

V55.-0515-001 (MAP) Spring 2006
World Cultures: Sources of Latin American Identities

Prof. Thomas Abercrombie
25 Waverly Pl, 6th Fl, Rm 605
Ofc Hrs: T, 1:30-2:00pm; Th, 11:15-12:15pm
Email: thomas.abercrombie@nyu.edu

Lectures (sect. 001): T. & Th, 9:30-10:45 pm. Silver 714

Preceptors:

Sandra Rozental. Ofc: ?. Hrs: TBA.
Lucas Bessire. Ofc: ?. Hrs: TBA.
Ruti Talmor. Ofc: ?, Hrs: TBA.

Recitation Sections (Required):

Sect. 002. W, 8:00-9:15am. Silver 721. Rozental
Sect. 003. W, 9:30am-10:45am. Waverly Bld, 667. Rozental
Sect. 004. W, 8:00 - 9:15am. Silver 821. Bessire
Sect. 005. W, 9:30 - 10:45am. Silver 802. Bessire
Sect. 006. W, 3:30am - 4:45pm. Silver 714. Talmor
Sect. 007. W, 4:45 - 6:10pm. Waverly Bld, 370. Talmor

This course explores the wonderful, magical, sometimes nightmarish world of Latin America through the past and present doings of its persons, and their representations, religious manifestations, song, dance, and literature. It aims both to uncover the roots of Latin-Americanness in the historical confluence of Europe, Africa, and America, and to discover how those roots are continually remade as each generation strives to rise from the ashes of its forebears. Approaching the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective that draws equally on scholarly works in anthropology, history, literature, and upon more direct appreciations of music, dance, and mass media, this course explores the origin and nature of cultural synthesis, creolization, and hybridity that underlies the identity politics of nations as well as subordinate or minority populations in Latin American and the Caribbean. It focuses on the contributions of African, Mediterranean, and indigenous American cultures in the new syntheses produced through their intersection under colonial and postcolonial conditions. Within the confines of colonial or nation-state bureaucracies, mainstream missionary religions, and the hum-drum routines of wage workers associated with modernity, members of rural indigenous groups and maroon communities of former slaves, and the laboring and mixed 'popular masses' in Latin America have forged an astonishing variety of unofficial cultural and religious responses to their predicaments. Depending upon cultural sources from Africa and the pre-Columbian Americas, but also on cultural forms borrowed from their European overlords, such peoples have inherited traditions

of magical practice, miraculous shrines, and rituals of inversion such as the 'world turned upside down' of carnival, which may be understood as forms of resistance not only to powerful states and wealthy and abusive elites, but the very terms of homogenizing global modernity. Students will survey a wide variety of such contemporary cultural forms, explore their Amerindian, African, and European sources, and evaluate their genesis under the conditions of colonialism. A series of case studies make possible explicit comparison of several syncretic or creolized cultural formations that have become central to contemporary nationalist or minority identity projects. Case studies include the samba schools and Candomble religion in Brazilian carnival, the role of Vodou in the Haitian revolution and in New York City, the Mexican burlesques of death in the Day of the Dead, and 'Indian' saints whose processions are associated with rites to underworld beings as well as to national integration. We will also explore the role of such phenomena in popular novels, telenovelas, movies, and the news media. The course also seeks to answer more fundamental questions. What does it mean to have an identity, Latin American or Gringo, White, Black, Indian, or Mixed? How are the collectivities called nations, ethnicities, races, and classes brought into being and sustained? How is the vanished past resuscitated to serve the needs of the present? What does it mean to be Latin American in the age of so-called globalization?

Course Requirements: Students will be graded on the following work, for a total of 100 points:

1. Two of three in-class essay exams, worth 15 points each for a total of 30% of grade.
2. Four one-page papers (the three best count), worth 10 points each for a total of 30% of grade.
3. One Take-home essay exam (on assigned topic), 20 points and 20% of grade.
4. Ten of 12 half-page reaction papers, posted to Blackboard, by 8pm the night before your discussion section meeting, 1 pt each for 10% of grade.
5. Participation in group analysis of news on contemporary events and issues in Latin America, and presentation in recitation section, on Wednesday, March 1. 5 points and 5% of grade.
6. Section attendance and participation in discussion. 5 points and 5% of grade.

(1). Quizzes will include identification, short answer, and essay questions. They will take 30 minutes at the start of class on dates given in schedule. They will cover readings, class lectures, videos and discussions for the period since the last quiz. One make-up quiz is scheduled as _quiz 3_. If you take all three, the lowest score will be dropped.

