

HIST 387 004
Inventing the Nation in Latin America

Spring 2012
MW, 1:30-2:45
Robinson B222

Prof. Matt Karush
Office: Rob B 339
Office Hours: MW, 12:00-
1:00 and by appt.
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Course Description:

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Latin Americans have struggled to define themselves and their nations. This quest for identity has involved governments, intellectuals, and artists, but also ordinary men and women. And the results have been extremely varied: whereas many nineteenth-century liberals dreamed of whitening or Europeanizing their populations, some revolutionaries and nationalists argued that the future lay in a glorious mixing of the European and indigenous or African races. This course will trace this history of identity formation and ask a series of key questions: Why did some formulations of race and nation gain acceptance in some places but not in others? What impact did these identities have on people's lives? How have ideas about race and nation been expressed in popular culture? In addition to work by historians, we will be examining many primary sources: novels, essays, films, and music. We will focus particular attention on the cases of Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Brazil

Requirements for this course include active participation in class discussions. We will be grappling with some very challenging texts; if you do not come to class prepared to discuss them, the result will be extremely painful for all of us. Students will be required to write three papers of 4-6 pages over the course of the semester. I have provided seven assignments, each with a specific, non-negotiable due date [see below]. Each student will select three of these to complete. Finally, this course will include a take-home final exam, which will consist of one or two essay questions. The exam will be distributed on the last day of class and will be due in my email inbox on May 9 at noon.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Participation	15%
3 papers	20% each
Take-home final exam	25%

Books required for purchase

Ignacio Altamirano, *Zarco: the Blue-Eyed Bandit*

Aluísio Azevedo, *The Slum*

Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution*

Che Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries*

Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*

All books are available at the University Bookstore. There are two other required readings – both articles. They are listed below under 3/28 and 4/11; one of them is available on JSTOR, while the other has been posted on Blackboard.

Class Schedule

1/23 Introduction

I. The Wars of Independence: Creating New Nations

1/25 Simon Bolívar and the Creole Project

1/30, 2/1 Independence in Colombia

Reading: Lasso, 1-67

2/6, 2/8 Pardos, Afro-Colombians, and the Fear of Race War

Reading: Lasso, 68-159

2/13, 2/15 The Dream of a Raceless Cuba: The Ten Years War

Reading: Ferrer, 1-89

[2/13 – paper #1 due]

2/20, 2/22 The Dream Betrayed: The US and the Birth of Independent Cuba

Reading: Ferrer, 93-202

II. The Nineteenth Century: Ambivalent Liberalisms

2/27, 2/29, 3/5, 3/7 Mexico: Learning to Love the Indigenous

Reading: Altamirano, all [Read to p109 by 2/29, *including* the Introduction]

[2/27 – paper #2 due]

[3/12, 3/14 – **Spring Break: No Class**]

3/19, 3/21, 3/26 Brazil: The Promise and Pitfalls of Whitening

Reading: Azevedo, all [Read to p124 by 3/21]

[3/19 – paper #3 due]

III. 1900-1950: The Cults of Mestizaje

3/28, 4/2, 4/4, 4/9 Mexico: Revolution and Tamales

Reading: Jeffrey Pilcher, “Tamales or Timbales: Cuisine and the Formation of Mexican National Identity, 1821-1911,” *The Americas* 53:2 (1996), 193-216. [Find on JSTOR; read by 3/28]

Film: *Like Water for Chocolate* (Arau, 1992) [screened in class on 4/2 and 4/4]

[3/28 – paper #4 due]

4/11, 4/16, 4/18 Brazil: Africanisms and the Samba

Reading: Darién J. Davis, “Race, Class, and Technology in the Promotion of the Popular Brazilian Sound” [read by 4/16; available on Blackboard]

Listening: Samba Selection: in class

[4/11 – paper #5 due]

IV. 1950-1980: Anti-Imperialism & Revolution

4/23 More Ambivalence: Latin American Attitudes toward the United States

[4/23 – paper #6 due]

4/25, 4/30, 5/2 The Revolutionary Awakening

Reading: Guevara, all

Listening: Examples from the New Song Movement: in class

[5/2 – paper #7 due]

[5/9 - Take-Home Final Exam due by 12:00 noon]

Paper Assignments

Choose any 3 of the following assignments. Each paper should be typed, double-spaced, spell-checked, stapled, page numbered, and 4-6 pages in length. Fonts should be around 12 point, and there should be no extra spaces between paragraphs. You must cite your sources, but parenthetical citations are fine (author, page number). Your essays should be based on the course readings; no outside research is required. Be sure to answer the question and to defend your answer with evidence from the readings. Due dates are listed below and on the class schedule; there will be no extensions. (I understand that things happen, and it's sometimes impossible to complete an assignment on time. That's why you have seven assignments to choose from.)

1. How did the “myth of racial harmony” come to play such a key role in Colombia, a country that was deeply divided along racial lines? And what role did people of African descent play in that process? **Due in class, 2/13**

2. The armies that fought for Cuban independence in the nineteenth century were integrated at every rank and fought under the banner of racial equality. Yet, independent Cuba was hardly a racial paradise. What factors account for the persistence of racism in Cuba? Did the United States play the most important role? **Due in class, 2/29**

3. Ignacio Manuel Altamirano was a soldier, politician, and intellectual with firm ideas about Mexico's future. How does he use the love stories in *El Zarco* to express those ideas? **Due in class, 3/19**

4. There are two Portuguese immigrants at the heart of Aluísio Azevedo's *The Slum*: João Romão and Jeronimo. Over the course of the novel, one of these men will abandon his black lover for a white woman, while the other will leave his white wife in order to begin a relationship with a mulata. How does Azevedo use these two romantic plots to comment on the question of Brazilian national identity? What do the two stories say about race in Brazil? **Due in class, 3/28**

5. In the film *Like Water for Chocolate*, the question of Mexican national identity is directly linked to food and sex. How? What, according to this film, makes Mexico special? **Due in class, 4/11**

6. What were the key factors that made samba music a symbol of mixed-race Brazil, and which of these factors was most important? You may want to consider the role of the radio, the government, intellectuals, and both black and white musicians. **Due in class, 4/23**

7. What does Che Guevara discover about himself and about Latin America over the course of the journeys described in *The Motorcycle Diaries*? Can you detect a shift in his sense of his own identity, and if so, what causes that shift? **Due in class, 5/2**

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to add a class: Jan 31

Last day to drop a class: Feb 24

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. For the purposes of this course, make sure that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. You may not present anyone else's words or ideas as if they were yours. If you do, I will immediately turn your case over to the honor committee.

MASON EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

WRITING CENTER

A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

“Ask a Librarian ”

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

(703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

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