

**INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (LAS2001)**  
**Spring 2024 | Class No. 13875**



**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Luis Felipe Lomeli

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**CLASS SESSIONS:** Weil Hall 273, Tuesday 10:40 – 11:30 am & Thursdays 10:40 am– 12:35 pm.

**OFFICE HOURS:** You can email me to arrange a more convenient time to meet, either via zoom or in person.

**OBJECTIVES:** This course offers a panoramic introduction to that astonishingly immense variety of cultures and societies that we—mysteriously—group together under the concepts of “Latinx” and “Latin America.” Using topics such as food, clothing, music, and art as a pretext, we will explore historical, cultural, political, socioeconomic, and other relevant issues in this region of the world. Throughout the semester, we will read articles, passages of books, and engage in conversations with invited guests. **At the conclusion of this course you will:**

1. Gain a panoramic understanding of fundamental topics, shared characteristics, and distinctions among the variety of societies that live in “Latin America.”
2. Conduct discussion-based seminars and critically engage with key theoretical, historical, political, and socioeconomic issues.
3. Learn and/or improve research skills and techniques to analyze texts and other cultural products.
4. Exercise public speaking, communication, and presentation skills.
5. Develop a “critical eye” to unveil and unwrap the hidden and intertwined histories, causes and effects, that construct a particular cultural phenomenon or product.
6. Practice the ability to understand and articulate diverse points of view for a single event.
7. Acquire a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that inspire your own academic interests in “Latin America.”

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

**COURSE FORMAT:** Due to our unique schedule (50 min. on Tuesdays and 115 min. on Thursdays) our course will have a mixed format. Our short sessions on Tuesday will usually have a **lecture** format with lots of participation from your part. This means that I will rarely arrive with a Power Point presentation, and I will never talk uninterruptedly for 40 minutes. Instead, we will build the class together. I will be asking questions to you and you will be discussing—with the whole class or in small groups and aided by assigned readings—the pros and cons of possible answers and approaches to the topic of the day.

**\*Santiago de Chile, Skyline. Photograph by Marianna Ianovska.**

On our long Thursday meetings or **workshops**, the session will be usually divided in two. We will have, approximately and subject to change, nine guests. In our sessions with guests, during the first half we will have an informal conversation with our guest: sometimes they would be sharing an article in advance with us and sometimes they would just arrive to chat with us and answer our questions. During the second half it would be your turn on the stage. We will have short and mini-presentations (the time lapse of these will depend on the number of enrolled students) where you will present your research, data, and thoughts on a particular topic and engage in a critical discussion with your classmates. Accordingly, if we don't have a guest, workshop sessions will have longer presentations and we will dedicate some time to conduct research during class time. Thus, our workshops will cover the three main branches of academic research: 1) discussion with experts, 2) research presentation and discussion, and 3) teamwork research. Details for each workshop will be posted on Canvas.

Why will we have so many presentations? Because there are so many different societies in that thing we call "Latin America" and the best way to cover most of them is working together and sharing our knowledge (i.e. if each student specializes in one country, and we are 20 in the classroom, at the end of the semester we will all know, at least, about 20 countries). Thus, research/presentations and participation in class comprise the largest share of your final grade. The two other components will be the midterm essay and the final essay.

Finally, some readings and topics on this syllabus may change according to the interests of the group and the availability of our possible guests.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings will be available on the course Canvas page or in "reserve" at the library.

### ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation: 20%  
Workshops/Presentations: 50%  
Midterm Essay: 15%  
Final Essay: 15%

Guidelines and rubrics for each one of the above-mentioned items will be provided on the course Canvas page.

**Evaluation:** Final grades will be assigned on the following scale (based on percentage points out of the total): **A:** >93% **A-:** 92-90% **B+:** 89-87% **B:** 86-83% **B-:** 82-80% **C+:** 79-77% **C:** 76-73% **C-:** 72-70% **D+:** 69-67% **D:** 66-63% **D-:** 62-60% **E:** 59% and below.