(2). One-page papers are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed in the schedule. Assigned topics will be posted to Blackboard one week in advance, and will require careful review of class notes and readings. All papers should be written in the

first person, as students put themselves in the place of cultural _others,_ taking on the class, gender, and cultural position of a specific kinds of person covered in the course.

Papers will be graded as follows: Full credit (10 points) for papers which satisfy the assignment and are stylistically acceptable. Extra credit (11 pts) for papers showing a superior understanding of readings and excellence in composition. Near credit (8 pts) for papers with a substantial deficit in comprehension of material, composition style, or somewhat off on length or format requirements. Half credit (5 points), for papers with a serious deficit in comprehension of material, composition style, or length and format requirements. At the discretion of the course instructor, late papers may be accepted at 5 points credit. No credit (0 pts) for papers not on the assigned topic, showing little comprehension of material, or needing major work on style.

All one-page papers must be typed, one full page (between 260 and 350 words) in length, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in a readable font style in 10 or 12 point type. Full name at top of page. Submit one sheet only. Any explanations or citations to literature should be noted on the back of the page. As a rule late papers will not be accepted, and there will be no make-ups for missing papers. You have five paper assignments; the lowest-scoring one will be dropped.

(3). The take-home essay exam requires careful reading of class material to respond to a question posed on Blackboard. It should be 4-5 pages in length, and is worth 20% of grade.

(4). Ten points will be allocated through Reaction papers. Reaction papers assigned by preceptors should be posted to your section's discussion thread on Blackboard the night before your discussion section, by 8 pm. They should assess in your own words the significance of one or more of the readings scheduled for the week it is turned in. They should be concise and should raise issues of comparison with other works or questions for discussion. They must conform to the style requirements given above, but should be about one-half page in length, or between 150 and 200 words. Twelve reaction papers may be scheduled; only the best ten will count towards your grade, at 1 point each.

(5). Group analysis of Latin American news: Each recitation section will be divided into four news groups. Members are expected to meet outside of class, and to share in the labor of compiling news reports on the thematic area assigned, to be summarized and analyzed in a 15 minute in-recitation presentation on March 1st.

(6). The final 5 points will be based on an assessment of the quality of participation in class discussion.

At the discretion of the instructor, limited opportunities for extra-credit work may be assigned, up to 6 points total per student.

To do well in this class, students must keep up with readings and attend all lectures and section meetings. The content of films and class presentations constitute an integral part of the course and will be included in quizzes and paper topics. Although one extra quiz, one extra paper, and two extra reaction papers are built into the class, I strongly recommend against intentionally missing quizzes or papers with the idea that the ones you miss are "extra" ones. Should you later miss a quiz or paper due to illness or other excusable absence, you will be out of luck. Make ups will be allowed only (and at the professor's discretion) in cases where students can adequately document an excusable absence of two full weeks of class or more.

Students discovered to plagiarize papers (copy other people's writing or closely paraphrase without citing the source), or cheat on quizzes, will receive an F and be recommended for disciplinary action.

Books and Other Readings:

Required books are available at the University Bookstore and will be placed in Bobst Library Course Reserve. Further readings, including articles, web sites, etc, are posted in the Course Readings section of Blackboard.

Required books:

Abercrombie, Thomas. *Pathways of Memory and Power* (U. Wisconsin, 1998; ISBN 0299153142).

Chasteen, John Charles. *National Rhythms, African Roots*. (U. New Mexico, 2004; ISBN 0826329411).

Erauso, Catalina de. *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*. (Beacon, 1997; ISBN 0807070734).

Fuentes, Carlos. *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1992; ISBN 039524995).

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. (Vintage, 2003; ISBN: 140003471X)

Blackboard:

It is essential that you pay attention to the contents of blackboard for this course, both under the lecture (sections 001-007) and under your discussion section. All books are available on course reserve in Bobst Library, but due to limited number of copies do not count on finding them there prior to class, quizzes, or paper due dates. Videos with a call number can be viewed at the Avery Fisher Collection, 2nd Floor of Bobst. Other course readings and materials, as well as course assignments, will be posted on Blackboard.

If you would like to post a question for Prof. Abercrombie, you may do so on the discussion board under section 001. Be sure to sign your name. Remember that all

students will see your question and answers to it. Reading responses and questions addressed to your own TA should be posted on the discussion board on the blackboard page of your discussion section.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

T, Jan. 17: Introduction: From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic World: Imperial and Colonial hybridity; American Origins of Modernity, Race, and Nationalism.

