

Cold War Latin America: Description and Learning Goals

Description

During the Cold War, Latin America was seen as an important site of both ideological and military conflict. As a result, the region was profoundly shaped by the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. This course will examine some of the political, social, and cultural effects of the Cold War on Latin America by studying various important episodes including the Cuban Revolution, Anti-communist dictatorships, and US interventions.

The course will be taught remotely, primarily through discussion on the Webex platform. As a student in the course, you are responsible for doing the reading ahead of class and preparing responses to the discussion questions. Since the enrollment for the class will be limited, you should expect to contribute in every class session.

About the Instructor

Instructor: Mr. J. Pablo Silva (he/him/his)

Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 4:20-5:50

and by appointment

Virtual Office: Webex Room 927 264 243

Email: silvajp@grinnell.edu

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Learning Goals For the Course

Learning Related to Latin America. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

Explain the basic periodization of Latin America's Cold War History

Explain the importance of the Guatemalan Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, Guerrilla Movements, and Reactionary Dictatorships

Identify some of the important trends in Latin American thought during the Cold War period

Skills Related to Historical Analysis. By the end of the semester, you should have refined your ability to:

Examine primary sources critically and in context in order to use them to provide evidence for arguments

Identify how historical arguments are framed within an existing historiography

Analyze and comment on how historical arguments make use of evidence and make their case

Writing Skills. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

Create an argument in response to an historical debate

Structure an introduction for a longer paper

Assemble a longer paper out of shorter segments

Cold War Latin America: Syllabus of Readings

Week 1. Overview and Beginnings

Thursday, 1 April

Introduction: Why did the Cold War matter to Latin America and how did its impact start?

Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, xxxi-35. [For Purchase]

Friday, 2 April

How did the Cold War Affect Latin America in the Fifties and Sixties?

Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, 36-85. [For Purchase]

Monday, 5 April

How did the US react to the Cuban Revolution and What were the Consequences?

Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, 86-149. [For Purchase]

Tuesday, 6 April

What happened in Central America

Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, 150-20. [For Purchase]

Wednesday, 7 April

What was the Cold War?

Odd Arne Westad, "The Empire of Liberty," and "The Empire of Justice," in *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8-72.

Thursday, 8 April

How did the Cold War start in Latin America?

Bethell and Roxborough, "Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 20 (1988): 167-189.

Friday, 9 April

Why did the US intervene in Guatemala? One perspective

Schlesinger and Kinzer, "The Overlord" and "Advertisements," from *Bitter Fruit*, e-reserve.

Sunday, 11 April

Research Paper Project: Debate Assignment Due at noon.

Week 2. From the Guatemalan intervention to the Cuban Revolution.

Monday, 12 April

Why did the US intervene in Guatemala? Another perspective

Cullather, *The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala*, xi-73. [For Purchase]

Tuesday, 13 April

How did the US intervene in Guatemala?

Cullather, *The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala*, 74-123. [For Purchase]

Wednesday, 14 April

What else was affecting Latin America in the early 1950s?

Lewis, "CEPAL and ISI: Reconsidering the Debates, Policies and Outcomes."

Thursday, 15 April

What else was affecting Latin America in the early 1950s?

Milanesio, "Food Politics and Consumption in Peronist Argentina."

Friday, 16 April

How did the situation in Cuba play in Latin America?

Karl, "Reading the Cuban Revolution from Bogotá."

Sunday, 18 April

Research Paper Project: Second Debate Assignment Due at noon.

Week 3. The Cuban Revolution

Monday, 19 April

How did the Cuban Revolution happen?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 1-38. [For Purchase]

Tuesday, 20 April

How did the US view Castro while the Revolution was underway?

Vanni Pettinà, "The Shadows of Cold War over Latin America: the US reaction to Fidel Castro's nationalism, 1956-1959," *Cold War History* 11:3 (2011): 317-339.

Wednesday, 21 April

What impact did the Cuban Revolution have?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 41-79. [For Purchase]

Thursday, 22 April

How did the US apply the lessons of the Cuban Revolution?