**Attendance and Make-Up Work:** Because this is a discussion-based course, students' attendance and active participation is required for the course's functioning and the mutual enrichment of all its participants. Requirements for class attendance and coursework are consistent with university policies found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#illnesspolicytext>

Assignments will be subject to the following reduction of points if turned in late: within 24 hours of the posted date and time, the assignment will be docked 25% of the total possible points; 24-48 hours late will result in 50% loss of total possible points. Assignments will not be accepted beyond 48 hours past the due date. Let me know as soon as possible if you need to miss an assignment due date for any reason (e.g., conference, illness, family emergency).

### UF ACADEMIC POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Academic Honesty:** As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*" You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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*". It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

- **Services for Students Requiring Accommodations:** The Disability Resource Center (0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *I want you to do well in this class and will gladly work with you to implement any necessary accommodations.*
- **Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. 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 [www.ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://www.ufl.bluera.com/ufl/).
- **Student Privacy:** There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.
- **Campus Helping Resources:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.
- **Food Insecurity.** The Pantry is a resource on the University of Florida campus committed to eradicate food insecurity (<https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>). Food insecurity is not having a reliable access to nutritious foods for yourself on a regular basis. If you, or anyone you know is experiencing food insecurity, the Pantry is a resource to visit.
- **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
- **Sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in this course:** UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>
- **Gender Equity Statement.** Gender-based discrimination and violence are antithetical to the university's mission and values, violate university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. The Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity is here for anyone who has been affected by gender-based discrimination and violence. If you or someone you know has experienced gender-based discrimination or violence, please contact the Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity to get support and information about your rights and reporting options. You can learn more about university protections, supportive resources, response processes, and prevention efforts by visiting [www.titleix.ufl.edu](http://www.titleix.ufl.edu) The University Title IX Coordinator is located in the Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity and is responsible for providing support to anyone affected by gender-based discrimination or violence. If you would like to report gender-based discrimination or violence affecting our community, please contact Russell Froman, Assistant Vice President for Accessibility and Gender Equity and ADA and Title IX Coordinator at (352) 273-1094, or by e-mail at [rfroman@ufl.edu](mailto:rfroman@ufl.edu). You can also submit a report using the online portal: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofFlorida&layout\\_id=20](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofFlorida&layout_id=20)
- **Video or Audio Recording of Class Lectures.** Students may record video or audio of class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the University, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation delivered by faculty (including any individual hired or appointed by the University to conduct classroom, teaching activities) or guest lecturer, as part of a University of Florida course, intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the faculty or guest. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, or leaflet. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be

subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### HEALTH & WELLNESS

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- **University Counseling & Wellness Center:** 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/) (Counseling Services, Self-Help Library, Groups and Workshops, Training Programs, Outreach and Consultation, Community Provider Database).
- **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1161.

### ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- **E-learning technical support:** (352) 392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu).
- **Career Resource Center:** Reitz Union, (352) 392-1601. [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/). Career assistance and counseling.
- **Library Support:** <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> General study skills and tutoring.
- **Writing Studio:** 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

### WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Subject to change based on the research interests of students enrolled in the course and the availability of invited speakers

#### Week 1: What is “Latin”? What is “America”? Why did they put these two words together?

1. **Lecture & Workshop:** Course introduction, main concepts, and basic geography.

**Objective:** Each student will propose a working definition of “Latin America.”

2. **Workshop:** Music.

#### Homework:

- a. Suggested reading: Fosler-Lussier, Danielle. *Music on the Move*. United States of America, Univ. of Michigan Press, 2020, Chapter 5: “Music and Media in the Service of the State.” Since this is our first week and it is a long read (30 pages), this will be a **suggested reading only**. Nevertheless, the author makes some very interesting points that **could change your idea of music for the rest of your life**. So, I strongly suggest you to give this chapter a look.
- b. Choose a Latin American country from the list and write your name after it to avoid repetitions. Watch and listen several music videos. Choose one song. Prepare a short presentation (**no ppt needed for this one, just add the YouTube link to the list**) about how that song—and the genre or artist of your choice—reflects cultural variety, and its intertwining across history, in that country.

**Objective:** Propose tentative hypotheses to explain the processes of continuity and differentiation of traditional and contemporary music in (Latin) America.

