

**ANT-257-01  
LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES  
Spring 2008**

**Tues 10-11:50, Thurs 10-10:50, Steiner 107**

**Instructor:** Eric D. Carter  
**Office Hours:** M,T,W,Th 1-2 pm, Th 11-12  
(except when convocation)  
or by appointment

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**Course Description:**

This course explores one of the world's most vibrant regions, Latin America. Extending from the Río Grande to Tierra del Fuego, this world region stretches across diverse landscapes, from tropical rainforests to the snowcapped peaks of the Andes, from mega-cities to vast deserts and plains. While the nations of Latin America have common historical roots, this variety of environments, along with the convergence of traditions from around the world, has fostered impressive cultural diversity. This course explores the cultures of Latin America in three sections. The first section of the course examines the historical roots of racial/ethnic, national, class, and gender identities in the region. We will look at these issues more closely with case studies on indigenous peoples in El Salvador and Argentina. The second section of the course focuses on the relationship between culture and environment in different regions of Latin America. Case studies will focus on agrarian livelihoods in the Andean highlands, the political ecology of environmental degradation, and the role of indigenous peoples in the transformation of the Ecuadorian Amazon basin. The last section explores class tensions and the cultural effects of modernization, with discussions on urbanization, globalization, international migration, and transnational identity, using case studies from Brazil and Mexico. Through class discussions and individual and group projects, students will get a hands-on, close-up perspective on the region.

**Required Readings:**

There are seven required books for this course. Here they are in alphabetical order:

- Goldstein, Donna. *Laughter out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. UC Press, 2003. ISBN-10: 0520235975
- Gordillo, Gaston. *Landscapes of Devils: Tensions of place and memory in the Argentinean Chaco*. Duke University Press, 2004. ISBN-10: 0822333910
- Hecht, Tobias. *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN-10: 0521598699
- Sawyer, Suzana. *Crude Chronicles: Indigenous politics, multinational oil, and neoliberalism in Ecuador*. Duke University Press, 2004. ISBN-10: 0822332728
- Smith, Robert C. *Mexican New York: Transnational lives of new immigrants*. UC Press, 2006. ISBN-10: 0520244133
- Tilley, Virginia. *Seeing Indians: a study of race, nation, and power in El Salvador*. University of New Mexico Press, 2005. ISBN-10: 0826339255
- Zimmerer, Karl. *Changing Fortunes: Biodiversity and peasant livelihood in the Peruvian Andes*. UC Press, 1996. ISBN-10: 0520203038

These books are available at the College Bookstore. There will be shorter, additional readings each week. These will be available online, either on the course's Blackboard page or via the Web.

### **Class Attendance and Participation Policy:**

In this class, 10 percent of your grade derives from attendance and participation. Consistent attendance is necessary to fully comprehend the course material, and there will be plenty of opportunities to participate in this class. In general, "participation" means speaking up and making yourself noticed in positive and intelligent ways. Recognize that "participation" can include many kinds of contributions: asking questions in class, contributing to class discussions, coming to see the professor during office hours with questions or comments, sending the professor emails about interesting news stories or articles, and so forth. If you attend class consistently (zero or very few absences) and participate frequently, while making significant contributions to everyone's learning experience, you can expect to get a 10 out of 10 for attendance and participation. If you show up to every class but never say anything, you will get fewer points. If you miss many classes, and then make little or no effort to participate, you should expect to get a very low attendance/participation score.

Any exam or in-class activity that is missed because of an unexcused absence will receive a zero. An excused absence is given only through prior permission of the instructor, and for medical reasons or family emergencies. In the latter two cases, notice must be provided through either the health center or academic affairs. Please do not be late as this is disruptive to the class. If you do come late it is your responsibility to ensure that I have marked you as present.

### **Academic Dishonesty Policy:**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, stealing or buying copies of exams or papers, unauthorized collaboration, and taking exams for someone else. Be aware that at Grinnell penalties for academic dishonesty include verbal reprimand, written reprimand, lowering of grade on a specific exam or assignment, a failing grade on specific exam or assignment, lowering of course grade, a failing course grade, and suspension and expulsion from the university. Depending on the circumstances of the infraction, you may be subject to any of these penalties. For more details, see the college's brochure on Academic Honesty at <http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/writinglab/writers/academicdishonesty.pdf>. This brochure not only contains information about the college's policy on this matter, but great tips on how to avoid plagiarism.

