

LAH 4930 Latin America's Cold War

Monday, Period 7-9 (1:55-4:55pm) / Keene-Flint 0229

Fall 2025

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Office hours: Monday, 11:30am – 12:30pm,

Weds 2 – 5pm, and by appointment

This research seminar explores the Cold War from the vantage point of Latin America by studying the groups and individuals who formed the many governments and organizations who waged it. We will explore questions like: what were the major events of the Cold War in Latin America? What were the key points of contention? Who were key actors? When did the Cold War begin in Latin

America? When and how did it end? We will come to understand how and why the Cold War occurred and explore the many meanings it took on for various social groups. Along the way, we will introduce the historiography of the Cold War in general and in Latin America. You will produce a substantial research paper based on primary source evidence. This paper will be related to a topic within the scope of the Latin American Cold War. It will provide you with experience in analyzing documents and in developing historical interpretation and argument.

The goals of the course are:

- To study the causes, historical contexts, and effects of the Cold War in Latin America
- To write a major research paper using historical methods and theories of history.
- To gain and share insight into the uses of history in contemporary politics.

The course is designed to satisfy the senior seminar requirement for history majors. In addition to learning about the subject matter of the course, students will gain experience in the philosophy, methodology, and practice of history. By studying primary and secondary documents and by writing a short paper as well as a longer research paper, students will become equipped to undertake advanced work in history or in other research-related fields. If you feel you are not able to commit to this workload without the use of generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, then please reconsider taking this class. This chance to do your own original thinking, learning, and writing is far too precious to sell out because of stress or a packed schedule. In class, we will talk about what constitutes “use of generative AI and LLMs.”



Required Books:

- Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre* (2004)*
- Héctor Lindo-Fuentes and Erik Ching, *Modernizing Minds in El Salvador: Education Reform and the Cold War, 1960-1980* (2012)
- Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace Nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (2015)
- Valeria Manzano, *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla* (2019)
- Jaime Pensado, *Love and Despair: How Catholic Activism Shaped Politics and the Counterculture in Modern Mexico* (2023)
- Gladys McCormick, *The Last Door: A History of Torture in Mexico's War Against Subversives* (2025)
- Tanya Harmer, *Beatriz Allende: A Revolutionary Life in Cold War Latin America* (2024)*
- Roberto Bolaño, *By Night in Chile*

* Denotes books that are available as e-books through UF Libraries (You may still wish to buy paper copies, but these are available in a pinch or if you prefer to read on a screen.)

If you feel you need a little more background or basic contextual information, check out Vanni Pettina's *A Compact History of Latin America's Cold War* (2022). Unfortunately, we do not have time in our syllabus to read it together. A good historiographical overview of much of what we're reading can be found here: Gilbert M. Joseph, "Border Crossings and the Remaking of Latin American Cold War Studies" *Cold War History* 19, no. 1 (March 2019): 141-70 and in Marcelo Casal's response to Joseph, "Which borders have not yet been crossed? A supplement to Gilbert Joseph's historiographical balance of the Latin American Cold War," *Cold War History* 20, no. 3 (July 2020): 367-372.

Format

This course is designed to be more demanding than the average lecture-based history course. As a seminar, the course requires consistent preparation and active participation by before and during class every week. Because there are relatively class meetings, attendance at every class meeting is required. You must arrive to class on time. Late arrivals are disruptive.

Periodically, we will do small workshops in our class meetings. You will determine what workshop topics you think will most helpful. In the past, students have chosen how to research effectively, personal statements and abstracts, how to structure big assignments (chronological, thematic, others), how to learn the historiography of a subject, and applicable skills from history to other disciplines. You can choose these and others. We will talk about this in Week 1 and 3.

Like all classes at a university, my 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 mindful of the effect of your actions and words on others.

A significant portion of the semester will be devoted to individual research. There is no midterm and no final exam. I will assess your engagement with the reading by the quality of your contributions to class discussion and the quality of your weekly discussion questions.

[Note: If necessary, I may update the syllabus during the semester. If changes are made, the updated syllabus will be announced in class and on the course Canvas site.]