#### Week 2: (Latin) America as utopia.

1. **Lecture:** What makes America unique?

- a. Fuentes, Carlos. *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1999, Chapter 6.
- b. Optional reading: O’Gorman, Edmundo. *The Invention of America: An inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1961.

2. **Workshop:** Food and transformation.

#### Homework:

- a. Read: Moore, James W. “The Capitalocene Part I: On the nature and origins of our ecological crisis.” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2017, pp.- 594 - 630.
- b. Optional reading: Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1997, pp. 85-92.
- c. Choose a (Latin) American country. Roam around Google Maps, Google Earth or any other platform of satellite images. Spot a non-urban human-transformed place or region that you may be able to explain by a particular production process (oil drilling, salt mining, wind farms, banana plantations, et cetera). Have your hypotheses at hand to discuss in class.

**Objective:** Analyze how “capitalism” transformed the societies and nature of an entire continent.

#### Week 3: The invasion(s) of America and the new socioeconomic order.

1. **Lecture:** The Pacific Ocean and the Americas: The Invention of “Capitalism.”

- a. Mann, Charles C. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. New York, Knopf, 2011, pp.- 118 - 163.

2. **Workshop:** Cultural

**Possible guest:** Welson Tremura.

**Homework:** Read: Tremura, Welson. "African Influence in Brazilian Music: Samba." Pp.- 1-8.

**Objective:** Analyze and explain the historical processes, cultural implications, and global trade webs that produced the diversity of cultures across (Latin) America.

**Week 4: The Construction of America**

1. **Lecture:** The translators.

- a. Dodds Pennock, Caroline. *On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe*. New York, Knopf, 2023, pp.- 74 - 93.

2. **Workshop:** Translating pluriverses

**Possible guest:** Clate Korsant

**Homework:**

- a. Watch: Gianetto, Claudia and Clate Korsant. Lifting the Green Screen.  
Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/380129281?share=copy>  
Password: GreenScreen19!
- b. Suggested reading: Korsant, Clate. "A Freirean Ecopedagogy or an Imposition of Values? The Pluriverse and the Politics of Environmental Education." *Globalizations*, 2022, pp.- 1-19.

**Objective:** Analyze and classify the different national models proposed in the independence movements.

**Week 5: The Latin American Communities.**

1. **Lecture:** Being "Latino": Law & performance.

**Possible guest:** Ariadna Tenorio.

- a. **Homework:** Read: Wade, Peter. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, Pluto Press, 2010, pp.- 1 -23.

2. **Workshop:** Communities. Clothing.

**Homework:**

- a. Reading: Lipovetsky, Gilles. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Princeton, Princeton UP, 1994, pp. 203-225.
- b. Choose one traditional and contemporary clothing trend in a (Latin) American community, investigate the designs' origin, cultural value, and technological features. Make a short presentation about it.

**Objective:** Analyze and explain the historical processes, cultural implications, and performance of traditional and contemporary clothing across (Latin) America.

**Week 6: Conservatives vs Liberals.**

1. **Lecture:** National struggles during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and beyond).

- a. Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1997, pp.- 173-204.

2. **Workshop:** Independence fighters and national models during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Homework:** Study the life, ideals, and accomplishments of a (Latin) American independence fighter. Make a short presentation about that person.

**Objective:** Analyze and classify the different national models proposed in the independence movements.

**Week 7: (Latin) American modernity.**

1. **Lecture:** What does it mean to be “modern”?
  - a. Read: Gallo, Rubén. *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 2005, pp.- 169-200.
  - b. Wrap-up of previously discussed topics.
2. **Midterm essay:** Handwritten **in-class essay**. You’re welcome to bring all handwritten notes, physical books, printed articles, and other non-electronic aids you may find useful.

### Week 8: A Nation of a Thousand Nations.

1. **Lecture:** Modernity *vs.* diversity.
  - a. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Great Britain, James Currey, 2011, pp.- xiv- 33.

2. **Workshop:** Languages & worldviews.

**Homework:** Choose an indigenous (Latin) American culture and study its language, history, territory, and worldview. Prepare a short presentation.

