ANTH 131B 1
Latin America in Ethnographic Perspective

Class Meeting
Tuesday-Thursday 5:00 – 6:20pm
Room: Brown 224

Professor Patricia Alvarez Astacio
Office: Brown 204
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00am – 12:00pm

Course Description

While we might tend to look at the world as divided into discrete regions, our world is also characterized by the global movement of people, information, goods, etc. Regions are deeply interconnected, shape and re-shaped through political and social histories. This makes our attempts to define and study the world in bounded regions increasingly problematic. Societies in the Western hemisphere have long historical relations of connectivity and movement across all of the Americas. In this class we will examine issues in contemporary Latin America and the Spanish speaking Caribbean from the perspective of sociocultural anthropology. We will read
and discuss books and articles that draw on long-term ethnographic research to explore cultural economic, political and religious aspects of the region. These texts will be placed in dialogue with other highly researched non-textual material such as documentary, cinema, and audio. The course will provide a framework for understanding contemporary Latin America and the sociocultural and sociopolitical relations that cut across geopolitical boundaries in the region. We will address the role of colonialism, migration, transnational communities, cultural production, social movements, and the impact of globalization in the region.

Learning Goals

- Familiarize students with key areas of research and debates within Latin American studies from an anthropological perspectives
- Develop and use modes of analysis, critical thinking, viewing and writing skills
- Examine the changing ways anthropologists have looked at the region
- Analyze social and historical roots of various contemporary social issues in the region
- Become familiar with the diverse ways of life in Latin America
- Consider the contributions that anthropology has made to the understanding of the geopolitical forces at play in the Americas

Required Readings

- Fabiana Li - Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru
- Gabriela Zamorano - Indigenous Media and Political Imaginaries in Contemporary Bolivia
- Petra Rivera-Rideau - Remixing Reggaeton: The Cultural Politics of Race in Puerto Rico
- LATTE

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation – 20%
Midterm Essay – 15%
Research question – 5%
Annotated bibliography – 10%
Oral presentation – 10%
Draft of paper and peer review – 10%
Final paper 12 – 15 pages – 30%

Attendance

Regular, punctual attendance is non-negotiable. Attendance will be taken each class through a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to sign in. If you forget to sign in you will be marked as absent. Signing the name of a student who is not present will be considered a violation of academic integrity. Both students will be marked absent.

You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. Three unexcused absences will result in a 1/3 grade markdown on the final course grade. More than 6 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late counts as 1/2 absence. Excused absences
should be cleared with me before class, with the exception of extenuating last-minute emergencies. Reasons like “I have to study for another class,” or simply saying “I’m not feeling well” will not be considered as excused absences.

**Participation**

Class participation is essential. Discussion is a central part of this class, the learning process, and your final grade. You are expected to attend class having done the assigned readings for that day. Be prepared to participate in class discussion with questions and comments. Bring your readings to class as well as notes you took, questions you have, and material you would like to discuss.

**Assignments**

Late assignments will NOT be accepted. All due dates are stated in the course schedule. Assignments must be handed in hard-copy unless stated otherwise by the professor.

In order to get full credit, students must fulfill the stated specified instructions for each prompt. Proofread all written assignments before handing them in. All written assignments must be double-spaced using font size 12, margins at 1,” include proper citations, and works cited page.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is a serious offence and will NOT be tolerated. The work you turn in for this class, both written and creative, has to be your own and come from your own critical and creative engagement with class material. If you use, incorporate or discuss ideas in your work found elsewhere, you must cite and provide the source following a citation style.

You are expected be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS-Library guides.

Rights and Responsibilities: (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rightsresponsibilities/index.html)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

**Class Communications**

All communications will occur through LATTE and your Brandeis email account.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

August 30, Thursday

Syllabus, Introductions, Latin American Trivia and Map Exercise

Recommended Viewing:
Even the Rain – Dir. Icíar Bollaín
Colombus on Trial – Lourdes Portillo

Week 2: What is Latin America?