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation (incl. Discussion Questions & Presentation)	20% (total)
Attendance and Participation	10% (100 pts)
Pre-Circulated Weekly Discussion Questions (8 x 5pts)	4% (40 pts)
Presentation	6% (60 pts)
5-pg. Primary Source Analysis Paper	15% (150 pts)
Oral history interview	10% (100 pts)
Research Project	55% (total)
3-pg. Prospectus	10% (100 pts)
Draft	20% (200 pts)
Final Paper	25% (250 pts)

Assignment Descriptions

Attendance and Participation

Do the reading each week and come to class ready to talk about it.

Discussion Questions

Every week when we are reading a book, you are responsible for posting to the class Canvas page a compelling discussion question by Sunday, 6pm. If your question is connected to a quote or passage, please include the page number. These questions will be part of our discussion in class.

Presentation

Every student will lead a class discussion of an assigned book in groups of two or three. Your presentation should include some background on the author, a summary of the book's argument, a summary of the book's chapters, a discussion of the book's sources, and connection to other books that we have read or prior discussions. We will sign up for presentations at the end of class on Week 1.

Oral history interview

For this assignment, you will draft at least 5 questions and conduct a 15-minute (minimum) interview with someone in English, Spanish, or Portuguese about an historical event they

witnessed. Then, you will write a one-page analysis of that interview. A rubric for this assignment is included at the end of this syllabus.

Five-page Primary Source Analysis Paper

See end of the syllabus for a detailed discussion of this assignment and a rubric.

Prospectus

For this assignment, you will draft a 3-page proposal for your final research paper. See end of the syllabus for a detailed discussion of this assignment and a rubric.

Paper Draft

This is your first draft of the final paper. It should be a nearly complete draft of your final paper with complete sentences, clear paragraphs and organization, footnotes, and bibliography. See end of the syllabus for more detail and a rubric.

Final Paper

This is your final draft of the final paper. See end of the syllabus for more detail.

Grade Scale

A	930	C	730
A-	900	C-	700
B+	870	D+	670
B	830	D	630
B-	800	D-	600
C+	770		

Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For up to date information on those policies and resources for students, please see [this link \(https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/\)](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/). Here are some highlights:

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this class. There are many acceptable reasons for absence, including illness, serious accidents or emergencies (affecting you, your roommates, or your family), severe weather, “special curricular requirements,” military obligation, jury duty, subpoenas, and religious holidays. Other reasons, like a job interview or club activity, are a little more debatable.

(The website reads: “For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit.”)

Regarding makeup work: “Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities because of the reasons outlined above.”

Accessibility & Accommodations

Students with disabilities who want to access academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>).

We will work together to make this classroom and syllabus accessible. Please let me know how I can support you by increasing accessibility. I will proactively seek opportunities to make assignments, discussion, the classroom itself, and technologies accessible.

UF's Honesty Policy

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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me.

Uncited use of AI, including ChatGPT and other Large Language Models (LLMs), is plagiarism and a violation of the Honor Pledge.

Campus Health & Wellness

UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Course Schedule

Week 1: August 25: Introduction to the Class and the Field

In-Class Reading in the National Security Archives Electronic Briefing Book No. 11
<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB11/docs/> and *The Guatemala Reader*

Week 2: September 1: Origins (Labor Day Holiday)

Read Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre*
(Note: We will discuss this book in Week 3)

Week 3: September 8: Education and Youth

Read Lindo-Fuentes and Ching, *Modernizing Minds in El Salvador: Education Reform and the Cold War, 1960-1980*

Week 4: September 15: Cultural Diplomacy – 5 pg. Primary Source Analysis Due

Read Iber, *Neither Peace Nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America*
AND
Renata Keller, "The Latin American Missile Crisis," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 195-222
OR
Jean Franco, "The Excluded Middle: Intellectuals and the 'Cold War' in Latin America," in *Cold War Literature* ed. Andrew Hammond (Routledge, 2006): 238-253.