**Objective:** Reflect on the conflict between the idea of progress and the idea of diversity of languages and worldviews.

### Week 9: Revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

1. **Lecture:** Utopia, interrupted.
  - a. No general reading today. Select a Mexican revolutionary figure from the list and find a) ideals and/or political/economic agenda, b) geographical range of military operations, c) armies he fought against, d) death (killed by...)

2. **Workshop:** Populism.

**Possible guest:** Carlos de la Torre.

**Homework:** Read: Milanese, Natalia "A Man Like You: Juan Domingo Perón and the Politics of Attraction in Mid-Twentieth-Century Argentina." *Gender & History*, Vol. 26, No. 1, April 2014, pp.- 84 – 104.

**Objective:** Analyze, classify, and explain the origins, goals, and aftermaths of the diverse revolutionary movements across (Latin) America.

### Week 10: Spring Break!

### Week 11: Revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (cont.) and Literature.

1. **Workshop:** Latin American guerrilla fighters.

Select a (Latin) American guerrilla movement and research its origins, social demands, actions, and outcomes. Prepare a short presentation to discuss in small groups. Important: Choose a single point of view for your presentation and declare it at the beginning (i.e. the government’s point of view or the guerrilla fighters’ point of view).

2. **Workshop:** How literature shapes our social imaginaries?

**Homework:**

- a. Read: Rama, Ángel. *The Lettered City*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1996, chapter II.
- b. Plus: Read one or two (Latin) American short stories and reflect on what it unveils about that particular (Latin) American society that we had not talk about in class. Prepare a short presentation to discuss in small groups.

**Objective:** Same objective as last module plus the use (Latin) American short stories to reflect on natural, social, and ideological aspects.

### Week 12: Art!

1. **Lecture:** Picturing national imaginaries.
  - a. Camnitzer, Luis. *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias*. Austin, U. of Texas Press, 2009, pp.-63 – 75.
2. **Workshop:** Art as ideology and/or resistance.

**Homework:** Explore a (Latin) American plastic artist or movement: artistic and social ideals, works, and impact. Prepare a short presentation.

**Objective:** Propose a working definition for the thin borders between art and propaganda, tradition and innovation, and resistance and global art markets across (Latin) America.

### Week 13: Latinx on the Borderlands.

1. **Lecture:** The borderlands.
  - a. Huntington, Samuel P. “The Hispanic Challenge.” *Foreign Policy*, 28 Oct. 2009.
2. **Workshop:** Latinx voices.
 

**Possible guest:** Rafael Solórzano.

**Homework:** Read John Box speech. 1928.

### Week 14: Open topic

1. **Lecture:** To be defined.
  - a. Reading to be defined.

Yes, for this class and the next you will decide the topic of our sessions. We could talk about telenovelas, the etiquette of loving & crying in (Latin) America, monsters & ghost stories, fantasy & maps, demographics and what does it mean to be classy in (Latin) America, movies, religions & saints, architecture and architects, health, “madness”, the (Latin) American families, et cetera.

2. **Workshop: Crime.**

**Possible guest:** Rebecca Hanson.

**Homework:**

- a. Reading: Zubillaga, Verónica, Rebecca Hanson, and Francisco Sánchez. “Criminal Governance in Times of Post-Chávez Revolution and Questioned Legitimacy: A Look at Different Territorial Orders and Armed Actors in Caracas”, *Rev. de Estudios de Conflicto e Controle Social*, Edição Especial No. 4, 2022, pp. 497-527. <https://www.scielo.br/j/dilemas/a/Fyj7fpzs96TCwblQ3NkXwKB/abstract/?lang=en>
- b. Paley, Dawn. “Drug War as Neoliberal Trojan Horse.” *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol 42, No. 5, September 2015, pp. 109 – 132.

**Objective:** Discuss the intertwining of economic ideologies, governmental policies, inherited inequality, and crime.

### Week 15: Projects.

2. **Final projects workshop.**
3. **Final projects presentations.**

### Week 16: Final thoughts.

1. **Discussion:** What can the world learn from Latin America?

### Final essay.