Sept 4, Tuesday

-Eduardo Galeano, Lust for Gold, Lust for Silver in The Open Veins of Latin America
-Jose Martí, Our America
https://writing.upenn.edu/library/Marti_Jose_Our-America.html

Sept 6, Thursday - BRANDEIS MONDAY - NO CLASS

Week 3: Conquest, Colonization, Decolonization

Sept 11, Tuesday – Rosh Hashanah – NO CLASS

Sept 13, Thursday

-Anibal Quijano, Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism & Latin America

Week 4: Movement, Nation, Citizenship

Sept 18, Tuesday

- JP Sniadecki and Joshua Bonnetta, “El Mar, La Mar”
-RadioLab: The Border Trilogy

https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/border-trilogy-part-1/
https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/border-trilogy-part-2-hold-line/
https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/border-trilogy-part-3-what-remains/
Sept 20, Thursday

-Jason de León, Better to be Hot than Caught: Excavating the Conflicting Roles of Migrant Material Culture

-Radio Ambulante: The Long Road and the End of the Journey


Week 5: Development, Democracy and Neoliberalism

Sept 25, Tuesday – BRANDEIS MONSAY – NO CLASS

Sept 27, Thursday

-Yarimar Bonilla and Rafael A. Boglio Martínez, Puerto Rico in Crisis: Government Workers Battle Neoliberal Reform in NACLA

-Juia Paley, The Paradox of Participation: Civil Society and Democracy in Chile

-Radio Ambulante: Debt


Week 6: Land, Labor, Extraction

Oct 2, Tuesday

-Stefanie Graeter, To Revive an Abundant Life: Catholic Science and Neoextractivist Politics in Peru’s Mantaro Valley in Cultural Anthropology

-Elizabeth Ferry, Geologies of Power: Value Transformations of mineral specimens from Guanajuato, Mexico in American Ethnologist

*Midterm Due

Oct 4, Thursday

-Ernesto Cabellos, “Hija de la Laguna” (Daugher of the Lake) - Netflix

Week 7: Land, Labor, Extraction cont.

Oct 9, Tuesday

-Fabiana Li, Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru

Oct 11, Thursday

-Fabiana Li, Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru
Week 8: Social Movements: Indigenous Politics

Oct 16, Tuesday

-Jayro Bustamante, “Ixcanul” - Netflix

*Research Question Due

Oct 18, Thursday

-Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Ch’ixxinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization in *South Atlantic Quarterly*

-Marisol de la Cadena, Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond “Politics” in *Cultural Anthropology*

Week 9: Indigenous Politics and Representation

Oct 23, Tuesday

-Eduardo Kohn, How Dogs Dream: Amazonian Natures and the Politics of Transspecies Engagements in *American Ethnologist*

Oct 25, Thursday

-Gabriela Zamorano, Indigenous Media and Political Imaginaries in Contemporary Bolivia

*Bibliography Due

Week 10: Media and the State

Oct 30, Tuesday

-Gabriela Zamorano, Indigenous Media and Political Imaginaries in Contemporary Bolivia

Nov 1, Thursday

-Gabriela Zamorano, Indigenous Media and Political Imaginaries in Contemporary Bolivia

Week 11: Race and Popular Culture

Nov 6, Tuesday

Peer Review Workshop – Bring 2 hard copies of your rough draft

*Hand in Rough Draft
Nov 8, Thursday

-Petra Rivera-Rideau, Remixing Reggaeton: The Cultural Politics of Race in Puerto Rico

Week 12: Race and Popular Culture/State Violence

Nov 13, Tuesday

-Petra Rivera-Rideau, Remixing Reggaeton: The Cultural Politics of Race in Puerto Rico

Nov 15 – Professor at AAA

-Tatiana Huezo, “Tempestad”
-Geografia del Dolor – Geography of Pain
http://www.geografiadeldolor.com

Week 13: Oral Presentation/Workshop/Discussion Films

Nov 20, Tuesday

-Oral Presentation and Doing Revisions Workshop
-Discussion of films

*Return Rough Drafts with Comments

Nov 22, Thursday – Thanksgiving – NO CLASS

Week 14: Final Research Paper and Oral Presentations

Nov 27, Tuesday

-Work on Draft Revisions and Oral Presentations – Independent work, scheduled meetings with professor

Nov 29 Thursday
-Work on Draft Revisions and Oral Presentations – Independent work, scheduled meetings with professor

Week 15: Oral Presentations

Dec 4, Tuesday

*Rough drafts returned

Dec 6, Thursday
Week 16: Oral Presentations

Dec 11, Tuesday – Oral Presentations

Dec 13-20 – Final Paper Due