

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

Prof. Thomas Abercrombie
25 Waverly Pl, 6th Fl, Rm 605
Ofc Hrs: T, 9:30-10:00am; Th, 2-3pm
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Lectures (sect. 001):
Mondays & Weds, 2p.m. to 4:45 p.m., Waverly Building, Room 435
Tuesdays, 2pm to 3:15pm, Goddard Hall, Room A

Preceptor:
Christopher Fraga Email: cmf273@nyu.edu

Recitation Sections (Required):
Sect. 002. T & Th, 3:30-4:45pm 48 Cooper Square, Room 111
Sect. 003. T & Th, 4:55-6:10pm, 25 West 4th Street, Room C-5

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 in-class essay quizzes, worth 15 points each for a total of 30% of grade.
2. Three one-page papers, worth 10 points each for a total of 30% of grade.
3. One writing assignment (on assigned topic), 15 points and 15% of grade.
4. Ten of 12 half-page reaction papers, posted to your section Blackboard (Discussion Board, under Communication button), by 10pm the night before class meetings (that is, Sunday night and Tuesday night), 2 pts each for 20% of grade.
5. Section participation/attendance: 5 pts and 5% of grade.

(1). Quizzes will include 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.

(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 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 (10points) 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 (6 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.

(3). The writing assignment requires participation in an event outside of class, plus careful reading of class material, choosing from assigned topics posted on Blackboard. It should be 3-4 pages in length, and is worth 15% of grade.

(4). Ten points will be allocated through Reaction papers. Reaction papers assigned by preceptor should be posted to your section's discussion thread on Blackboard, by 10 pm on Sunday and Tuesday nights. They should assess in your own words the significance of one or more of the readings scheduled for the following day's class. 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. Eleven reaction papers may be scheduled; only the best ten will count towards your grade, at 2 points each.

At the discretion of the instructor, an opportunity for extra-credit work may be assigned, up to 5 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. Make ups will be allowed only (and at the professor's discretion) in cases where students can adequately document an excusable absence of one full week 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. 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).

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 001-003) and under your specific discussion section. 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 preceptor should be posted on the discussion board on the blackboard page of your discussion section.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Monday, May 15: Introduction: From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic World: Imperial and

Colonial hybridity;

American Origins of Modernity, Race, and Nationalism.

View: Buried Mirror Series, 1

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, chs. 1 and 2

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 1

Tuesday, May 16 Problematizing Race, Class, Gender, Ethnicity, and "the Primitive"

View: Mirrors of the Heart (VCA 3257)

Read:

Chasteen, National Rhythms, ch. 2

Wade, P. "The meaning of race and ethnicity." In Race and Ethnicity in Latin Amer, pp5-24.

Recommended: Fuentes, Burried Mirror, ch. 3

Wed, May 17 (Paper 1 Assigned): "Convivencia," the Spanish "Reconquest," the "Three Orders," Town and City.

Read:

Kagan, Richard. Urban Images of the Hispanic World, chs. 1 and 2

IAA Thomson, "Hidalgo and Pechero." In: P. J. Corfield, ed, Language, History and Class

(Blackwell, 1991), pp.

53-78.

Recommended:

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

Niremburg, Conversion, Sex, and Segregation

M, May 22: Corpus Christi, Carnival, and the Urban Body Social/Honor and Spatial Control of the Social Body

View: Semana Santa (documentary)

Read:

Burke, P. "World of Carnival" and "Triumph of Lent" IN Popular Culture in EM Europe
Erauso, Lieutenant Nun, forward, introduction, chs. 1-5 (to page 17)

Abercrombie, "Affairs of the Courtroom." In: Boyer & Spurling, Colonial Lives (Oxford, 2000)

Rec:

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

Modern France.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. Rabelais (sels)

T, May 23 (Paper 1 due) Performing Gender and Power.

Read:

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

Perry, Mary Elizabeth, "From Convent to Battlefield". In: Blackmore & Hutcheson, eds. Queer

Iberia (Duke, 1999),
pp. 394-419.

