

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2017-2018 LA ST 205: A1 (Fall Term)

Introduction to Latin American Studies: Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean

(Fall Term)

Instructor: *Odile Cisneros*

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Time: *MWF 12:00-12:50 PM*

Place: *CAB 2-69*

Office Hours: *MF 1:00 PM-2:30 PM*

or by appointment

Course Website:

eClass under LA ST 205

Course Prerequisite: None

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed, no such projects approved.

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students' Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)

Yes No

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will provide students with a general introduction to the cultural contexts of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Through a number of units of study, organized around specific social/cultural moments in Latin American and Caribbean history, the course will explore both high intellectual versions of cultural history as well as more popular genres (popular music, cinema, oral traditions, and folklore) that shape Latin American and Caribbean identities. ***This course counts toward the [Certificate in International Learning \(CIL\)](#).***

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- 1) Cite major moments in the development of social and cultural history of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean from Pre-Columbian times to the contemporary period.
- 2) Identify leading intellectual, artistic, and political figures and movements that made significant contributions to society and culture in the region.
- 3) Discuss major trends in the development of politics, culture, and society in the region, including recurring patterns and breakthroughs in those patterns that have contributed to identity formation.
- 4) On the basis of the material discussed in class, develop an individual critical position on an important issue in Latin American Studies, and present a coherent argument in writing to defend such a position.

Texts:

Required:

LA ST 205 Selected Readings. Course pack available from the University Bookstore. (Kindly request a reprint from Bookstore if no copies are available on shelf.)

Recommended:

Thomas E. Skidmore, Peter H. Smith and James Green. *Modern Latin America*. 8th Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. (Available from amazon.ca.)

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Term work:	70%	Term work:	
		Midterm (Oct. 20):	25%
		Final Paper (Dec. 8):	25%
		Participation:	20%
		(of which 5 pop quizzes, each at 2%:	10%)
Final Exam (Dec. 20, 2:00 pm):	30%		
Total:	100%		

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):

TBA at a mutually agreed time according to regulations specified on the following site:
[http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_\(Exams\)](http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Class attendance is important and participation will count for 20% of the term work. It is to the benefit of the student to attend class regularly and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion, make comments, and ask questions. This will make the learning experience more enjoyable for all of us. Throughout the semester there will be in-class assignments, group work, and discussions to complement readings and lectures (live and online). Five unannounced quizzes testing the reading material will be given throughout the semester for

a total of 10% of the participation grade. No make-ups will be available for these quizzes, but students will have the option of dropping the lowest quiz grade, and grades of other quizzes will be weighted accordingly.

Videos and outlines of class lectures, and questions on readings and films will be posted on eClass ahead of time. Students are urged to check the website in preparation for each class meeting. Students are responsible for doing the assigned reading and/or viewing the assigned video or film in advance and attend class prepared for discussion.

Each student will have to hand in a final term paper to show how the student grapples with the material discussed in class, and his/her ability to take a critical position on an important issue in Latin American Studies. The final paper topic must be approved in writing by the instructor through submission of an abstract by the student **on November 10**. The essay will be a maximum of **six** typed pages, as well as contain bibliography and notes in correct format (Consult the Chicago Manual of Style or MLA Handbook for acceptable formats.) The due date for the paper will be the last day of class (**December 8, 2017**). Essays not handed in on this day will lose 1% per day.

There will be one midterm and one final exam in the course, testing the student's comprehension and grasp of the material as well as the student's ability to take that knowledge and apply it in a discussion of certain related topics. (See dates above.)

If you have any questions and/or problems regarding the course, I am available during my office hours or by appointment.

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or

- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course, attendance and participation will count for 20% of the grade. Please see "Grade Distribution" and "Explanatory Notes on Assignments" above.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 1% -per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381).

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59