



HISTORY 521

BEYOND THE COLOR LINE? RACE, INEQUALITY, AND CITIZENSHIP IN LATIN AMERICAN POST-SLAVE SOCIETIES

Instructor: Dr. Graham Nessler

Class Meets: Tuesdays, 7:20 - 10:00 PM, SS 141

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 146

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 PM, and Thursdays, 1:45-4:45 PM

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Please see the note on communication below.

This syllabus is subject to change (any updated versions will be posted to eCollege)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 1903, W. E. B. DuBois prophetically wrote that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” Over a century after he penned these famous words, racial inequality—in all its numerous manifestations—remains an entrenched problem in many parts of the Western Hemisphere and beyond. This course delves into the historical roots of racial inequality and continuing struggles for social and economic justice by those most affected by both the legacies of slavery and the equally important legacies of restrictions on citizenship rights and dignity after abolition. DuBois approached the problem of racial inequality from a global perspective, for he knew that racism in his own country was “but a local phase of a world problem,” as he put it in a 1906 article. Following DuBois’s lead, we will closely examine transitions from slavery and struggles for equal citizenship in several Latin American nations and the United States through a comparative lens.

In the first part of this course, we will study the dismantling of slavery in the nineteenth century, focusing especially on the three great antiracist wars that led to the end of slavery in Haiti, the United States, and Cuba. In these conflicts, as well as in other areas such as Brazil and the British Empire, the end of slavery gave rise to both new ideologies of racial equality and freedom and new modes of racism, political and economic exclusion, and militarism.

In Part II, we move into the twentieth century, when conflicts over the rights of ex-slaves and their descendants profoundly shaped politics and social life in a number of American post-slave societies.¹ We will carefully examine the intellectual, legal, and social meanings of race in a

¹ For the purposes of this course, we will use the terms “America” and “American” to refer to the entire Western Hemisphere, not just the part that became the United States.

variety of contexts, ranging from controversies concerning affirmative action in Brazil to debates over the persistence of racism in socialist Cuba. As we will see, there is not one but many “color lines” in Latin America. Over the next few months, we will engage in a productive dialogue centered on these color lines and their implications for the continuing struggles to comprehend and eliminate racial inequality in many parts of *las Américas*.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will evaluate key texts on abolition and racial inequality in several Latin American nations and the United States.
2. Students will compare and contrast struggles over race and citizenship in the places covered in this course.
3. Students will help to lead a discussion on race relations in a Latin American nation or the US.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts:

Ferrer, Ada. *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999. [ISBN: 0807847836]

Fuente, Alejandro de la. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. [ISBN: 0807849227]

Holt, Thomas. *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. [ISBN: 0801842166]

Scott, Rebecca, and Jean Hébrard. *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. [ISBN: 9780674047747]

Other required readings are available on the course’s eCollege page.

Optional Texts:

In this course, we will discuss a variety of historical and geographical contexts that may not be familiar to many students. While I will sometimes deliver mini-lectures to help contextualize the material, students are advised to consider purchasing one or both of the following optional textbooks, which both offer succinct and readable overviews of modern Latin American and Caribbean history. They are available at all of the major online booksellers such as Amazon.

Chasteen, John. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011. [ISBN: 0393911543] (or the two previous editions of this book)

Williamson, Edwin. *The Penguin History of Latin America*. Rev. ed. London: Penguin, 2010. [ISBN: 0141034750] (or a previous edition)

Grading:

The components of this course will be weighted into the final grade as follows:

- Reading response papers: 50% of your final grade
- Presentation: 10% of your final grade
- Final paper: 25% of your final grade
- Attendance and participation: 15% of your final grade

Grading Scale:

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% and below

Reading Response Papers:

You will write **seven (7) reading response essays** for this course. Each response essay will cover one week's worth of readings (and films, where relevant), and must be between 2-3 pages in length (see "Paper Format" below). You may choose any seven weeks you would like. For these essays, you must summarize and critically analyze the readings. What are their main contributions, and what new insights do they offer? What are their limitations or shortcomings? How well do they use evidence? If there is a dispute between different authors, who makes the stronger argument, and why? You should analyze these texts through the eyes of a scholar, focusing on how they speak to each other and what they add to our understanding of the topic. You may also address how one would effectively use one or more of the week's texts in a K-12 or postsecondary classroom. Papers that simply reiterate the authors' main arguments without evaluating the texts will be graded unfavorably. Essays will be due by the start of class for the week covered in the essay (*except for Week XII, which will be due November 20 at 7:20 pm*).