Michael Grow, "The Dominican Republic, 1965," *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 75-92. On e-reserve.

Friday, 23 April

What did Cuba look like from the Soviet side?

Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, "Latin America: Introduction" and "'The Bridgehead,' 1959-1969," in *The World Was Going Our Way* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 27-57. e-reserve.

Sunday, 25 April

Research Paper Project: Look forward to the Bibliography Assignment and the Argument Assignment.

Week 4. Guerrilla Warfare and the Radical Moment

Monday, 26 April

What was Guevara's vision?

Che Guevara, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method," September 1963.

Che Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinental," 16 April 1967.

Salazar and Anderson, *Che Guevara: Lessons From Revolutionary Life*.

Tuesday, 27 April

How did Guerrilla Warfare work out?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 81-116.

Wednesday, 28 April

What have you learned?

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Thursday, 29 April

What did it feel like at the time?

Four Days in September.

Friday, 30 April

What was the view of the United States from the Latin American left?

Galeano, "The Contemporary Structure of Plunder," *The Open Veins of Latin America* [1971].

Sunday, 2 May

Research Paper Project: Bibliography Assignment Due at noon.

Week 5. The Rise and Fall of Popular Unity

Monday, 3 May

What happened in Peru and Chile?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 121-160.

Tuesday, 4 May

What did Allende want?

Program of the UP.

Allende Speech to the FECH.

Wednesday, 5 May

What moved the opposition?

Power, "Diffusion of Anti-Communism among Conservative Women in Brazil, Chile and the United States," *JLAS* (2015).

Thursday, 6 May

What were the results?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 187-206.

Friday, 7 May

What did this look like in Argentina?

Finchelstein, "State Terrorism," in *The Ideological Orgins of the Dirty War*.

Sunday, 9 May

Research Paper Project: Argument Summary Due at noon.

Week 6. The Cold War's Shift

Monday, 10 May

How did Latin American Dictators affect the Cold War?

John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents*, 1-41. On e-reserve.

Tuesday, 11 May

How did the Soviets reassess?

Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, "Intelligence Priorities After Allende," in *The World Was Going Our Way* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 89-114. e-reserve.

Wednesday, 12 May

How did Central America become the main theater of the Cold War in Latin America?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 163-182, 209-225.

Thursday, 13 May

How did other players participate in Central America?

Armony, "Transnationalizing the Dirty War."

Friday, 14 May

How did other players participate in Central America?

Gleijeses, "The View from Havana."

Sunday, 16 May

Research Paper Project: Draft Introduction Due at noon.

Week 7. The End of the Cold War

Monday, 17 May

Winning Hearts and Minds?

Danner, "The Truth of El Mazote," *The New Yorker*, 6 December 1993.

Tuesday, 18 May

How did Neoliberalism come to Latin America?

The Chicago Boys.

Wednesday, 19 May

What has Happened Since?

Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 229-248.

Thursday, 20 May

What was the reckoning?

Rabe, "Aftermath," in *The Killing Zone*, 181-205.

Tuesday, 25 May

Final Exam at 1 p.m.

Your Final Draft is due on 25 May. Remember to include a title page.

Cold War Latin America: Course Textbooks

Required Books

Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala* (Stanford, 2006).

Rabe, *The Killing Zone*, Second Edition (Oxford, 2016).

Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, Third Edition (Praeger, 2018).

Recommended Books

The Craft of Research (Chicago, Second, Third, or Fourth Edition)

Williams, *Style* (Chicago, 1995)

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Cold War Latin America: Assignments

Midterm (23 February), Final (25 May), a Research Paper, and possibly some other short assignments/quizzes. Several of these assignments represent different stages of the paper. But over the course of the term, the most important assignment is to read the assigned text ahead of each class meeting and prepare responses to the discussion questions.

When it comes to the paper, turn in assignments late at your own risk. If assignments are handed in late, they probably won't get reviewed in time to help you and that will make it that much harder to finish the next assignment. You know the due dates and assignments well ahead of time. Plan accordingly.

