Introduction: This course is a general introduction to the history and culture of Latin America. Because the region encompasses many different countries over a very long stretch of time, the course cannot be comprehensive. It focuses instead on the major themes in the history of the region: colonization and the interaction between Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous people; the Atlantic slave trade and the creation of slave and plantation societies; race, nationalism, and revolution; and the role of the United States in the region.

The course emphasizes the use of original texts—Spanish and Indigenous accounts of the Conquest, firsthand accounts of the slave trade, revolutionary manifestos, photography, political cartoons, and a range of other sources. Thus, in addition to learning about the history and culture of Latin America, students will also be required to engage in close readings of textual and visual materials, to develop their practices of scholarly interpretation, and to hone their abilities to develop scholarly arguments on the basis of original sources.

Readings: Students should complete the readings by the day for which they are listed on the syllabus; you will get more out of lectures that way. Many of the required readings for the course
will be made available on our NYU Classes site. Those readings are marked with an asterisk (*) on the syllabus.

There are two required books for the course:


Miguel Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave* (Curbstone Press, 2016 or 1994)

Both books can be ordered from the bookstore, or you can order them on your own. They are also available for free electronically through NYU Bobst Reserves. You can access those materials by logging onto Bobcat.

Because our readings will consist mostly of primary sources, we recommend that you purchase the textbook *Born in Blood and Fire* by John Chasteen to help guide your learning. Any edition of the book will do.

Students are also required to subscribe to the *Latin American News Dispatch*, a website created by NYU students to cover news related to Latin America, the Caribbean, and US Latinx news. You can do so here: [http://latindispatch.com/newsletter/](http://latindispatch.com/newsletter/).

**Written assignments and assessment:** Students will be required to write four short papers over the course of the semester. Papers will be 4-5 double-spaced pages in length. Guidelines for the papers are appended at the end of this syllabus. Papers should be submitted via the NYU Classes assignments page for our class on the following dates:

- Thursday, October 1
- Tuesday, October 27
- Tuesday, November 17
- Thursday, December 10

Each paper will count for 20 percent of your final grade. The other 20 percent will be determined by your attendance and participation in lecture and recitation sections.

Unexcused late assignments will affect your final grade; all assignments must be completed to pass the course. A reminder that plagiarism is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Whenever you draw on somebody else’s words or ideas, give them credit in a note. The most
common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty, but stress and uncertainty. Please review the [NYU Core Curriculum guidelines on academic integrity](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). And if you still have questions, please ask!

**Course Procedures:** The lecture component of this course, which meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11-12:15, will be taught remotely via Zoom. Classes will be taught synchronously, meaning that students are expected to log into our Zoom sessions at our regular class time. Links for each session will be available on NYU Classes (at the Zoom tab on the left). **Be sure to log into Zoom via NYU Classes** in order to avoid technical and security problems.

To the extent possible under these circumstances, we would like to learn your names and get to know you, so we ask that you turn your cameras on for our class meetings, if possible. All sessions will be recorded. If you miss a class, you can access the recorded session via NYU Classes.

**Recitation Sections:** All recitation sections meet on Wednesdays. Like our lectures, recitations will meet remotely and synchronously. They will normally cover the readings and lectures from the previous Thursday and Tuesday. The schedule of topics for the recitation sections appears at the end of the syllabus.

**Additional NYU resources for students**

Students requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Web site: [http://www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd); Email: mosescsd@nyu.edu.

Students with immigration concerns should be aware of the NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative (IDI), which offers free and confidential legal services to NYU students on their immigration cases. IDI can assist with DACA, TPS, asylum, legal permanent residency, citizenship, employment authorization, representation in immigration court, humanitarian visas, and consultations for those who have had contact with the criminal system (i.e. arrest or conviction) or have violated their visa. See: [https://www.law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic/IDI](https://www.law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic/IDI)

The work of the following centers and initiatives at NYU may also be of interest to students. The **Center for Multicultural Education and Programs (CMEP)** is host to diversity education and training, as well as cultural and social justice events throughout the year. The **NYU LGBTQ+ Center** offers support, hosts programs, and nurtures a tightly-knit community for students. The
Office of **Global Spiritual Life** connects students to religious services and chaplains, supports multi-faith initiatives, and offers popular mindfulness programs. **Proud to be First** highlights resources and opportunities for first-generation students. Finally, and very importantly, this semester coincides with a presidential election. We encourage you to visit [NYU Votes](https://www.nyu.edu) for critical information on voter registration and other election information.