Presentation:

Each student will choose one week when he or she will make a presentation and help to lead the discussion. Each student must have his or her own separate week (i.e., no "doubling up"). In these presentations, you will speak for approximately **ten minutes** on the week's readings, as well as on **at least one article or book chapter that is not on the syllabus**. Your presentation will offer brief summaries of the texts, evaluations of the arguments and use of evidence, and your own interpretation of the main questions and theme raised in the readings. You will also pose four or five questions to the class on the assigned readings. These should be questions that you believe will inspire extensive discussion and debate. **You must send your questions to the class through eCollege by midnight the night before your session (please upload your questions to the "discussion" part of your chosen week). Please read your peers' discussion questions each week before coming to class.** We will assign presentation slots the first week of class.

Final Paper:

For this capstone paper, you will have two choices: either compose an analysis of the historiography on a specific topic, or write a paper on how you would teach about a topic in a K-12 or post-secondary classroom. Further details will be provided in a separate handout. **Due December 13 at 5:00 pm.**

Attendance and Participation:

Attending every class session is critical for your success in this discussion-based course. Nonetheless, I am aware that unexpected events sometimes arise that interfere with course responsibilities. **Therefore, each student can take one (1) “free” absence that will not incur any penalty.** Please use this free absence wisely. All absences beyond this free absence will incur progressive deductions from your participation grade. No absences beyond the free one will be “excused” for any reason. Tardiness will also count against your participation grade. **All students with any special needs must see the instructor as soon as possible in the semester to discuss this.** Failure to address the matter promptly may result in the inability to accommodate a specific circumstance.

Paper Format:

All written work must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins and in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx). *Please do not submit any documents in .pdf format.* Please double-space all body text and single-space any footnotes or endnotes (which should be in Times New Roman, 10-point font). You can use either footnotes or endnotes, but please be consistent within assignments. We will follow the Chicago Manual of Style for all written assignments. A copy of *The Chicago Manual of Style* is available for consultation at the Reference Desk at TAMUC Library. I recommend investing in a copy of this book (preferably the 15th or 16th edition) as this is the standard format for scholarship in history and other fields in the United States.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND ACCESS

In this course, we will make extensive use of the eCollege online course system (<https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>). eCollege is a Learning Management System (LMS) that facilitates instruction through a variety of online tools. For more information and technical support in using eCollege, please send a message to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or call 1-866-656-5511.

Please find the page for our course within eCollege and navigate to it. You will submit all written assignments through eCollege, submit your discussion questions for the rest of the class through eCollege before the session in which you present, and receive instructor feedback through this system. You will also find on eCollege all of the course readings which do not come from the books that you will purchase. We will discuss eCollege and our use of it in more detail in class. **Please submit all written work to the appropriate listing in the Dropbox on the course’s eCollege page. (No hard copy submissions, please.)**

For this course, you will need an up-to-date web browser, Microsoft Word (or Open Office), and the free Adobe Acrobat reader (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Outside of class sessions and office hours, email is the best way to communicate with me. Please use your TAMU Commerce email address in all email communication with me, and put the course name (History 521) in the subject line. Please also keep the following in mind: like all of you, I am a busy member of this University community who must juggle multiple commitments. Please expect a response to your message within 24 hours on a weekday and 48 hours on the weekends. I will not respond to questions whose answer is contained in this syllabus or in another handout that I have distributed.

Writing Center:

Students are encouraged to make use of the University's Writing Center for assistance in composing and revising their papers. If you take advantage of this service, please plan ahead by giving yourself enough time to make an appointment and incorporate their suggestions into your revisions. For more information and to make an appointment, see: <http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Late Work Policy: All assignments turned in after the deadline will incur a penalty of one letter grade per day late. This starts from the minute after the deadline (i.e. a paper turned in at 5:10 that was due at 5:00 the same day is counted as being one day late; response papers are due by the start of class on the relevant day, that is, 7:20pm). **No extensions will be granted under any circumstances.**

Absence Policy: See the Attendance and Participation section above.