Wed, Jan. 18 section viewing: Buried Mirror Series, 1

Read for Section:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 1

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 1

Th, Jan. 19: Problematizing Race, Class, Gender, Ethnicity, and "the Primitive"

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 2 & 3

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 2

Rec: Wade, P. "The meaning of race and ethnicity."

T, Jan. 24 (**Paper 1 Assigned**): "Convivencia," the Spanish "Reconquest," and the "Three Orders"

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 4

IAA Thomson, "Hidalgo and Pechero." In: P. J. Corfield, ed, Language, History and Class (Blackwell, 1991), pp. 53-78.

Rec: *Niremburg, David, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation"

Wed, Jan 25 Section Viewing: Mirrors of the Heart (VCA3257)

Th, Jan. 26: Town and City, God and King:

View (in class): Semana Santa (documentary)

Read:

Nader, Helen. Liberty in Absolutist Spain, Introduction, ch. 1

Burke, P. "World of Carnival" and "Triumph of Lent" IN Popular Culture in EM Europe

Rec:

Rabelais, selections from Gargantua and Pantagruel, a classic carnivalesque novel from Early Modern France.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Rabelais (sels)

T, Jan. 31 (**Paper 1 due**, beginning of class): European Invasion of America/American Invasion of the European Imagination

Read:

Columbus letter

Herodotus, The Histories, Bk 4 (pp. 216-225, 235, 239-240, 249-251)

Polo, Marco. Travels, Book III, chs 7-14 (pp272-282), ch31 (p309-310)

Rec: White, Hayden. "Forms of Wildness" pp. 150-182 in Tropics of Discourse.

Th, Feb. 2: Senorio, Encomienda and embiendienda

Read:

Patricia Seed, "The Requerimiento", from Ceremonies of Possession.

Casas, B. de las. Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies (sels)

Las Casas Confesionario (sels)

Letter from Lope de Aguirre, rebel, to King Philip of Spain, 1561

T, Feb. 7: NOT Guns, Germs and Steel: Aztecs and Incas, Cortes and Pizarro

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 5 & 6

Townsend. Camilla. 2003. "Burying the white gods: New perspectives on the conquest of Mexico." The American Historical Review. 108 (3) 658-.

Rec: Seed, Patricia, "Failing to Marvel"

Th, Feb. 9: Social Estate and Honor in Iberian Expansionism

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 7, 8

Lieutenant Nun, forward, introduction, chs. 1-5 (to page17)

Rec: Abercrombie, "Affairs of the Courtroom." In Boyer & Spurling, Colonial Lives

T, Feb. 14: **Quiz 1.** Gender and Power

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 9

Lieutenant Nun, chs. 6-26 (pp. 18-80)

Rec: Perry, Mary Elizabeth, "From Convent to Battlefield". In: Blackmore & Hutcheson, eds. Queer Iberia (Duke, 1999), pp. 394-419.

Wed, Feb. 15 Section Viewing: The Incas (VCA?)

Th, Feb. 16: Indigenous Communities of the Andes

Read:

Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 1 & 2

T, Feb. 21 (**Paper 2 assigned**): Local and Global, Present and Past

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, chs. 3 & 4

Th, Feb. 23: Anthropological history of an Andean community I: narrative conquest

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 5 (pp. 129-212)

Surf: < <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/peru/worlds/>> ('Lost Worlds', all parts);
(‘The High Mummies’ and ‘Preserving a Mummy’);
and (Huarochiri’s ancient Quechua book’)

T, Feb. 28: **Paper 2** due. Anthropological history of an Andean community II:
colonising space and time

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 6, App. C (p429-435)

Rec:

de Certeau, M. "Making Do: Uses and Tactics." _ Ch 2 (pp. 29-42) In: Practice of
Everyday Life.

Wed, Mar. 1 **Section News-group presentations**

Th, Mar. 2: Making Place and Memory

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 7

T, Mar. 7: Ethnography of an Andean Community: Remembering Social Worlds

Read: Abercrombie, T.A. Pathways of Memory and Power, chs. 8, 9 (368-422)

Solomon, Tom, "Dueling landscapes: Singing places and identities in highland
Bolivia." Ethnomusicology (2000) 44(2):257-280.

Surf: <http://atlas.cc.itu.edu.tr/~solomon/> (sections on Map, Landscapes and People,
Fieldwork, Language, and Musical Performance)

Th, Mar. 9: **Quiz 2.** Horrifying mixtures and colonial urban life

Read: Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 10

Abercrombie, T.A. "Q'aqchas and the Plebe" IN J. of Latin Amer Anthro, 1996.

