

History 364
Revolution and Radical Politics in Latin America

TR 12:00-1:15PM
Horizon Hall 3008
Spring 2022

Prof. Matt Karush
Office: Horizon Hall 3103
Office Hours: Tues, 1:30-3:00
and by appt.
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Course Description:

During the twentieth century, Latin America witnessed both peaceful political movements and violent revolutions aimed at redressing economic inequalities and creating a more just society. This course will consider several of these movements in comparative perspective: the Mexican Revolution, the Allende government in Chile, the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolutions, the Chavez regime in Venezuela. Among the questions we will consider are the following: What factors account for the emergence of these movements? What has determined their success or failure? What impact have they had on society? Are they compatible with democracy? What role has the United States played in fomenting or preventing these radical political movements? Throughout the semester, we will look beyond the leaders of revolutions to examine the roles played by ordinary people.

Books Required for Purchase:

Marc Becker, *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions* (2017)

Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971* (2012)

Marian Schlotterbeck, *Beyond the Vanguard: Everyday Revolutionaries in Allende's Chile* (2018)

Gioconda Belli, *The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War* (2003)

All books are available at the University Bookstore (and from your favorite on-line vendor).

Readings marked with an asterisk will be distributed via email. For readings on 2/8 and 2/22, links have been provided below. For 4/28, please find the López Maya reading through the library website. **Note: We will not be using Blackboard for any purpose in this class. If you have a question about your grade in the course, feel free to email me.**

Class Requirements:

1) Two essays of 3-5 pages (see assignments below). Since there are four essay topics and you are only required to write on two of them, late papers will only be accepted in the case of serious emergency. Please talk to me as early as possible if issues come up (I do understand that things sometimes come up). All due dates are listed in the class schedule below. Students are allowed to rewrite one essay for an improved grade. Rewrites are due within one week of receiving your graded paper from me. To improve your grade, you must make substantive – not merely cosmetic – changes.

2) One final paper of 6-8 pages (see assignment and due date below)

3) Two 2-page summaries of specific reading assignments. These are due by 11:00 am on the day we discuss the readings in question. I will circulate a sign-up sheet at our first meeting for you to select the readings you will write on. The assignment is to summarize the author's argument and suggest at least one substantive question worth class discussion. Email your summary to me as a word doc attachment. You will be expected to play a big role in class discussion that day.

4) Active participation in class discussions. I do not take attendance, and you will not be penalized if you miss class due to illness. Just try to come to class prepared to discuss the reading.

Grades will be determined as follows:

2 essays	20% each
final paper	30%
2 reading summaries	10% each
participation	10%

Classroom Policies:

Students should feel free to bring laptops, ipads, etc to class in order to take notes. However, please try to stay off social media and the web (unless you are googling a name or event that was mentioned in lecture or discussion). The material we will be discussing in class is complex; it requires your full attention. More important, the images on your screen are likely to distract students sitting behind you. If you (like me) are one of those people who will find it hard not to surf the web, then leave the laptop at home. Similarly, if you stayed out late the night before and you know you are unlikely to be able to stay awake, skip class and get the notes from a classmate. Sleeping students are a distraction to others. Finally, and most importantly, **DO NOT TEXT** in class. If you have a personal emergency to deal with, quietly leave class and go deal with it.

All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (<https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus>). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Students are required to follow Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An appropriate facemask must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom.

Class Schedule:

1/25 – Introduction: The Significance of Revolution in Latin American History

1/27 – Revolutionary Ideologies and Key Issues

- Becker, 1-31

Part I: Modernization and its Discontents: The Mexican Revolution

2/1 – Origins and Outbreak of the Revolution

- Becker, 35-40
- "Plan of San Luis Potosí"*

2/3 – The Revolutionary Alliance Falls Apart

- Becker, 40-48

2/8 – Who Won and What Changed?

- Becker, 48-51
- Gilbert Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, 55-85*
- Excerpts of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution (1917):
<http://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/Mexicoreader/Chapter5/1917constart27.htm>

2/10 – Interpreting the Revolution

- Becker, 51-54

Essay 1 due (via email) by noon on Monday, 2/14

Part II: The Dawn of the Cold War

2/15, 2/17 – Frustrated Postwar Revolutions: Guatemala, 1954 and Bolivia, 1952

- Becker, 57-78; 81-104

Part III: Cuba Changes Everything

2/22 – The Cuban Revolution: Origins

- Becker, 107-122
- Fidel Castro, "History will Absolve Me"
(http://college.cengage.com/history/world/keen/latin_america/8e/assets/students/sources/pdfs/87_fidel_castro.pdf)
- "Sierra Maestra Manifesto" (<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuban-rebels/manifesto.htm>)

2/24, 3/1 – Taking Power and Managing Dissent

- Guerra, 37-106; 135-169

3/3 – Radicalization: Towards Dictatorship?

