER 333

Class Meetings: Tuesdays 10:40-11:30 & Thursdays 10:40-12:35 in Keene-Flint 119

Course Description: In recent years, scholars have re-examined the ways in which we tell the story of Africans in the Americas. No longer content with traditional narratives about Latin America that focus on European conquistadors decimating Indigenous communities and forcefully introducing enslaved Africans to replace a “lost workforce,” historians of colonial Latin America have striven to illuminate the diverse historical experiences of people of African descent in the region. “Afro-Latin America” thus brings together the fields of Latin American History and the African Diaspora to study the contributions of Africans and people of African descent to the development of Latin American societies, from the early colonial period to the formation of independent nation-states, ending with questions of integration/exclusion in the post-abolition, independent nations. While slavery (and the ways in which the institution shaped colonial society) will occupy some of our attention—as well as, its social and cultural implications in relation to the question of national identity—this is *not* a course *about* slavery. Topics we will explore include: free and enslaved Africans in the conquest of the Americas; cultural “retention” and resistance to slavery; race, nation and debates on “racial democracy,” among others.

Course Goals: First and foremost, the course aims to deepen our understanding of the diverse histories of Africans and their descendants in the region. It also seeks to shift the focus away from the institution of slavery, highlighting the different ways in which Africans and people of African descent have contributed to Latin American societies. Students will become equipped to articulate both in writing and orally a critical understanding of historical themes pertaining to the African Diaspora in Latin America. Students will also improve research and writing skills, and create an online exhibit to showcase their work.

Required Texts:

- Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews (Eds.), *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018) [referred throughout this syllabus as Fuente & Andrews, ALAS] (free E-book available at UF libraries)
- George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [referred throughout this syllabus as Andrews, Afro-LatAm] (limited chapter download through UF Libraries, otherwise available at the UF Bookstore and many online vendors)

Other readings will be available in Canvas

Course Assignments [full assignment description in Canvas]

Weekly journal	30%
Final Project	30%
Mid term paper	10%
Participation	10%

Discussion Leadership	5%
Peer review	5%
Self-assessment	5%
Annotated Bibliography	3%
Preliminary Bibliography	2%

GRADING CRITERIA

A Work that goes beyond instructor's expectations: is careful, thoughtful, original, and thorough. Truly outstanding work – even for a “good” student.

A- Very good work with most of the attributes of “A” work but either deficient in some technical aspect, in thoroughness and care or not as strikingly incisive, original, or creative as “A” work. Excellent.

B+ Better than good, competent work, even for the typical student at this university. Some aspects are very strong, but not uniformly excellent.

B Good competent work, which meets all standards/requirements the instructor could specify in advance. Reasonably thorough. Alternatively, work with some excellent aspects that are balanced by serious deficiencies.

B- Almost up to specifiable standards. Often characterized by vagueness and signs of lack of effort or insufficient engagement with the material. Sometimes the result of correctable misunderstanding. Sometimes the result of truncate writing that could improve with more attention/work. Talk to instructor.

C+ Below the specifiable standards for good work. Sometimes the result of poor writing that compromises quality of the work/clarity of ideas. Talk to instructor.

C Work showing serious misunderstanding or lack of effort or engagement. Talk to instructor

C- or below: Talk to instructor immediately.

Passing grades at UF in general range from A to D-, however a grade of C- does not count as a passing grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or basic distribution requirements. Current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradestext-otp1>

Communicating with the instructor (listed in order of preference/efficacy):

Student Hours: The best way to reach me is during Student Hours (also known as “Office Hours.”). I hold regular Student Hours according to the schedule noted on the top of this document. In normal circumstances, that means that during those hours the door to my office is literally open to you, students, to discuss any issues pertaining to the class (content questions, clarifications, requests for extensions, etc), or any other topics you may wish to talk about (for example, request for recommendation letters, questions about going to graduate school, your general interests in Latin American and Caribbean history, or if you want to know more about my current and future research projects). If my regular Student Hours conflict with your schedule, contact me via email to make an appointment at a time that works for both of us.

Electronic Communication (Email): If you have questions/concerns that have not been addressed in class and cannot be answered by consulting the syllabus or a classmate, come see me during Student Hours. If you are unable to attend Student Hours, please send me an e-mail to request an alternative meeting time. Only straightforward, pertinent questions will be answered via e-mail, which I generally check and respond to once daily. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response. I do not respond to work emails during the weekend.