### Schedule of Classes

**Th Sept 3**  
**Introduction and the Iberian Backdrop to the Conquest**

**UNIT 1: Colonialism**

**T Sept 8**  
**Caribbean: Columbus and Hatuey**  
*Readings:*

**Th Sept 10**  
**Mexico: Cortés and Moctezuma**  
*Readings:*
  * James Lockhart, ed. and trans., *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 48-49, 108-157. Please focus on the second of the four columns of the text – this is a translation into English of the original Nahuatl language.

**T Sept 15**  
**Andes: Atahualpa and Pizarro**  
*Readings:*

**Th Sept 17  Colonial Society: Religion, Culture, Violence**

*Readings:*
* “The Requirement,” attributed to Dr. Juan López de Palacios Rubios (1513).

**T Sept 22  Colonial Society: Labor, Land, Extraction**

*Readings:*

**Th Sept 24  The Atlantic Slave Trade**

*Readings:*

**T Sept 29  Plantation Society**

*Readings:*


**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1: FIRST PAPER DUE (Submit via NYU Classes)**

**UNIT 2: Age of Revolution I**

**Th Oct 1  Andean Revolution: Origins**
* Readings:

**T Oct 6  Andean Revolution: Meanings**
* Readings:

  * The plan of Tupac Amaru, in Benjamin Keen, ed., *Latin American Civilization: History and Society, 1492 to Present*, pp. 141-143.

  * Letter from Tupac Amaru to the creoles of Chichas; Coronation Edict attributed to Tupac Amaru; and José Antonio de Areche’s death sentence for Tupac Amaru, in Ward Stavig and Ella Schmidt, eds., *The Tupac Amaru and Catarista Rebellions*, pp. 67, 73-74, 130-135.


**Th Oct 8  The Haitian Revolution**
* Readings:
T Oct 13     Haitian Echoes
Readings:
* Browse/Explore Digital Aponte: http://aponte.hosting.nyu.edu

Th Oct 15    Independence: Iberia and Mexico
Readings:
* Erin O’Connor, “Father José María Morelos and Visions of Mexican Independence,” and José María Morelos, “Sentiments of the Nation,” both in Documenting Latin America: Gender, Race, and Empire, 1: 227-32.

T Oct 20    Independence: South America
Readings:

Th Oct 22    Imagining Revolution: Caribbean
Film:
* “Burn!” (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1969)
Watch on YouTube before today’s class
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4v3DhfQK3s

T Oct 27    Imagining Revolution: The Actors’ Perspective
No class meeting, because the second paper is due today.
UNIT 3: Race, Nation, and Empire

Th Oct 29    Indigenous Peoples, New States, and Foreign Capital in the Amazon
Guest lecture by José Octavio Orsag
Readings:

T Nov 3    Cuba, between Race War and Racelessness
Readings:

Th Nov 5    Empire’s Workshop: Intervention and Occupation in the Caribbean
Readings:
* Message of President James Monroe at the commencement of the first session of the 18th Congress (*The Monroe Doctrine*), 12/02/1823.
* Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message to Congress for 1904 (*Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine*), 12/06/1904.
* John Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, selections TBA

T Nov 10    Empire’s Workshop: The Panama Canal
Guest Lecture by Khemani Gibson
Readings:
*Memoranda Relating to the Murder of Samuel Cox (1907)

Th Nov 12  Race, Mestizaje, Indigenismo

Readings:


T Nov 17  Imagining Race

No class session, because the third paper is due today. Please watch two films: Martín Chambi and one PBS episode.

*Film:

  * “Martín Chambi and the Land of the Incas” (BBC, 1986).
  [https://archive.org/details/martinchambiandtheheirsoftheincas](https://archive.org/details/martinchambiandtheheirsoftheincas) (Please note there are two parts).

