

LAS 6938, LAS 4935, ANG 6930 and ANT 4930
Political Economy Approaches to Latin American Studies



Professor Carmen Martínez Novo
Spring 2020
Thursdays 4:05-7:05
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Office hours: Tues 12:00-1:00 or Thurs 3:00-4:00 or by appointment
(Please, make appointment for office hours too)
Preferred method for reaching instructor is e-mail

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The class explores anthropological and other ethnographic writings on capitalism, neoliberalism, post-neoliberalism, labor, production and consumption, and discusses how to apply a political economy lens to our field-based research projects. The course locates the political economy current within the critical social science debates starting in the 1970s. Work on Latin America figured prominently in this theoretical current. Students will read classic works that combine history and political economy to understand the uneven expansion of capitalism in Latin America. Then, the class focuses on recent ethnographic understandings of neo-liberalism as an economic regime, a regime of governance, and a technology of power and subject formation. Finally, it considers the successes and failures of anti-neoliberal struggles and post-neoliberal experiments in Latin America. The course aims to explain the contribution of political economy approaches to Latin American studies and vice versa.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify classic and contemporary works of anthropology with a political economy perspective
- Apply a political economy approach to their fieldwork projects
- Understand concepts such as welfare capitalism, neoliberalism, and post-neoliberalism and recognize the concrete elements of these modes of production in fieldwork situations
- Use monographs that apply a political economy lens as models for student research projects
- Write review essays that identify the main debates and contributions of a theoretical current
- Present their insights orally and with the help of technology to the class in a supportive environment.

COURSE GOALS

- Teach classic and recent monographs that use a political economy approach
- Teach students how to apply the political economy approach to their field projects and how to identify the concrete elements of a political-economic model in the field
- Teach students how to write review essays that identify the main contributions and debates within a theoretical current
- Teach students how to conduct effective oral presentations

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Sidney Mintz. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin. ISBN 978-0-14-009233-2.

Christian Zolniski. 2019. *Made in Baja. The Lives of Farmworkers and Growers Behind Baja's Agricultural Boom*. University of California Press.

Maria Tapias. 2015. *Embodied protests: emotions and women's health in Bolivia*. Univ. Illinois Press.

Sarah Radcliffe. 2015. *Dilemmas of Difference: Indigenous Women and the Limits of Post-colonial Development Policy*. Duke University Press.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation: 10 %

Mid-term essay: 30 % (A critical analysis of class readings in 8 to 10 pages)

Final essay: 35 % (A critical analysis of class readings or an exploration of a particular political economic topic of interest to the student in 8 to 10 pages)

In class presentation of a reading: 15 % (an oral presentation)

Two class reading reviews: 10 %.

Mid-term and final essays will consist of 8-10 pages typed and double-spaced each. Specific instructions for mid-term and final essays will be distributed in separate handouts. Class presentations should take around 15 minutes of class time and should go

beyond a summary of the reading for the day. Presentations should be critical and analytical (see appendix).

GRADING SCALE

A 93-100

A- 90-93

B+ 87-90

B 83-87

B- 80-83

C+ 77-80

C 73-77

C- 70-73

D+ 67-70

D 63-67

D- 60-63

E 0-60

COURSE SCHEDULE

1/9 Introduction to the class

Political Economy: Foundations and classics

1/16 Eric Wolf. *Europe and the People Without History*. Chapter 1. Introduction. Chapter 5. Iberians in America. Ch. 11. The Movement of Commodities.

1/23 Sidney Mintz. *Sweetness and Power*. Ch. 1 Food, sociality and sugar, Ch. 2 Production.

1/30 Mintz Chapter 3. Consumption and Chapter 4 Power.

2/6 Blanca Muratorio. *The Life and Times of Grandfather Alonso: Culture and History in the Upper Amazon*. Chapter 1 "Forest travelers", Chapter 2 "Ethnicity Language and Culture." Chapters 3 and 4.

2/13 Muratorio. Ch. 5 "State, Missionaries and Native Consciousness", 6, 9, 10 "Gold, Oil and Cattle." **Questions for mid-term essay distributed.**

2/20 **Mid-term essay due.**

Neoliberalism

2/27 David Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Ch. 1 "Freedom is Just Another Word," Ch. 2 "The Construction of Consent" Ch. 3 "The Neoliberal State"

3/12 Christian Zolniski. 2019. *Made in Baja. The Lives of Farmworkers and Growers Behind Baja's Agricultural Boom*. University of California Press. Introduction and Ch. 2.

