

# History and Culture of the Americas

AMST 6201/AMST 3720/HIST 4490

Kennesaw State University

Fall 2019-Social Science Building 2005

Wednesdays: 6:30pm-9:15pm

Professor: Rodolfo Aguilar, PhD

Assistant Professor

American Studies & Latin American/Latino Studies

Interdisciplinary Studies Department

Social Science Building, Suite 2017A

Email: [raguila6@kennesaw.edu](mailto:raguila6@kennesaw.edu)

Office Hours: Mon, Tues between 2pm-4pm

“When you say ‘America’ you refer to the territory stretching between the icecaps of the two poles. So to hell with your barriers and borders guards!” –Diego Rivera

## Course Description

---

In the contemporary age of globalization, nations seek to reify their sovereignty on the world stage while seeking foreign markets. The election of Donald Trump in the U.S. and Britain’s decision to exit the European Union are two examples of how politicians in developed countries are calling for more isolationist policies in order to remedy social strife in their respective nations. For example, the United States government renegotiated NAFTA and significantly reduced programs to welcome migrants and refugees. All the while, developing countries are also looking for ways to minimize “foreigners” from taking up residency in their nations. The Dominican Republic is a clear case in point, when their government revised citizenship laws to deport people of Haitian descent. Humanities and social science scholars, on the contrary, theorize convergences across the Americas due to migration, empire, economic integration, and cross-flow cultural processes. This course will study the “Americas” rather than exclusively the United States of America. Students will expand their intellectual conception of “America” by studying Hemispheric American Studies, historical writings, transnationalism, and the relevance of America in a global context. We will borrow from history, literary studies, political economy, personal memoirs, cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. Assigned readings will include scholars from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States in order for participants to grasp a broader context of our hemisphere. This hemispheric study of the Americas will entice students to study beyond their own intellectual and national borders.

## Learning Outcomes:

---

1. Examine “America” in a hemispheric framework to include North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean.
2. Analyze scholarship regarding cultures and significant historical junctures in the Americas.
3. Summarize knowledge of major scholarly debates regarding the history and cultures of the Americas in short writing assignments.

4. Write independent research papers using a variety of sources on a topic related to the Americas.
5. Argue original thesis statements in independent research papers.

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

### **Intellectual Understanding:**

---

We, the students and professor, will attend class having read the assigned readings for each meeting and be prepared to contribute to a lively discussion. Every student has the right to express their thoughts relevant to the course and the texts. Please respect your peers. There may be viewpoints presented which of you may disagree. Let us creatively create a healthy learning environment where we learn from and teach each other.

### **PARTICIPATION:**

---

Advance topics courses rely heavily on participation from all involved parties. Our course is no different. Please attend every class having completed the readings with the intention of contributing to the week's discussion.

### **CLASS FACILITATION:**

---

Student will work in pairs to facilitate one class discussion during the semester. Assignments for class facilitation will be arranged in the first week of class.

#### Responsibilities for class facilitation include:

Introduce scholars' background information

Provide a synopsis of the week's reading(s)

Laying out the key arguments

Define key terms and/or theories

Discuss methodology of the assigned readings

Elaborate how the assigned reading(s) are relevant to the study of the Americas

Present a set of open-ended questions to sustain course conversation

### **REFLECTION PAPERS:**

---

Students will write two reflection papers throughout the semester. The reflection paper should analyze key arguments/theories/concepts in the various texts covered during class. Students will then proceed to explore how these key arguments/theories/concepts are relevant to the study of the history and culture of the Americas.

Paper length: **AMST 3720 & HIST 4490**: 3 double-spaced pages; **AMST 6201**: 6 double-spaced pages

### **FINAL PAPER:**

---

The final assignment will consist of a research paper on a related topic of personal interest to the study of the Americas. Students must properly cite sources in their preferred format (MLA, Chicago Style, etc) throughout paper and provide a works cited after the required page requirement has been met. The final paper will be due during finals week. Every student will deliver a 5 to 10-minute presentation describing their research topic during week 15 of our

course. Each student must consult research topics with Dr. Rudy during his office hours before week 10.

Paper length: **AMST 3720 & HIST 4490**: 10 double-spaced pages; **AMST 6201**: 15 double-spaced pages

**PAPER FORMAT:**

---

Reflection essays and research papers must adhere to the following page formatting: Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spacing with a 1” margin on both the left and right side of pages. The manipulation of paper formatting to minimize the amount of completed writing can result in point deductions.

**ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS:**

---

Each student is allowed one absence with no penalty. Please provide documentation if you must miss more than one due to illness, family emergency, or other life matters. Students with three or more unexcused absences will be in jeopardy of failing the course (we only have 15 meetings).

**PLAGIARISM:**

---

The steal, use, or improper citation of an individual’s ideas or work is not acceptable in this class. Any student(s) caught committing plagiarism will receive a failing grade and further actions might be taken by university administrators. Please visit the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity’s weblink for a detailed definition of plagiarism and University’s protocol addressing cases of plagiarism.