Skim, and review illustrations: Iona Katzew, "Changing Perspectives: Casta Painting
in the Era of the Bourbon Reforms," ch. 4 in Casta Painting, Yale, 2004,
(pp111.162)

Spring Break: March 13-18

T, Mar. 21 (**Paper 3 assigned**): African-Christian Gods in Spanish-style
Confraternities

Read:

Thornton, John. "Kongolese Christianity"

Murphy, J.M. "Candomble in Brazil," Working the Spirit, (pp. 44-80)

Surf:

Th, Mar. 23: Rebellions and Transgressions: Dangers Lurking Below

Read:

Penry, "The Rey Comun".

Trouillot, "Silencing the Past".

film excerpts: Quilombo

T, Mar. 28: **Paper 3 due.** Creole Nationalism

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 11

Anderson, B. Imagined Communities, sels (pp1-53, esp. 1-7, 37-53)

Rec: Lomnitz, Claudio, "Nationalism as a Practical System"

Th, Mar. 30: Colonial Epistemology and Social hygiene

Read:

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 2

Stallybrass and White, "_Below the Stairs," IN The Politics and Poetics of Transgression

Rec:

Caulfield, Sueann. "_The Birth of Mangué." In: Balderston, D, & D. Guy, eds, Sex and Sexuality in Latin America, ch. 6 (pp. 86-100).

Chambers, Sarah, From Subjects to Citizens, ch. 3.

Gotkowitz, Laura. "Trading Insults: Honor, Violence, and the Gendered Culture of Commerce in Cochabamba, Bolivia, 1870s-1950s," Hispanic American Historical Review 83:1 (Feb. 2003), pp.83-118

T, Apr. 4: **Paper 4 assigned.** Liberalism, Racial Exclusion, and the Postcolonial Predicament

Read:

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 12, 13

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 3 (Tia Ciata_s House-Rio de Janeiro_)

Sommer, D. "Love & Country: An Allegorical Speculation," Foundational Fictions, pp. 30-51.

Th, Apr. 6: The Romance of Indigenista Nationalism

Read: Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. Chronicle of a Death Foretold.

T, Apr. 11: **Paper 4 due.** Cultural Mixture, Embodiment, and Desire:Market Women and Maids

Read:

Weismantel, M.J. "Sharp Trading" IN: Cholas and Pishtacos.

Rec:

Seligmann L.J. "To be in between: the cholas as market women." Comparative Studies in Society and History 31(1989, no. 4):694-721

Gill, Leslie. "Proper Women and City Pleasures: Gender, Class, and Contested Meanings in La Paz," American Ethnologist, (1993) 20(1): 72-88

Wed, Apr. 12 Section Viewing: Dancing with the Incas (John Cohen)

Th, Apr. 13: **Quiz. 3.** Regimes of Rhythm and Desire

Read:

Chasteen, National Rhythms, chs. 4-6 ("Podesta brothers' Circus-Buenos Aires";
"Fialde'_s Orchestra-Havan"_; and "Drums of Epiphany")

T, Apr. 18: Dance and Independence

Read:

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 7-8 ("Latest Steps", and "Dances of the Country")
Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 14 & 15

Wed, Apr. 19 Section Viewing: Danzon.

Th, Apr. 20: Populism and the National Romance. Carnival Indigenismo in the Andes.

Read: Abercrombie "Mothers and Mistresses of the Bolivian Nation," IN: After
Spanish Rule.

Rec: Himpele, Jeff. "The Gran Poder and the Social Movement of the Aymara Middle
Class: A Video Essay," Visual Anthropology, Spring 2003.

T, Apr. 25: Dance and Religion

Read: Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 9, 10 ("Dancing for Joy" and "Morena")

Th, Apr. 27: **Take-home exam assigned.** Neoliberalism, Indigenous Movements, and
Populism: Mixed Masses and Politics

Read:

Fuentes, chs. 16, 17, 18

Albro, Robert, "The Cochabamba Water Wars,"

Thomson, Sinclair, and Forrest Hylton, ""

Recommended:

Himpele, Jeff D. "Arrival Scenes: Complicity and the Ethnography of Media in the
Bolivian Public Sphere" in Media Worlds: Anthropology in New Terrain, U.
California Press, 2002.

Thursday May 4: **Take home exam due**, 10 am, in Prof. Abercrombie's mailbox, 25
Waverly Place, 1st floor (give to secretary and ask to write time on it)