  * Select one film from the PBS series *Black in Latin America*, available through the NYU libraries site for free via Kanopy. You will need to be logged into NYU Home.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17: THIRD PAPER DUE (Submit via NYU Classes)

UNIT 4: Age of Revolution II
Th Nov 19  The Mexican Revolution
Readings:

T Nov 24  Cuban Revolution: Euphoria and Radicalization
Readings:
* Read one of the following speeches by Fidel Castro:
  ● 1/2/1959: http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590103.html
  ● 7/26/1959: http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590728.html

Th Nov 26  No class -- Thanksgiving

T Dec 1  Cuban Revolution: Confronting the US
Readings:
* Avi Chomsky et al., eds, The Cuba Reader, pp. 530-56.
* United States Central Intelligence Agency, A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime. Secret Paper, March 16, 1960 (PDF also available on NYU Classes)

Th Dec 3  The Bolivian Revolution
Readings:

T Dec 8  Revolution and Counterrevolution in Colombia
Guest lecture by Natalia Mahecha Arango
Readings:
* United States Embassy in Colombia. “Violence in the Mid-Magdalena Region of Colombia” (Confidential cable, 1983). Available from the National Security Archive
Legacies and Conclusions

Film:

* “Even the Rain” (Iciar Bollain, 2010).

T Dec 15: FOURTH PAPER DUE (Submit via NYU Classes)
PAPER PROMPTS AND GUIDELINES

You will write four short papers over the course of the semester, each of 4-5 double-spaced pages in length.

**Paper 1. Due October 1, via NYU Classes**

**Analysis/Comparison of Two Primary Documents**
Choose two primary documents from among the required readings to compare and contrast. To facilitate the comparison, it may be useful to focus on a specific theme, event, person in both documents. For example, you can select a document written from the perspective of an enslaved person and another written from the perspective of a master to compare and analyze the way each approaches the issue of violence or religion or family. Or, for example, you can select documents written by a conquistador or priest and an Indigenous person to examine the way each approaches questions of Native culture and Spanish conquest. To the extent possible, consider how the specific social position of the author of your document affects the way that person understands and interprets the specific issue the document addresses or the theme you’ve selected. Please fully identify the documents you are analyzing in a bibliography.

**Paper 2. Due October 27, via NYU Classes**

**Imagining Your Own Primary Source**
Invent a historical character—an ordinary person, not a state leader or other notable figure. You can situate your figure anytime during the region’s Age of Revolution, that is anytime between the Andean insurrections of the 1780s, the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath, and the Latin American wars of independence. Write a one-paragraph biographical sketch that tells us who your character is and when and where they live. Then write 3 to 4 diary or journal entries in that character’s voice experiencing an event or period we have studied together. While this exercise requires imagination, the final written product should make clear that you are drawing on readings and lectures.

Please note that if the character you develop was unable to read and write, you have the option for this assignment of submitting a video or audio journal in place of a written paper.

**Paper 3. Due November 17**

**Analyzing Visual Sources**
This paper will be an analysis of visual materials related to the third unit of the course. Further guidelines will be provided closer to the due date.

**Paper 4. Due December 7 December 15**

**Historical Analysis**  
Choose one of the following three questions for your final paper (4-5 pages double-spaced) based on our work for the second half of the course (Units 3 and 4). This should be a standard expository essay in which you state your topic and thesis in the introduction. You should then use the body of the paper to provide evidence supporting your thesis, drawing from the required readings and/or lectures (additional outside sources are acceptable but not necessary for the paper). You should conclude with a short final note recapitulating how you have demonstrated the main point.

1. The issue of U.S. power in Latin America and the Caribbean has arisen at multiple points during the second half of our course. Discuss the role of the United States in two cases we’ve studied (from 1898 to the present). Examine both the operation of and the limits to US power or influence.

2. Pick one case of revolution that we have studied in the second part of the course (1910 to present). Write an essay that addresses one of the following problems: a) what was the relationship between revolutionary leadership and popular or mass mobilization?; b) how did the international context shape the revolution?; c) how did the revolution change from its inception to its eventual outcome?

3. Reflect on the legacies of the Latin American reform movements and revolutions we have studied in the second part of the course (1910 to present). Write an essay that examines one or more of these legacies within a given country, or the way that one revolutionary experience had repercussions in another country in the region. You can choose whether to focus on legal, political, economic, artistic, or other symbolic legacies.
Schedule of Recitation Sections

September 2: Prior to first class -- No meeting

September 9: Legislative Day -- No meeting

September 16: Conquest in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru

September 23: Colonial Society

September 30: Slave Trade and Slavery

October 7: Andean Revolution

October 14: Haitian Revolution

October 21: Independence

October 28: Diary Assignment

November 4: Race, Nation, and Empire 1

November 11: Race, Nation, and Empire 2

November 18: Indigenismo

November 25: Thanksgiving Break - (No meeting)

December 2: Modern Revolutions 1

December 9: Modern Revolutions 2