Grinnell College's Academic Honesty policy is located in the online Student Handbook. It is the College's assumption that students be aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy. If you have questions about how a particular assignment relates to the College's policy, I will gladly consult with you in advance of the assignment's due date.

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Cold War Latin America: Grading

I will determine grades on the basis of the paper, the midterm, the final, class participation, and any supplemental quizzes or assignments. The approximate breakdown is as follows: paper (27%), the midterm (15%), the final(28%), class participation (30%).

These components will each receive a letter grade (on a 4-point scale) and then a weighted average of the grades will determine the final grade.

Note: I really do grade on class participation. After every class, I will try to complete a checklist indicating who made a substantive contribution, who did not, and who was absent. Bonus points are sometimes awarded for particularly incisive, evidence-based commentary, but you will not be rewarded simply for talking frequently and at length. Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute. On the other hand, if you do not participate regularly, you will get a lower grade. If you are absent frequently, you will get a lower grade. To avoid letting absences affect your grade, you may turn in a 500 word essay on the day's assignment *before* the class meets. You might want to model that essay on the research paper source assignment.

Cold War Latin America: Course Policies and Resources

Class Sessions

The course will be taught remotely, primarily through discussion on the Webex platform. As a student in the course, you will be responsible for doing the reading ahead of class and preparing responses to the discussion questions. Since the discussion group should be small enough to allow extensive participation, **you should expect to contribute in every class session.**

Many of our discussions will touch on issues of race, class, and power differentials. These subject matters can inspire strong reactions and it is always possible that one of us may say, or seem to say, something that may be offensive. We should all try to remember that this is a learning environment and should approach each other with generosity. For the same reason, it is important for us all to refrain from the use of language that is intended to demean or offend. Our shared goal is to advance our knowledge of Latin American history.

For that reason, I ask that you confine all recordings of class discussion to your personal academic use. To facilitate honest discussion, it is important that you and your classmates know that what is said in class is not going to be distributed for non-academic purposes.

Although it is highly recommended that you participate in each assigned session, it is understood that you may occasionally miss class. Two or three absences over the course of 35 sessions should not affect your grade. But if you know ahead of time that you will likely miss more than that, you may want to consult with me. Note that Grinnell College offers alternative options to complete academic work for students who observe religious holy days. Please contact me within the first three weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you.

Academic Resources

Grinnell's Writing, Reading, and Speaking Center supports students working on papers, projects, presentations, and applications. Schedule a session with one of the Center's professional instructors and get feedback as you interpret readings, talk through your ideas, analyze evidence, develop and organize arguments, craft introductions and conclusions, rewrite sentences and paragraphs, or plan presentations. Center instructors do not proofread papers, but they can show you how to edit your own work effectively. Make an appointment online: <http://mywco.com/grinnell>

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, John Hirschman, who can be reached at 641-269-3089, and discuss your needs. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course and coordinate your accommodations. You can find more information [here](#).

For your research paper, it may be a good idea to schedule a one-on-one library lab appointment early. That is done by filling out [this form](#).

If you are experiencing tech issues, please let me know as soon as possible so that we might figure out how to resolve them or find a work-around.

Academic Conventions to be Observed

Follow University of Chicago (17th Edition) style citations in footnotes or endnotes for all assignments in this course, unless the assignment directs you explicitly to do something else. You may consult the Chicago Manual of Style online through the Grinnell College Library catalog [here](https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html) (you will need to log into the Library through its proxy server): <https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html>. I will also post a short style guide on Blackboard for quick reference.

Grinnell College's Academic Honesty policy is located in the online Student Handbook. It is the College's expectation that students be

aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy. For the purposes of this class, it is fine to help each other out of class by reading each others research paper assignments. In addition, in this course, it is my expectation that students may collaborate on basic preparation for class sessions and preparation for quizzes and exams, but not on the actual quizzes and exams. If you have questions about how a particular assignment relates to the College's policy, I will gladly consult with you in advance of the assignment's due date.

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