“Brazil is the country of the future, and always will be.” This ironic observation—often expressed by the Brazilians themselves—neatly encapsulates the gap between predictions of Brazil’s rise to great power status and its continuing struggles with social and racial inequalities, economic instability, and political corruption. In a more subtle fashion, it also alludes to the tension between the drive for economic development and (westernized) cultural modernity, on the one hand, and the enduring embrace of non-European aspects of Brazilian culture and tradition, on the other. This tension has deeply informed the way Brazilian scholars and scholars of Brazil view its history and culture.

During the first 12 years of this century, Brazil, which then had the world’s eighth largest economy, seemed to be on the verge of joining the community of rich and powerful nations, and was even making some progress in reducing income inequality and racial discrimination. It seemed like “the future” had finally arrived. But recent developments in Brazil have demonstrated how quickly conventional wisdom about a nation’s “character” or “destiny” can shift, and shift again. Over the last four years, Brazilians have witnessed a severe slump in their economy, the revelation of massive corruption schemes, a major public health crisis caused by the Zika virus, and the impeachment and removal of a democratically-elected president, Dilma Rousseff, on questionable charges. Even more sobering is the imprisonment of the still widely popular former president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who leads in the polls by a large margin but has been disqualified for candidacy in the upcoming presidential elections. By every conceivable measure, including a rising murder rate, things are not going so well in Brazil at the moment.

The geopolitical entity known as Brazil began life as an overseas colony of a European empire, and as is the case with most nations that emerged from colonial rule, there has been a simultaneous emphasis on the formation of a distinct “national culture” and on the need to forge a “modern nation,” in both the political and economic sense. This course will focus on postcolonial Brazil, which refers not just to the period following independence, but also to the many ways in which the colonial experience has shaped Brazilian society and culture and Brazil’s place in the global order. The course will also focus on three principal locales: Rio de Janeiro (the major focus), São Paulo, and Salvador da Bahia. Because Brazil, like the US, Russia, and China, is a nearly continental nation, it would be virtually impossible to cover every segment of its national territory, but these three very different cities, and the regions in which they are situated, will allow us to appreciate the diversity of Brazilian society and culture, and the range of historical experiences that have produced them.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
There will be a midterm and a final exam, both consisting mainly of essays. Course requirements also include one brief (5-page) analytical paper, based on a recommended film, as well as two very short
(2-page) response papers on assigned readings, for which there are three options. Hand-outs elaborating on the paper assignments will be distributed early in the semester. In addition to these paper assignments, all students will be required to attend and participate in recitation sections, where attendance will be taken. In preparation for the section meetings, you will be required to post at least one question or comment on the NYU Classes Forum site for your section about the weekly reading assignment. The calculation of final grades will assign the following (approximate) weights to the required assignments: Final exam—25%, Midterm exam—20%, Longer paper—15%, Two short papers (combined)—15%, Class participation—25%.

Plagiarism, including borrowing from the internet or the work of others without attribution, will be grounds for a failing grade and will be reported to departmental and university authorities. NYU’s policies on academic integrity can be found at https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html

If you have any sort of disability that may affect your ability to carry out assigned course work, I urge you to contact the staff in the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980) to explore what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. Information and documentation of disability will be kept confidential.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the peer tutoring services at the University Learning Center, located in University Hall, 110 E. 14th St. (212-998-8047) and in the Academic Resource Center, 18 Washington Pl. (212-998-8085). The website is www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/undergraduate-advisement/academic-resource-center/tutoring-and-learning.html

Most of the required readings will be from The Rio de Janeiro Reader or one of three novels assigned for the course. In addition, there is a textbook from which there will be nearly weekly reading assignments that will provide additional background and context. Any supplementary readings listed below will either be available through electronic journals or will be scanned and posted on the main NYU Classes site for this course.

Machado de Assis, Dom Casmurro
Jorge Amado, Captains of the Sands
Clarice Lispector, The Hour of the Star
Daryle Williams, Amy Chazkel, and Paulo Knauss, eds., The Rio de Janeiro Reader
Boris Fausto and Sérgio Fausto, A Concise History of Brazil (2nd ed.)

Week I (9/4, 9/6): From Center of Empire to Imperial Court

Readings: Rio Reader, pp. 1-15
Fausto and Fausto, pp. 1-20; 59-72

Week II (9/11, 9/13): Building an Independent Nation on Slave Foundations

Readings: Rio Reader, pp. 37-44, 73-78, 92-96
Machado de Assis, pp. xi-xxii, 3-44
Fausto and Fausto, pp. 75-94
Week III (9/18, 9/20): The Second Slavery and the Conservative Reaction

Readings:
- Fausto and Fausto, pp. 94-114
- Machado de Assis, pp. 44-118

Week IV (9/25, 9/27): African Cities of the Americas

Readings:
- Rio Reader, pp. 99-100, 106-120, 130-3
- Machado de Assis, pp. 119-180
- João José Reis, Divining Slavery and Freedom, pp. 64-74
- Robert E. Conrad, Children of God’s Fire, pp. 381-386

Week V (10/2, 10/4): Ending Slavery and Empire

Readings:
- Machado de Assis, pp. 181-263
- Rio Reader, pp. 134-137
- Fausto and Fausto, pp. 114-137

OPTION I SHORT PAPER DUE IN SECTION MEETING, 10/12

Week VI (10/11): The Rise of São Paulo and the First Republic

Readings:
- Fausto and Fausto, pp. 137-161
- Rio Reader, pp. 139-146
- Theresa R. Veccia, “‘My Duty as a Woman’: Gender Ideology, Work, and Working-Class Women’s Lives in São Paulo, Brazil, 1900-1950,” pp. 100-139

Week VII (10/16, 10/18): São Paulo, Modernism, and the Rise of Vargas

Readings:
- Amado, pp. 1-18
- Fausto and Fausto, pp. 162-230

Week VIII (10/23, 10/25): Urban Culture (Salvador da Bahia)

Reading: Amado, pp. 19-125

MIDTERM EXAM 10/23

Week IX (10/30, 11/1): Urban Culture in Rio and the Changing Urban Landscape

Readings:
- Amado, pp. 126-187
- Bryan McCann, Hello, Hello Brazil, pp. 41-65
- Rio Reader, pp. 149-157, 174-8, 206-7, 218-223, 230-3

Week X (11/6, 11/8): From Populist Republic to Military Dictatorship

Readings: Amado, pp. 188-261
Fausto and Fausto, 231-272

Week XI (11/13, 11/15): Miracles, Counter-Cultures, and Transitions

Fausto and Fausto, pp. 273-304
Christopher Dunn, Contracultura, pp. 146-174
OPTION II SHORT PAPER DUE IN SECTION MEETING, 11/16

Week XII (11/20): Rio and São Paulo in the Long Lost Decade

Readings: Rio Reader, pp. 297-303
Lispector, pp. vi-xiv, 1-60
Fausto and Fausto, pp. 305-332

Week XIII (11/27, 11/29): The Marvelous City and the Challenges of Urban Life

Readings: Rio Reader, pp. 270-274, 304-7, 320-336, 344-356
Lispector, pp. 60-77
Fausto and Fausto, pp. 332-365

Week XIV (12/4, 12/6): The Workers’ Party in Power, 2002-2016

Fausto and Fausto, pp. 371-415
OPTION III SHORT PAPER DUE IN SECTION MEETING 12/7

Week XV (12/11, 12/13): Corruption, Collapse, and the Resurgence of the Right


LONGER PAPER (FILM ANALYSIS) DUE IN SECTION, 12/14

FINAL EXAM: TBA