Week 5: September 22: Counterculture

Read Manzano, *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla*

Week 6: September 29: No Class – Individual Meetings – Oral History Due

Week 7: October 6: Religion

Read Pensado, *Love and Despair: How Catholic Activism Shaped Politics and the Counterculture in Modern Mexico*

Week 8: October 13: No Class – Research – Prospectus Due

Prospectus Peer Editing Workshop, Part 1

Week 9: October 20: Biography

Read Harmer, *Beatriz Allende: A Revolutionary Life in Cold War Latin America*
Prospectus Peer Editing Workshop, Part 2

Week 10: October 27: Violence

Read McCormick, *The Last Door: A History of Torture in Mexico's War Against Subversives*
AND

Greg Grandin, "Living in Revolutionary Time: Coming to Terms with the Violence of Latin America's Long Cold War" in Grandin and Joseph, *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War*

Week 11: November 3: No Class – Research & Writing Time

Class is encouraged to attend the International Oral History Workshop and Dr. Jeffrey L. Gould's screening of *Puerto El Triunfo* on Tuesday, Nov. 4th.

Week 12: November 10: Veterans' Day Holiday (Individual Meetings as needed)

Week 13: November 17: In-Class Film (*I'm Still Here* [Brazil, 2024]) – Rough Draft of Paper Due
Peer Editing Workshop, Part 3

THANKSGIVING

Week 14: December 1: Legacies of the Cold War / Guest Speaker Panel

Roberto Bolaño, *By Night in Chile*

Final Exam Period: No Class Meeting – Papers Due by December 12, 2025, 12pm (noon)

Tips for Effective Book Discussions in History Classes

1. Organization
 - Start big, then go small
2. Presentation
 - Start big, then go small (again)
 - Who is the author? Where do they work? What else have they written? Where did they do their PhD?
 - What kinds of primary and secondary sources did the author use in their research?
 - Do they refer to any key theoretical terms or frameworks?
 - How is the book organized and what is each chapter about?
 - How are they similar or different to other books/authors we've read?
3. Asking Good Questions
 - Avoid yes/no questions if possible
 - Make connections across the readings
 - Include page numbers or otherwise specifically refer to the text
4. Answering Questions Well
 - Answer with more than yes/no
 - Find examples or illustrations of your answer in the text
 - Answers can also include follow-up questions
5. Building Community
 - Everyone will get something different out of a book, so learn from each other
 - Listen and respond to each other's questions and comments
 - Refer back to questions by your classmates, even from other weeks
 - If you usually talk a lot, remember to step back and make room for others
 - Likewise, if you are usually quiet, take the opportunity to step up and say more
6. Returning to the Text (include a pg. #)
 - Go back to a passage that sparked your interest
 - Go back to a passage that seemed really important
 - Go back to a passage that you didn't understand
7. Not all books are created equal
 - The same question might create a great discussion of one book but not another
 - Sometimes books do not lend themselves to good discussion
8. Curiosity
 - Let curiosity guide your questions and discussion
9. Taking breaks
 - If a discussion topic is not getting a lot of interest, let it go
 - Call for a break when you think it's time – we'll usually break halfway through
10. Practice
 - Good discussions take practice and trust over time with a group

Primary Sources for 5 pg. Primary Source Analysis Paper

This paper will address one major primary source or a few shorter primary sources on Cold War Latin America. There are numerous sources in English, Spanish, and Portuguese that are available online for you to use. To simplify the process and focus your attention on analysis (rather than research), I have gathered some good sources for you here. You may also write on a primary source that you find (with my approval).

For this assignment, you should choose one (1) long primary source or a few short primary sources and analyze it/them using the 5Ps (Person, Place, Plan, Public, and Purpose), ultimately illustrating how and what it can tell us about revolutions in Central America.

English

- Various sources in translation are available in *The Guatemala Reader*, *The Peru Reader*, *The Mexico Reader*, and other country readers by Duke University Press (available online through UF Libraries)
- Newspaper reporting on the Cold War in U.S. newspapers, like *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, or *Miami Herald* (or similar newspaper)
- *The Nicaragua Reader: Documents of a Revolution Under Fire* (UF Libraries)
- Speeches by or interviews with Martha Harnecker
- National Security Archives Digital Reading Room Projects on Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, or the Southern Cone

Spanish

- Roque Dalton's poems (also widely available in English translation)
- Speeches by or interviews with Daniel Ortega, Dora María Tellez, Fidel Castro, Salvador Allende, Augusto Pinochet, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, and many other leaders
- Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA), Archivo de Inforpress Centroamericana, Recortes de periódicos y documentos:
<https://cirma.org.gt/glifos/collection/GT-CIRMA-AH-002?nav=GT-CIRMA-AH-002-002-001>
- Documentales en línea sobre El Salvador o Nicaragua, Archivo Mesoamericano > Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI) o Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica (IHNCA)

Note: This is not an exhaustive list potential primary sources, just a starting point for people who may be stuck!

