



History 131-60731  
Latin American History  
(from Independence to today)  
M-W 11:10 AM-12:35 PM  
30-12

Paul Rittman, Instructor  
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### Course Description:

This course is designed to give students a chronological overview of Latin American History beginning with Latin American Independence and concluding with present events and problems in Latin America. Students will gain an understanding of the social, economic, political, and diplomatic elements that have been the basis for post-Independence Latin American development. Special emphasis will be placed on US-Latin American relations.

### Textbook:

Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood & Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. Norton, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (2011).

### Availability:

I will be available to talk to students before and after the class meets, and can be reached via email.

**When you email me, please let me know your class number, 131.** This way I can know which file to open up to look up any information you are requesting. **I usually don't respond to requests for information contained in the syllabus. If you would like to be included whenever I email something to the class, be sure to maintain a current email with our college's online registration system.**

### Withdrawal Policy:

February 26 is the last day to drop this class without receiving a W grade; April 1 is the last day to drop and receive a W grade. Excessive absences (at any time in the semester) will result in the student being dropped. **If you are going to be absent from class for two or more class periods in a row, please email me beforehand. Students who arrive tardy should confirm their attendance at the end of that class period with the instructor. BECAUSE OF ABUSES IN THE PAST, STUDENTS WHO ARE DROPPED FROM CLASS FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES WILL NOT BE REINSTATED.**

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the student can:

1. Develop analytical skills in relation to post-independence Latin America, cause and effect.
2. Identify and discuss transformational people, institutions, and events that have been the basis for the political, economic, social and diplomatic development of post-independence Latin America.
3. Critically analyze how inter-group relationships have affected the social, economic and political development of Latin America since 1800.
4. Analyze the basis for and the impact of US foreign policy on modern Latin American development.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be allotted according to the following percentage scale:

A	90%
B	80%
C	70%
D	60%
F	below 60%

The different types of assignments are given below, with the percentage points assigned to each category. All assignments will be given a score, and then factored in according to the following ratios, to determine the final semester grade.

Tests	40% (20% each for the midterm and final)
Essays	40% (20% each for the first essay and second essay)
Participation	15%
Essay outline	5%

**PENS NEEDED FOR WORK WRITTEN BY HAND:** Written work (exams, reflections, and the essay outline assignment if it is not printed from a computer) needs to be done in pen (blue or black ink; no light colors allowed). Work not written in pen will be returned to the student, for them to copy it out in pen, before being graded for credit.

**Exams**

The two exams are both written, usually a mixture of short and long responses. Long responses (one- or two-pages in length) are at least 80% of the exam grade. Usually, the final will cover only the material since the midterm. On the exams, I will not be grading your spelling, punctuation, or paragraph or essay structure, so much as the ideas you are expressing (obviously your spelling and writing has to be clear enough to be understood by me—I don't give credit for what I cannot understand).

On the exams, **if you answer more than the requested number of questions, be sure to cross out the ones you don't want me to grade**; if that isn't indicated, I will determine which responses are read and scored.

**When writing out the exam questions, write out the short answer terms and underline them; for the long responses, simply give the number of the question and circle it.** This will be made clear in the instructions for the exam. Any student that correctly does this for ALL short and long responses will be given one additional (percentage) point for that exam.

No electronic media are allowed at all during tests; all books and papers will need to be placed below the desk. If a student is caught looking at printed materials, or on another student's exam, their test will be given an automatic zero, regardless of whether they choose to continue taking that test or not. **Once I pass out the midterm or final, students must remain in the room to take it. If or when they leave (to answer a cell phone, go to the bathroom, or for any other reason) the test is considered finished and must be turned in to the teacher.** Such students will not be allowed to make up the exam at a later point. **If a student feels that a medical (or other) condition might require a student to use the restroom during an exam, they can choose to do the midterm makeup—but once the exam has been given, they have to finish it (they can't look at the test and then decide to do the midterm makeup).**

### **Blue Books**

**You need to bring Blue Books to class for both the midterm and final (large, 8.5 x 11 inch size recommended—some students fill up more than one of the small Blue Books). NO EXAM RESPONSES WRITTEN IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN A BLUE BOOK THAT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ME PRIOR TO BEING WRITTEN IN, WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

I strongly suggest for the exams, that students bring **pens to write with.**

### **Essays**

There will be two essays assigned during the semester. Both essays need to be 1600 words (roughly five pages) long. A recommended division of the essay is a half-page introduction, a four-page body, and a half-page conclusion. Essays need to be typed in 12-point type and double-spaced (so that they are easy to read); don't use decorative or script fonts.