3/19 Zolniski. *Made in Baja*. Chapter 4 and Chapter 7.

Subject making and the embodiment of neoliberalism

3/26 Maria Tapias. 2015. *Embodied protests: emotions and women's health in Bolivia*. Univ. Illinois Press. Introduction and Ch. 1.

4/2 Tapias. Chapters 2 and 3.

Exits, False Exits, Survivals

4/9 Sarah Radcliffe. 2015. *Dilemmas of Difference: Indigenous Women and the Limits of Post-colonial Development Policy*. Duke University Press. Introduction and chapter 3.

4/16 Radcliffe. Chapters 5 and 6.

4/27 **Final essay due.**

COURSE POLICIES

-Students should read the texts assigned for the day before coming to class. This is very important because we intend to have a participatory class with an inviting academic environment in which all feel free to express their **informed** opinions. Students should be ready to participate, ask questions, engage in group discussion, based on the assigned readings for that day and on readings from previous days.

-Students should be familiar with canvas and should check their UF e-mail for instructor's messages.

-Attendance is extremely important in this class. Students are allowed up to one unexcused absence without a repercussion in grades. Each additional absence will be reflected in a deduction of a letter grade from the class attendance and participation component of the final grade.

-Unexcused tardiness of 15 minutes or more or leaving class early will be counted as an unexcused absence unless the student has a documented reason for arriving late or leaving early.

Excused Absences:

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays.

-Students should hand their assignments as a hard copy in class or in the professor’s mailbox according to instructions and by the deadline set in the handout. Students may be given extra time to complete assignments after they provide documentation of justified cause for the delay. If there is no justified cause for delay, 5 points will be deducted from the assignment per day of delay.

-While differences of opinion are valued and encouraged, discussion and debate must take place in a civil and respectful manner. Personal attacks or other acts of denigration will not be tolerated in this class.

UF POLICIES

- **[Students with Disabilities Act](#):** The Dean of Students Office coordinates needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066.*
- **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.
- **Academic Misconduct:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Work submitted for credit by UF students should not include any form of plagiarism, cheating or unauthorized aid. Unless an assignment is explicitly identified as collaborative, all work should be completed independently. Students should understand and follow the [Student Honor Code](#) that they signed upon enrollment at the University of Florida: *“I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I*

agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

UF HELPING RESOURCES

- **Latin American and Caribbean Collection at UF Libraries:** Specialized staff support use and enjoyment of the 500,000 volumes, 50,000 microforms, thousands of current and historical serial titles and digital resources in [this world-class collection](#). LACC library staff provide expert help in online searches for research and study materials.
- **Academic Writing, Grammar and Style:** The [UF Writing Studio](#) is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!
- **Technical difficulties with E-learning in CANVAS:** Contact the [UF Help Desk](#) at Learning-support@ufl.edu or (352) 392-HELP, then select option 2.
- **Personal Challenges:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling Center and Student Mental Health both provide confidential counseling services at no cost for enrolled students. Resources are also available for students seeking to clarify career and academic goals and to deal with academic challenges.
 - [University Counseling Center](#), 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling.
 - Student Mental Health, [Student Health Care Center](#), 392-1171, personal counseling.
 - Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
 - Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

****THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE****

APENDIX

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IN CLASS PRESENTATION OF A CLASS READING

Each student will be responsible for **presenting and discussing the reading assigned for one day of their choice**. The presentation should be visual, written (in a power point or other presentation technology), and oral. The presentation may contain the following elements:

1. Context for the reading:
2. A) Information on the author
B) General information on the topic or geographical location of the reading
3. Brief summary of the main points of the reading
4. Discussion of concepts in the reading that need further explanation
5. What is significant or interesting from this reading? What have we learned from this reading that can be of value to us?
6. Criticisms of the reading: What is unclear in the reading? Point to inconsistencies and contradictions in the argument. What do you disagree with and why?
7. Connect the reading to the student's own background. How is what is described in the reading similar or different from students' personal experiences?
8. Questions for class discussion.