Keep in mind that emailing your professors or TAs is not the same as emailing (or texting) your friends. For some useful tips on how to avoid unprofessional electronic communication (not only for this class, but also for all professional communication that happens online), see “[How to Email Your Professor \(Without Being Annoying AF\)](#)”

Canvas Messages: If you need to communicate with me electronically, please do so via email (see above). I use Canvas messages for general course-related messages that are addressed to the entire class (including reminders about upcoming deadlines, clarifications, notices, etc), or, if I deem relevant, to individual students. But for *you* to reach me, email is strongly preferred. It is the students’ responsibility to check messages on both Canvas and their UF email regularly for important information relating to the course, and to respond in a timely fashion when necessary.

Communicating About Grades: Students who wish to discuss their grades must wait 24 hours after receiving their grade to contact the instructor. I am happy to offer further clarification on assignments, but please note that grades are only re-evaluated in case of mathematical error.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

[subject to change]

UNIT 1: BEGINNINGS

Week 1, Aug. 24: Course introduction and initial discussion

- Reading: The Syllabus

Week 2, Aug. 29, 31: What/where is Afro-Latin America?

- Readings:
 - George Reid Andrews, “Introduction,” in *Afro-LatAm*, pp.3-10
 - Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews, “The Making of a Field: Afro-Latin American Studies” in ALAS, pp.1-24

UNIT 2: DIASPORA IN MOTION

Week 3, Sep. 5, 7: The Early Presence of Black Africans in the Americas

- Readings:
 - [“First Blacks in the Americas: The African Presence in the Dominican Republic”](#) – digital platform. [Read entire content]
 - Matthew Restall, “Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America” *The Americas* Vol. 57, No. 2 (Oct., 2000): 171-205

Week 4, Sep. 12, 14: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the African Diaspora in Latin America

- Readings:
 - Andrews, *Afro-LatAm* excerpt. pp.11-22
 - Roquinaldo Ferreira and Tatiana Seijas, “The Slave Trade to Latin America: A Historiographical Assessment,” in Fuente & Andrews, ALAS, pp.27-51

UNIT 3: INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE DIASPORA

Week 5, Sep. 19, 21: [Auto]Biographies of the African Diaspora

- Readings:
 - Mariana Dantas, “Anna Maria Lopes de Britto, Eighteenth-Century Minas Gerais (Brazil),” in *As If She Were Free: A Collective Biography of Women and Emancipation in the Americas*, ed. Erica Ball, Tatiana Seijas, and Terri Snyder (Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp.190-206

- “Biography of Mahommah G. Baquaqua, a Native of Zoogoo, in the Interior of Africa” (1854)” available [online](#) – begin reading at Chapter VII, “Mahommah’s Early Life Etc”, pp.26-65

Assignment due: submit topic choice for final project

Week 6, Sep. 26, 28: Black Brotherhoods and Laymen Associations

- Readings
 - Célia Maia Borges, “Black Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil,” in Javiera Jaque Hidalgo and Miguel Valerio (Eds.), *Indigenous and Black Confraternities in Colonial Latin America*
 - “A Black Irmandade in Bahia, Brazil.” In William B. Taylor, Kenneth Mills, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham (Eds.) *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*

Week 7 Oct. 3, 5: Maroon Communities

- Readings:
 - Andrews, Afro-LatAm excerpt, pp. 22-52
 - Jane Landers, “*Cimarron* and Citizen: African Ethnicity, Corporate Identity, and the Evolution of Free Black Towns in the Spanish Circum-Caribbean,” in *Slaves, Subjects and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* 111-145
 - Kathryn Joy McKnight, “Soldier, Slaver, and Elder: Maroon Voices from the Palenque del Limón, 1634” in *Afro-Latino Voices*, pp.43-54

Mid term – in-class on TR Oct. 5

UNIT 4: AFRO-LATINO CULTURE

Week 8, Oct. 10, 12: Art & Music

- Readings:
 - Alejandro de la Fuente, “Afro-Latin American Art,” in Fuente & Andrews, ALAS, pp.348-405
- Documentary: “Tango Negro: The African Roots of Tango” (Films on Demand)

Week 9 Oct. 17, 19: Religion

- Readings:
 - Paul Christopher Johnson and Stephan Palmié, “Afro-Latin American Religions,” in Fuente & Andrews, ALAS, pp.438-485

- Martha E. Davis, “Diasporal Dimensions of Dominican Folk Religion and Music.” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 161-191

Assignment due: preliminary bibliography

UNIT 5: DISMANTLING NATIONAL MYTHS

Week 10, Oct. 24, 26: Slaves and Free People of Color in the Spanish American Wars of Independence

- Readings:
 - Andrews, *Afro-LatAm* Chapter 2, pp.53-84
 - Peter Blanchard, “The Slave Soldiers of Spanish South America: From Independence to Abolition,” in Christopher L. Brown & Philip Morgan (Eds.), *Arming Slaves, from Classical Times to the Modern Age*

Week 11, Oct. 31, Nov. 2: A White Argentina?