Essays are an excellent way to learn more about a topic that you are personally interested in. Additionally, essay writing develops your critical thinking skills—you learn to discern what points and issues will support your main thesis, as well as (possibly) examine different explanations, and decide which is most valid. Finally, the reading and writing involved in these essays will help develop these same skills, which the vast majority of you will put to use as you advance in college and work, as well as in becoming an informed citizen.

The essays are **research** essays—assignments whereby you research your topic, and combine the information you have gleaned, with your own opinions and conclusions. As such, essays written essentially of your own opinions or beliefs will be severely downgraded. The idea here is to develop research skills, including not only reading, but also the assimilating different bits of information and viewpoints. If you simply write five pages on everything you already know about your topic, you don't develop those skills.

### What to write about

The essays need to cover a person that lived, or a specific event that occurred, within the content area and time frame of this class: **Latin America (Mexico south to Chile, along with the Caribbean), from 1800 onward. Keep in mind that even though we might go outside of these boundaries in class lectures and readings, you will still need to observe these parameters for your two essays.** The subject of the essay has to be either a person, or a specific event. When students write on broader topics, they typically lose focus and the essay wanders all over the place. The emphasis on specific people and events eliminates myths and legendary characters as subjects of your essays. **If you are in any way unsure as to whether your topic fits these parameters, ask the instructor.**

If you choose to write an essay on a topic covered in class, make sure that your essay goes well beyond what was covered in class; essays that simply repeat classroom lectures or readings will be downgraded to the degree that this happens.

### Format

I do require both 5-page essays to be turned in digitally via Blackboard (see link at top of first page). For the purposes of keeping everything organized, I will NOT accept a hard copy of the essay. The day it is submitted digitally to me is the day it is turned in.

Both 5-page essays will be given one additional percentage point if they: (1) are uploaded to Blackboard on time; (2) do not need to be re-uploaded because of improper subject matter or for any other reason; and (3) have the same arrangement as the essay template on my website: name *only* on cover page, and a works cited page in back of essay.

If you are uncertain how to upload a file on Blackboard, go to the Blackboard web address given in the top of the first page. Click on the link to this class. Then click on the Announcements section on the left side of that page. That will show you a link to a PDF file that explains how to upload a document. **Upload the files by attaching them into the Blackboard interface; do NOT paste the file into a text field.** Please see the instructions on how to upload the file if you are not sure how to do this.

One of the reasons for insisting on a digital copy is for catching plagiarism. **I will accept digital copies in one of the following formats: Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), OpenOffice (.odt), or Word Perfect (.wpd).** Essays not in one of those formats will be returned to the student, to be resubmitted in a proper format, and will be penalized.

As research essays, they need to reference IN THE TEXT OF THE ESSAY ITSELF at least 3 different books or articles, in MLA format. Place your full citations on their own page, at the end of your essay (in the same document)—do not create a new document for your works cited. Essays that place the works cited on a separate document will be penalized. These three sources are not to include class handouts, notes, the textbook, or Wikipedia (or any of its derivative websites).

If students are unaware of the MLA format, they can go to a page on my history site, and scroll down to a section that is entitled "Classroom Handouts." You can visit two links listed there, both of which explain the MLA format. One is the Purdue OWL site, the other is maintained by Victor Valley College. Both of those pages have sample essays written in MLA format, so you can see exactly what you are being asked to do.

Essays written before this semester started, or submitted to other classes, are not acceptable.

### **Essay Outline**

For the essay outline assignment you will turn in **two forms**. One is the outline form itself; the other, a document from the Writing Lab (that they will give you) signifying that you have gone there and consulted with them. Before going to the Lab, complete as much of the outline form as you can (including small paragraphs in the spaces allotted for them). Then, have them look it over and make suggestions. This visit to the Lab has to be with the first (not the second) essay. While you can feel free to use this outline form for your own benefit when you write the second essay, you will not need to turn in an outline form with that second essay, or take that essay to the writing center.

The writing lab form will not be given credit unless it is turned in at the same time as the essay outline form. Neither of these forms can be turned in later than the first essay itself.

The late penalty (20 percent of the grade) will be assessed to the writing lab form if it is not **stapled** to the essay outline form.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not permitted, and can result in receiving a 0 on the assignment, without the option to submit the assignment again, and additionally, any allowable penalty as explained in the student handbook or in accordance with VVC policy.