Laptop Use: Use of laptops in class is a **privilege**. I reserve the right to revoke this privilege if a student is caught using a laptop for any purpose other than to access the course readings, access eCollege **for this class**, or take notes related to our course. Cell phones must be turned off and not used at all in class sessions; iPads and other tablets can be used only for the purposes for which laptop use is permissible. Repeated cell phone rings and the like will damage your participation grade.

Grade Appeals: The instructor's judgment of all student grades on essays and all other graded assignments is final and will not be subject to revision, except when a mathematical error has been committed.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is any act which involves the theft of someone else's ideas. This includes but is not limited to: lifting text out of anyone else's work without proper attribution; using an author's exact words with a citation but without quotation marks to indicate these words; and simply reiterating another's ideas (author, professor, peer, etc) without giving credit to this person. Plagiarism also includes buying or otherwise acquiring material from the Internet and passing it off as your own as well as having a friend (or anyone else) write all or

part of your paper. **You are also committing plagiarism if you submit part or all of something that you have written for another assignment—for this or another class—without proper attribution.** Other forms of academic dishonesty include (among other offenses): possessing, using, or distributing illicit examination materials; and forgery.

I have a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of academic dishonesty. Anyone caught plagiarizing or committing any other academic offense will receive a zero on the assignment in question and will be referred to the Dean of Students. The offender may also fail the course. Ignorance is **not** an excuse; it is the responsibility of **all** students to be fully informed about plagiarism and to absolutely avoid it. If you have any doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. **All written assignments will be automatically uploaded to turnitin.com for plagiarism checking.**

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

If you require such an accommodation, please contact the above office **as soon as possible in the term.**

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct* from *Student Guide Handbook*). Among other things, this includes exhibiting respectful behavior in class at all times. While I welcome and expect disagreements in viewpoints, all students must refrain at all times from making inappropriate or offensive remarks and treat all classmates and the instructor with respect, courtesy, and dignity. Please see the above guidelines if you are unclear about any aspect of acceptable conduct.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Part I: The Nineteenth Century: A World without Slavery?

Week I (August 28): Introductions: What is a Post-Emancipation Society?

- Robin D. G. Kelley, “‘But a Local Phase of a World Problem:’ Black History’s Global Vision, 1883-1950,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1045-1077 [33 pp]
- Frederick Cooper, Rebecca Scott, and Thomas Holt, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 1-32 [32 pp]
- **Total reading: 65 pp**

Week II (September 4): The Haitian Revolution: The First Great Antislavery Conflict (1789-1809)

- Scott and Hébrard, *Freedom Papers*, 20-64 [45 pp]
- Graham Nessler, “‘They Always Knew Her to be Free:’ Emancipation and Re-Enslavement in French Santo Domingo, 1804-1809,” *Slavery and Abolition* 33, no. 1 (2012): 87-103 [17 pp]
- Carolyn Fick, “Emancipation in Haiti: From Plantation Labour to Peasant Proprietorship,” *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 2 (2000): 11-39 [29 pp]
- **Total reading: 91 pp**

Week III (September 11): “The Mighty Experiment:” The End of the British Slave Trade and the Abolition of Slavery in the British World (1807-1838)

- Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 3-9, 13-53 [48 pp]
- Beatriz Mamigonian, “In the Name of Freedom: Slave Trade Abolition, the Law and the Brazilian Branch of the African Emigration Scheme (Brazil-British West Indies, 1830s-1850s),” *Slavery and Abolition* 30, no. 1 (March 2009): 41-66 [26 pp]
- **Total reading: 74 pp**

Week IV (September 18): Connections between the Haitian Revolution and the United States Civil War and Reconstruction

- Scott and Hébrard, *Freedom Papers*, chapters 6-7 [39 pp]
- Caryn Cossé Bell, “The Common Wind’s Creole Visionary: Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez,” *South Atlantic Review* 73, no. 2 (2008): 10-25 [16 pp]
- Rebecca Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2005), 30-60 [31 pp]
- **Total reading: 86 pp**