- Readings:
 - Andrews, *Afro-LatAm* Chapters 4 and 5, pp.117-190
 - Erika Denise Edwards, “The making of a White nation: The disappearance of the Black population in Argentina,” *History Compass* (June 2018)

Assignment due: annotated bibliography

Week 12, Nov. 7, 9: “Racial Democracy”

- Documentary:
 - “Brazil: A Racial Paradise?” (PBS Series “Black in Latin America,” produced by Henry Louis Gates Jr.)
- Readings:
 - Andrews, *Afro-LatAm* Chapter 3, pp.85-116
 - Paulina Alberto and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, “‘Racial Democracy’ and Racial Inclusion: Hemispheric Histories,” in Fuente & Andrews, *ALAS*, pp.264-316

Week 13, Nov. 14, 16: Silenced Histories in Mexico and Peru

- Documentary: “Mexico & Peru: The Black Grandma in the Closet” (PBS Series “Black in Latin America,” produced by Henry Louis Gates Jr.)
- Readings:
 - Relevant readings for your final project

Week 14 Nov. 21, 23—: Peer-review of Final Project

Assignments due: 1) draft of final project, due in hard copy at the beginning of class on Tuesday, 11/21
2) Peer-review

NO CLASS ON THUR. 11/23– THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15 Nov. 28, 30: Exhibit prep.

- Readings:
 - Relevant readings for your final project

Assignment due: complete draft of final project

Week 16 Dec. 5

T: Exhibit “opening”

Assignment due: Self-assessment

Policies and Expectations:

Attendance & makeup policy: Learning happens in the classroom. Your attendance and participation are therefore expected. Of course, life sometimes gets on the way. If you cannot attend a class meeting due to personal issues including but not limited to: health concerns; family emergencies; severe weather, please know that the occasional absence will not jeopardize your performance in the class. It is strongly advisable that you contact the instructor in advance (if possible) or shortly after to arrange for make-up work. You are not required to disclose the reason for your absence. A doctor’s note is not required for illness-related absences unless those extend beyond a reasonable amount. That said, students who miss more than 50% of class meetings without a reasonable excuse cannot pass the course. Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at [Attendance Policies](#). It is the students’ responsibility to know and follow the University’s policies regarding religious holidays, illness, and athletic or other extra-curricular activities. Please consult the link to become familiar with those, and contact the Instructor if you have questions or concerns.

Extensions: students in this course can ask for a one-week extension, no questions asked, for any one assignment (except the peer-review), without incurring in any grade deduction. In order to benefit from this opportunity, the student must contact the instructor via email up to 24 hours prior to the assignment deadline. Each student can take advantage of this policy once in the semester. Students who anticipate obstacles in meeting subsequent deadlines beyond the one

allowed should contact the instructor right away to inquire about possibly turning in late work. In these cases, acceptance of late work will occur at the discretion of the instructor.

Classroom Etiquette, including the use of electronic devices and course recording: This course will ask students to engage in conversations with the instructor and their peers related to the topics of study. For this reason, you are asked to refrain from using your cell phone or any other electronic device. Limited use of laptops or tablets is permitted in specific circumstances only, such as text-referencing of e-books or oral reporting on weekly journal entries. The Professor reserves the right to ask students to turn off electronic devices when she deems it pedagogically relevant. No electronic device will be permitted during the mid-term. Unauthorized recording of any portion of the course, in any means (including screenshots), and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials, is strictly prohibited.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class. Plagiarism is not tolerated. Unintentional plagiarism results in an “F” for the assignment. Intentional plagiarism results in an “F” for the course, or worse.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from the Gatorevals website (Links to an external site.)<<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the evaluation system. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at the public results website: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

Campus Resources

UF is a big school, but there are many resources available to help students navigate campus life. Here is a sample of some useful resources:

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 392-1575

Multicultural and Diversity Affairs (<https://multicultural.ufl.edu/>) (352-294-7850) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.

Hitchcock Field And Fork Food Pantry: For anyone experiencing food insecurity, with no requirement to verify income or need. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

The Molm Family Gator Career Closet: An on-campus, lending closet for students to borrow professional clothing and accessories free of charge. Valid with UF ID <https://career.ufl.edu/closet/>

Police Department: 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

The Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

Disability Resource Center (DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu | 352-392-8565) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honorcode-student-conduct-code/>

On-Line Students Complaints: <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/>