Research Paper & Project

3-pg. Prospectus	10% (100 pts)
Rough Draft	20% (200 pts)
Final Paper	25% (250 pts)

Prospectus: For this assignment, you will offer an initial overview or proposal of your final research project. You will write a short prospectus of about 3 pages (roughly 900 words) that achieves all these basic tasks: proposes a working title for your project, compiles a beginning bibliography with primary (3) and secondary sources (5), situates your research within existing scholarship through a brief historiography/literature review, asserts your sense of the importance of your project, and outlines your research methodology.

Be sure to include the following in your Prospectus:

- a working title for your project;
- a statement of your research question(s);
- a beginning bibliography with primary (3) and secondary sources (5);
- a brief historiography/literature review:
 - o the relationship between your project and published scholarship;
 - o your sense of the importance of your project;
- a statement of your research methodology

Rough Draft: For the Draft paper, your submission should be the better part of your paper (say around 4,000 words), include a correctly formatted bibliography, complete sentences and paragraphs (mostly) and, if necessary, a detailed outline of unwritten sections.

Final Paper: Your paper should be approximately 6,000 words (a little bit longer is fine; shorter is not) and include all the elements listed below. Include a word count at the end of your paper.

Be sure to include in your Rough and Final Drafts:

- a title for your project;
- an introductory paragraph that states clearly:
 - o your research question(s);
 - o a statement of your research methodology;
- a section of your paper with historiography/literature review:
 - o the relationship between your project and published scholarship;
 - o your assessment of the importance of your project;
 - o reference to at least two of the books we've read together;
- a detailed engagement with your research question(s) and an answer to it/them;
- a bibliography with primary and secondary sources, divided into these sections, and organized alphabetically by author's last name.

Rubric for Short Primary-Source Paper on Latin America's Cold War
LAH 4930: Latin America's Cold War
Fall 2025

Name:

Did you...	Exceptionally Well	Well	Acceptably	Poorly
Select appropriate source/s (one major or a few shorter primary sources related to Latin America's Cold War)				
Analyze it/them using the 5Ps (Person, Place, Plan, Public, and Purpose)				
Discuss how and what these sources can tell us about revolutions in Central America?				
Have an argument				
Compose a paper that was well-written and well-organized				
Format according to the assignment sheet				
Use footnotes appropriately and include a bibliography				
Other notes/comments:				

Grade: / 150 points

Rubric for Oral History Interview
LAH 4930: Latin America's Cold War
Fall 2025

Name:

Did you...	Exceptionally Well	Well	Acceptably	Poorly
Select an appropriate interview subject?				
Draft five questions about a historical event they witnessed?				
Conduct a 15-minute interview with the interview subject?				
Submit that interview via Canvas in a usable format?				
Other notes/comments:				

Grade: / 100 points

Rubric for Prospectus Assignment
LAH 4930: Latin America's Cold War
Fall 2025

Name:

Did you...	Exceptionally Well	Well	Acceptably	Poorly
Working Title				
Statement of Research Questions				
Bibliography – 3 Primary Sources that are relevant to your research questions.				
Bibliography – 5 Secondary Sources that are relevant to your research questions.				
Historiography/Literature Review				
Statement of Research Methodology				
Compose a prospectus that was well-written and well-organized				
Format according to the assignment sheet				
Other notes/comments:				

Grade: / 100 points

Rubric for Final Paper Draft***LAH 4930: Latin America's Cold War****Fall 2025**

(*Final Paper rubric is identical, except for expanded requirement of 6,000 words and 250 points)

Name:

Did you...	Exceptionally Well	Well	Acceptably	Poorly
Include a title				
Include an Introduction with a clear statement of research questions & methodology				
Utilize primary sources				
Utilize secondary sources				
Write a thoughtful Historiography/Literature Review				
Compose a draft paper that was well-written and well-organized				
Include a clear and detailed outline of any unwritten sections				
Format your paper according to the assignment sheet (about 4,000 words written and correctly formatted bibliography)				
Other notes/comments:				

Grade: / 200 points