### **Participation**

The participation grade will consist of some short readings (sometimes primary source), and a one-page response by the students that are done in class, referred to me as reflections. These are rather unstructured, and the idea here is simply to expose you to historical documents and ideas, and get you to think about them. At the end of the semester, I will average the grade for each reflection assignment, and that will constitute the participation portion of the final semester grade. The lowest reflection grade will be dropped and will not count against the grade. Most of the reflections that are turned in are given full credit.

Part of the participation grade *might be* class presentations of newspaper articles about current topics and events in Latin America, that reflect in some way on issues we are studying in class. If these are assigned, they would be graded just as if they were a reflection assignment. Students will be asked to show an article to the rest of the class, and explain the main points of it, and how it continues some of the issues we have been, or will be, looking at in class.

### **Quizzes**

**I reserve the right to give short quizzes throughout the semester.** These quizzes, if and when they are given, would be given at the beginning of class. Quizzes must be turned in when the instructor asks for them; they cannot be made up later on in that class period, nor on any other day. Once I am done passing out quizzes I will not pass any out later on in the class period, even if students come in late to that class. Any quizzes that are given out will be averaged in to the participation grade (as if they were reflections).

**Late Work and Makeup Work Policy**

The only assignments that can be turned in late are the essay outline, and the two five-page essays. Late work has to be turned in no later than seven days after the original due date and will be given 80 percent credit (that is, 80 percent of what the grade would have been, had it not been turned in late). This 80 percent credit policy will be implemented regardless of the reason for the assignment being late. The only exceptions to this one-week extension are any assignments that fall due the last week of class—no work can be turned later than the day of the final exam.

The midterm exam can be made up (for full credit) by taking it in the Communications Center. The makeup midterm will be different from that taken in class, but it will still be based on the study guide. Midterm makeups need to be taken BEFORE the last week of class. Reflections (and quizzes) are based on class lectures and discussions and cannot be made up (or turned in before or after the assignment is done in class).

A word to the wise: this isn't deliberate at all, but I typically return late work (and essays that need to be re-uploaded or re-done for any reason) very slowly. It is always in the best interest of the student to make sure that all criteria for essays (as mentioned in this syllabus) are met, before uploading the essay.

The essay outline will be collected at the beginning of the class period of the day it is due. Any essay outlines turned in from that point onward (including later on in that class period) will be assessed the late penalty.

**Extra Credit or Re-doing Assignments**

Apart from the special instructions for emailing essays and writing out your exams, there is no extra credit offered; the only assignments that can be re-done are essays that are returned because of unacceptable subject choice, improper file format, or some other condition, **at the discretion of the instructor**. Sorry, but plagiarism or otherwise improper use of sources or other people's work doesn't constitute a reason for making up the assignment. Apart from the special instructions for emailing essays and writing out your exams, there is no extra credit offered; the only assignments that can be re-done are essays that are returned because of unacceptable subject choice, improper file format, or some other condition, **at the discretion of the instructor**. Sorry, but plagiarism or otherwise improper use of sources or other people's work doesn't constitute a reason for making up the assignment.

***Out of consideration for the rest of the class, if you do come in late, please walk in through the back door (facing the lake); and please don't walk up to the front of the class to sit down. Find a seat in the back.***

## Class Schedule

**Assignments listed below are due the Wednesday of the given week**

Feb 13-15	Class introduction; Native Indian civilizations
Feb 22	Native Indian civilizations, cont.
Feb 27-Mar 1	Ch. 2 "Colonial Crucible" Spanish conquest and colonization
Mar 6-8	Ch. 3 "Independence" 1810-1825
Mar 13-15	Ch. 4 "Postcolonial Blues" 1825-1850; <b>essay outline</b>
Mar 20-22	Ch. 4, cont.
Mar 27-29	Ch. 5 "Progress" Industrial Revolution & Latin America, 1850-1875; midterm review; <b>First essay</b>
Apr 3-5	Ch. 5, cont.; <b>midterm</b>
Apr 10-12	Easter vacation
Apr 17-19	Ch. 6 "Neocolonialism" Northern influence, late 1800s & early 1900s
Apr 24-26	Ch. 6, cont.
May 1-3	Ch. 7 "Nationalism" 1910-1945
May 8-10	Ch. 8 "Revolution" 1945-1960
May 15-17	Ch. 8, cont.
May 22-24	Ch. 9 "Reaction" 1960s & 1980s <b>Second essay due</b>
May 31 (May 29 is Memorial Day)	Ch. 10 "Neoliberalism" 1990s; final exam review;
June 5-7	Ch. 10, cont.; <b>final exam</b>