Week V (September 25): Race and Nation in the Cuban Independence Wars (1868-1898)

- Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp 1-42, 70-92, 170-202 [96 pp]
- **Total reading: 96 pp**

Week VI (October 2): The Final Abolition: The End of Slavery in Brazil (1888)

- Martha Abreu, “Slave Mothers and Freed Children: Emancipation and Female Space in Debates on the ‘Free Womb’ Law, Rio de Janeiro, 1871,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3, (October 1996): 567-580 [14 pp]

- Keila Grinberg, “Slavery, Liberalism and Civil Law: Definitions of Status and Citizenship in the Elaboration of the Brazilian Civil Code (1855-1916),” in *Honor, Status and Law in Modern Latin America*, ed. Sueann Caulfield, Sarah Chambers, and Lara Putnam (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 109-127 [19 pp]
- Joaquim Nabuco, *Abolitionism: The Brazilian Antislavery Struggle*, trans. Robert Conrad (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 7-28 [22 pp]
- Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, “Continuity and Crisis: Cuban Slavery, Spanish Colonialism, and the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century,” in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik Seeman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 199-217 [19 pp]
- **Total reading: 74 pp**

Part II: The Twentieth Century: Equality for All?

Week VII (October 9): Cuba, I: A Raceless Nation? (1898-1958)

- Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 23-95 [73 pp]
- Aline Helg, “Race and Black Mobilization in Colonial and Early Independent Cuba: A Comparative Perspective,” *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 1 (1997): 53-74 [22 pp]
- **Total reading: 95 pp**

Week VIII (October 16): The Legacies of Slavery in the British Caribbean

- Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 381-402 [22 pp]
- In-class screening of *Life and Debt* (2001; 80 min); class discussion follows (attendance is mandatory)
- **Total reading: 22 pp**

Week IX (October 23): An Island Divided: Haiti and the Dominican Republic

- Richard Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (2002): 589-635 [47 pp]
- Lauren Derby, “Haitians, Magic and Money: Race and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900 to 1937,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (July 1994): 488-526 [39 pp]
- **Total reading: 86 pp**

Week X (October 30): Cuba, II: The Contradictions of Antiracism under Castro (1959-)

- De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 259-334 [76 pp]
- **Total reading: 76 pp**

Week XI (November 6): The Affirmative Action Controversy: The View from Brazil

- Henry Louis Gates (narrator), “Brazil: A Racial Paradise?” installment of TV miniseries *Black in Latin America* (PBS, 2011), available online at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/featured/black-in-latin-america-full-episode-brazil-a-racial-paradise/224/>

- Mala Htun, “From ‘Racial Democracy’ to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil,” *Latin American Research Review* 39, no. 1 (2004): 60-89 [30 pp]
- Paulina Alberto, “When Rio was *Black*: Soul Music, National Culture, and the Politics of Racial Comparison in 1970s Brazil,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89:1 (2009): 3-39 [37 pp]
- **Total reading: 67 pp**

Week XII (November 13): The French Caribbean

- In-class screening of *Sugar Cane Alley* (1983; 103 min); class discussion follows (attendance is mandatory)
- **Note: response paper for this week is due November 20**

Week XIII (November 20): No class; happy Thanksgiving!

Week XIV (November 27): Race and Inter-American Migration

- Tiffany Joseph, “‘My Life was Filled with Constant Anxiety:’ Anti-Immigrant Discrimination, Undocumented Status, and their Mental Health Implications for Brazilian Immigrants,” *Race and Social Problems* 3 (2011): 170-181 [12 pp]
- Malissia Lennox, “Refugees, Racism, and Reparations: A Critique of the United States’ Haitian Immigration Policy,” *Stanford Law Review* 45, no. 3 (1993): 687-724 [38 pp]
- **Total reading: 50 pp**

Week XV (December 4): Conclusions

No readings this week; we will complete formal course evaluations, engage in a concluding discussion of the future of race relations and politics in Latin America, and have an informal course evaluation in the form of an open-ended discussion in which students can offer feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Final papers due December 13 at 5:00 pm.