<http://scai.kennesaw.edu/students/general-info/cheating.php>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

---

Often times, various forms of disabilities ranging from physical injuries to mental health issue may hinder a student’s scholarly performance. All students should be aware that they must notify the instructor if any such type of disability is experienced during the semester. The instructor will consult with the student and disability services to arrange the proper procedures to ensure the students’ success in the course. Please see KSU Student Disabilities Service webpage:

<http://studentsuccess.kennesaw.edu/sds/>

**GRADING:**

---

Seminar Participation 10%  
Class Facilitation 10%  
2 Reflection Papers 30%  
Final Paper 50%

**GRADING SCALE**

---

90-100	A	80-89	B	70-79	C	60-69	D	59 OR LOWER	F
--------	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------------	---

**Required Texts:**

---

Belnap, Jeffrey, and Raul Fernandez. *Jose Marti's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

Davis, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Flores, John H. *The Mexican Revolution in Chicago Immigration Politics from the Early Twentieth Century to the Cold War*. University of Illinois Press, 2018.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

LeBrón, Marisol. *Policing Life and Death: Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico*. Oakland: University of California, 2019.

Noble, David W. *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

\*\*\*\*Additional readings will be uploaded to our D2L site

### Course Timeline

---

#### **Week 1: (08/21)**

#### **Nuestra America, “America First” & Historicizing the Contemporary “American” Moment**

Introduction to Course

Read Jose Marti, “Nuestra America” *El Partido Liberal*, March 5, 1892

<http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/marti/America.htm>

#### **Week 2: (08/28)**

#### **Challenges to American Exceptionalism**

Noble, David W. *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. Ch. 1-5

#### **Week 3: (09/04)**

Noble, David W. *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. Ch. 6-epilogue

#### **Week 4: (09/11)**

#### **Contemporary American Studies and the Americas**

Vicki L. Ruiz, “Citizen Restaurant: American Imaginaries, American Communities” *American Quarterly* 60 (2008): 1-21. 2007 American Studies Association Presidential Address

Gómez-Barris, Macarena & Fiol-Matta, Licia. “Introduction: Las Americas Quarterly” *American Quarterly* 66 (2014): 493-504.

Briggs, Laura. “Notes from Antigua Naval Base” *American Quarterly* 65 (2013): 303-308

Cowan, Benjamin A. "Rules of Disengagement: Masculinity, Violence, and the Cold War Remakings of Counterinsurgency in Brazil" *American Quarterly* 66 (2014): 691-714.

**Week 5: (09/18)**

**Slavery throughout the Americas**

Davis, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Chapters: Prologue, 1,3, 5, 6, 8, 11,15

**Week 6: (09/25)**

**Empire & Latin America**

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997. Introduction and Part 1

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Reflection Paper due on 09/18</b>
-----------------------------------------------------

**Week 7: (10/2)**

**Empire & Latin America, pt. 2**

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997. Part 2 and 3

**Week 8: (10/09)**

**U.S-Mexican Cultural Politics**

Flores, John H. *The Mexican Revolution in Chicago Immigration Politics from the Early Twentieth Century to the Cold War*. University of Illinois Press, 2018.

**Week 9: (10/16)**

**Jose Marti & the Hemispheric Turn in American Studies**

Belnap, Jeffrey, and Raul Fernandez. *Jose Marti's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999, 27-57; 58-76; 115-128; 145-175; 179-190, 275-292, 293-316.

**Week 10: (10/23)**

**Indigeneity across the Americas**

Jortner, Adam, "The Empty Continent: Cartography, Pedagogy, and Native American History." in *Why You Can't Teach United States History Without American Indians*, edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith et al. 71-86. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Gonzales, Sandra M. "Colonial Borders, Native Fences: Building Bridges between Indigenous Communities through the Decolonization of the American Landscape." in *Comparative Indigenities of the Américas: Toward a Hemispheric Approach*, edited by M. Bianet Castellanos, Lourdes Gutierrez Najara, and Arturo J. Aldama. 307-320. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012.

Wotherspoon, Terry, and Hansen, John. "The "Idle No More" Movement: Paradoxes of First Nations Inclusion in the Canadian Context" *Social Inclusion* 1 (2013), 21-36.

Forum on settler colonialism in *American Quarterly*, 69 (2017): 777-832.

**Week 11: (10/30)**

Special Issue in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* on Trans Studies en las Américas

<https://read-dukeupress-edu.proxy.kennesaw.edu/tsq/issue/6/2>

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Reflection Paper due on 10/23</b>
-----------------------------------------------------

**Week 12: (11/06)**

**Borderlands and the Expansion of American Studies**

Excerpts from Anzaldúa Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*. Place of publication not identified: Aunt Lute Books, 1999.

Adams, Rachel. "The Northern Borderlands and Latino Canadian Diaspora" in *Hemispheric American Studies* edited by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, 313-327. New Brunswick & London: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Fernandez L'Hoeste, Hector. "All Cumbias, the Cumbia: The Latin Americanization of a Tropical Genre." in *Imagining Our Americas: Towards a Transnational Frame* edited by Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman, 338-364. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007.

Muñoz Martinez, Monica, "Recuperating Histories of Violence in the Americas: Vernacular History-Making on the US–Mexico Border" *American Quarterly* 66 (2014): 661-689.

No Class; Working Week

**Week 13: (11/13)**

**Neoliberalism**

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

**Week 14: (11/20)**

LeBrón, Marisol. *Policing Life and Death: Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico*. Oakland: University of California, 2019.

-----Fall Break---November 25-29-----

**Week 15: (12/04)**

**Student Presentations and Closing Remarks**

Hard Copies of Final papers are due on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 in Dr. Rudy's mailbox located in ISD suite (SO 2019) by 5pm.