### **Course Requirements/Assignments:**

- 1) Attendance and Participation (see above)
- 2) Discussion Board contributions. Every week you will need to post a commentary on the week's readings on our course's Blackboard page. The commentaries should be concise but insightful, demonstrate command of the material, and raise pertinent and probing questions. These comments must be posted before 6:00 pm on the Monday before class, to receive credit (that means you need to have the readings done before then, too).
- 3) "Perspectives" assignments. Through this course's "Perspectives" assignments, you will consider Latin American culture from many different angles:

- Assignment 1: Prepare a typical Latin American meal and explain its geographical origins and cultural significance (tentative – subject to change).
- Assignment 2: Watch a Latin American film (foreign language – subtitled) and write a review of it.
- Assignment 3: Read a Latin American novel (in English translation or original language, if you're comfortable) and write a review of it.

The product of each of these assignments will be a 3-4 page essay. I'll give you a separate assignment sheet for each one. *If possible, try to stick to one Latin American region for all three Perspectives assignments.*

- 4) Exams. There will be two exams. You should expect to be tested on lectures and readings, and any other in-class material (such as videos). The midterm exam will be a take-home. The final exam will be worth more than the midterm exam because it will be comprehensive (i.e. it will cover topics from throughout the semester).

### **Grading**

Attendance and Participation	10 pts.
Discussion Board contributions	10 pts.
Perspective assignments (3 x 10 pts.)	30 pts.
Exam 1	20 pts.
Exam 2	30 pts.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>

## Course Schedule

WK	DATES	TOPIC AND READINGS	OTHER
1	1/21-25	Tu: Introduction Th: begin <b>Historical Overview</b>	
2	1/28-2/1	<b>Historical Overview</b> Chasteen, John Charles (2000). "First Stop, the Present." Chapter 1 in <i>Born in Blood and Fire</i> . Crosby, Alfred (2007). "The Columbian Exchange." <i>History Now</i> 12 (June). Lovell, W. George (1992). "'Heavy Shadows and Dark Night': Disease and Depopulation in Colonial Spanish America" <i>Annals of the AAG</i> 82 (3): 426-443. Denevan, William (1992). "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492." <i>Annals of the AAG</i> 82 (3): 369-385. Winn, Peter (1999). "Legacies of Empire." Chapter 2 in <i>Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean</i> .	
3	2/4-8	<b>Constructing the Nation-State</b> Show video, "Mirrors of the Heart" Anderson, Benedict (1991). "Creole Pioneers." Chapter 4 in <i>Imagined Communities</i> . Craib, Raymond C. (2002). "A Nationalist Metaphysics: State Fixations, National Maps, and the Geo-Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Mexico." <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> 82 (1): 33-68. Wade, Peter (1989). <i>Race and Ethnicity in Latin America</i> (excerpt) Other readings T.B.A.	Sat. Feb. 9th -- Perspectives Assignment 1: Latin American Food Festival (date tentative)
4	2/11-15	<b>National and Ethnic Identity</b> Tilley, <i>Seeing Indians</i> Other readings T.B.A.	
5	2/18-22	<b>Labor, State Violence, and Indigenous Peoples</b> Gordillo, <i>Landscapes of Devils</i> Other readings T.B.A.	
6	2/25-29	<b>People and Environment: General</b> Readings T.B.A.	Fri. Feb. 29th -- Perspectives Assignment 2: Film Review due
7	3/3-3/7	<b>Rural Livelihoods and Cultural Change</b> Zimmerer, <i>Changing Fortunes</i> . Other readings T.B.A.	
8	3/10-14	<b>People and Environment: Politics of Development</b> Roberts and Thanos, <i>Trouble in Paradise</i> (excerpt); Wright and Wolford, <i>To Inherit the Earth</i> (excerpt)	Exam 1 (take-home) due Monday, April 10th
	3/17-21	SPRING BREAK	
	3/24-28	SPRING BREAK	

9	3/31-4/4	<b>People and Environment: Indigenous Peoples</b> Sawyer, <i>Crude Chronicles</i> Other readings T.B.A.	
10	4/7-11	<b>Urban Life, Poverty, and Inequality I</b> Hecht, <i>At Home in the Street</i> Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1992). <i>Death Without Weeping: The violence of everyday life in Brazil</i> (excerpt).	
11	4/14-18	<b>Film Screenings.</b> Professor Carter will be out of town for the AAG meeting. But class will be held, and you will watch “Maria Full of Grace” in class on Tuesday and “News from a Personal War” in class on Thursday	Fri. April 18th -- Perspectives Assignment 3: Fiction Book Review due
12	4/21-25	<b>Urban Life, Poverty, and Inequality II</b> Goldstein, <i>Laughter Out of Place</i> Other readings T.B.A.	
13	4/28-5/2	<b>Globalization, Migration, and Transnational Identities I</b> Smith, <i>Mexican New York</i> (begin) Other readings T.B.A.	
14	5/5-9	<b>Globalization, Migration, and Transnational Identities II</b> Smith, <i>Mexican New York</i> (finish) Other readings T.B.A.	