Tuesday, May 23 Section

W, May 24 European Invasion of America/American Invasion of the European Imagination

Read:

Columbus letter

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

Fuentes, Buried Mirror, ch. 5 & ch 6 to p 124

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

Recommended:

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

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

Seed, Patricia, "Failing to Marvel"

Thursday, May 25 Section: Quiz 1.

M, May 29 Memorial Day Holiday

T, May 30: (Paper 2 assigned) Indigenous Communities of the Andes

Read:

Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 1-4

W, May 31: Anthropological history of an Andean community: Battles of memory

View: The Incas (VCA?)

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 5 (pp. 129-190), ch. 6 (pp. 213-282, 291-302),

App. C (p429-435)

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)

Recommended:

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

M, June 5. (Paper 2 due) Making Place and Memory

Read: Pathways of Memory and Power, ch. 7, 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)

T, June 6: Horrifying mixtures and colonial urban life

Read:

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

Ilona Katzew, "Changing Perspectives: Casta Painting in the Era of the Bourbon Reforms," ch.

4 in Casta

Painting, Yale, 2004, (pp111.162)

Premo, Bianca, Creole Wetnurses article

Tues, June 6 Section: View Devil's Miner

Wed, June 7: Indians and Africans in Spanish-style Confraternities

Read:

Thornton, John. "Kongolese Christianity"

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

Trouillot, Michel-Rolphe. Silencing the Past

Penry, "The Rey Comun".

Surf: <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/vodou>

Thurs, June 8: View: Black Orpheus, selections

M, June 12: Creole Nationalism, Racial Exclusion, and the Postcolonial Predicament.

Read:

Chasteen, *Born In Blood and Fire*, ch. 8, Nationalism

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

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

-51.

Chasteen, *National Rhythms*, ch. 3 (Tia Ciatas House-Rio de Janeiro)

T, June 13: Honor and Regimes of Desire

View: Danzon (1st part)

Read:

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

Chasteen, *National Rhythms*, chs. 4-6 ("Podesta brothers' Circus-Buenos Aires"; "Fialde's Orchestra-Havana";

and "Drums of Epiphany")

Rec:

Caulfield, Sueann. "The Birth of Mangué." In: Balderston, D, & D. Guy, eds, *Sex and Sexuality*

in Latin America,

ch. 6 (pp. 86-100).

Gill, Leslie. "Proper Women and City Pleasures: Gender, Class, and Contested Meanings in La

Paz," *American*

Ethnologist, (1993) 20(1): 72-88

Tues, June 13 Section: View Danzon (2nd Part).

W, June 14 (Paper 3 assigned) Populism and the National Romance. Carnival

Indigenismo in

the Andes; Afro-

Latin Dance in the Plantation Zone.

View: *Dancing with the Incas*

Read:

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

Chasteen, *National Rhythms*, chs. 7-10 ("Latest Steps", "Dances of the Country",

"Dancing for

Joy" and "Morena")

Recommended:

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

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

M, June 19: (Paper 3 due) Cold-War Interventions, Post-1989 Neoliberalism

Read: Chasteen, *Born In Blood and Fire*, chs. 9-11, Revolution, Reaction, Neoliberalism

View: Missing (1st part)

T, June 20: Neoliberalism, Decentralization, Privatization

Read:

Chasteen, *Born In Blood and Fire*, ch. 11, Neoliberalism

Ben Kohl, Decentralization

Cochabamba Water War

Tues, June 20 Section: View Missing, end.

W, June 21: Anti-Neoliberalism and New Citizens Movements

View: Crisis Is Our Business

Read:

Postero, "Indigenous Responses to Neoliberalism"

Albro, Robert, 'Culture and Rights in Bolivian Indianist Movements'

Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson, "The Chequered Rainbow"

Forrest Hylton, "Landslide in Bolivia"

Recommended: Albro, Robert, "The Populist Chola"

Th, June 22 discussion section: Quiz 2