- Guerra, 170-188; 198-226

3/8 – Challenges to the Revolution: Youth, Sexuality and Race

- Guerra, 227-277

3/10– Reviving the Revolution: 10 Million Tons of Sugar

- Guerra, 290-316; 353-367

Essay 2 due (via email) by 5:00 PM on Friday, 3/11

3/15, 3/17 – NO CLASS [Spring Break]

Part IV: After Cuba

3/22, 3/24 –The Impact of the Cuban Revolution in Latin America and the U.S.

- Becker, 185-205
- Belli, ix-102

3/29, 3/31– Chile: A Peaceful Path to Socialism?

- Schlotterbeck, 1-89
- Becker, 135-146

4/5, 4/7 – The Fall of the Allende Revolution

- Becker, 146-156
- Schlotterbeck, 90-167

Essay 3 due (via email) by noon on Monday, 4/11

4/12, 4/14 – Nicaragua: The Origins of the Sandinista Revolution

- Becker, 159-176
- Belli, 103-241

4/19, 4/21– The Sandinistas in (and out of) Power

- Becker, 176-82
- Belli, 245-369

Essay 4 due (via email) by noon on Monday, 4/25

4/26, 4/28 – Chavez in Venezuela: Something New or the Return of an Old Model?

- Becker, 209-221
- Alejandro Velasco, “We are Still Rebels: The Challenge of Popular History in Bolivarian Venezuela”*
- Margarita López Maya, “Venezuela: The Political Crisis of Post-Chavismo” *Social Justice* 40: 4 (2014), 68-87.

5/3, 5/5 – The Afterlives of Revolution

- Becker, 223-237

Final Paper due (via email) by noon on Thursday, May 12

Essay Assignments

Each student must complete **two** of these. Your essay should be 3-5 pages in length; it must be double-spaced, in a normal, 12-point font, with margins no bigger than 1.25 inches on each side. Do NOT right-justify your text, and do NOT add spaces between paragraphs. DO include page numbers, your name, and a title. Since you will only be citing a small number of sources, brief parenthetical citations are fine: (author's last name, date). You must submit your paper as a **Word doc** (NOT a pdf) attached to an email sent to me at: mkarush@gmu.edu.

1. [Due 2/14] Drawing on both the Becker chapter and the chapter by Joseph and Buchenau, as well as the primary sources we read, consider the Mexican Revolution as a battle of ideologies. What were the major ideologies in conflict, which one triumphed, and why?
2. [Due 3/11] How did ordinary people (young people, women, Black people) shape the Cuban Revolution? How did they support and/or resist the plans hatched by leaders? What impact did their support or resistance have? You may draw on the Becker chapter and the primary sources we read, but you must rely primarily on Guerra's book, and you must clearly explain her argument (even if you end up disagreeing).
3. [Due 4/11] There are two possibilities for this one: a) How does Schlotterbeck's use of oral history illuminate the revolutionary process in Chile? In what ways are the memories she collects useful for historical understanding? Are there problems with her reliance on such memories or with her choice of which memories to include? **OR** b) Watch the film *The Battle of Chile, part 3* (1978) by Patricio Guzmán (it is available simply searching "battle of chile part 3" on the GMU library homepage). This is the third part of a documentary filmed in 1972-73 as events unfolded. How does the film support or oppose Schlotterbeck's interpretation of the revolutionary process in Chile?
4. [Due 4/25] How did being a woman shape Gioconda Belli's experience **and** interpretation of the Sandinista Revolution?

Final Paper

Your essay should be 6-8 pages in length, with all the same rules as above. You must submit your paper as **Word doc** (NOT a pdf) attached to an email sent to me at: mkarush@gmu.edu.

What have been the principal obstacles to a successful revolution in Latin America? Have revolutionary movements struggled repeatedly with the same challenges? Have some responded better than others? How? You must discuss at least **five** of the seven revolutions we have studied (Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua, Venezuela), and you must draw substantially on at least **four** of the authors we have read. The goal of this paper is for you to put the various readings we have done this semester into dialogue with each other. To do that, think about how an interpretation made about one case might apply to others.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.

Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

(Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website, registrar.gmu.edu.)

Last day to add a class: Jan 31

Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty: Feb 7

Last day to drop a class: Mar 1

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.

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 I suspect that you have, 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

For help with your writing, please use the services of the Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>; wcenter@gmu.edu

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

(703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

OTHER STUDENT SERVICES

For a complete list, see <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowning-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.