Field Seminar: Modern Latin America
HIS542/CEG517
Soc&BehavSciences Bldg. (N303)
Wednesdays (5:30-8:30)

**Description:** This Field Seminar introduces students to some of the principal debates and literatures about Latin American history since independence. It is designed for MA and PhD students in the graduate program who intend to teach or to go on to a PhD in Latin American History. Advanced students from other geographic concentrations and disciplines are also welcome. Our focus will be on analyzing the methodological strategies used by authors, while discerning what epistemological assumptions underlie and inform each author’s approach to “doing history.” Although not inclusive of all historical approaches, the course aims to introduce students to many of the most relevant historiographical discussions across as broad a temporal and geographic range as possible.

**Expectations:** The success of weekly seminars will rest on the degree of preparation and engagement brought by students to each session. Keeping in mind that we are reading these texts as much for approach as content per se, my expectation is that students come prepared to discuss, analyze and critically explore each week’s readings to the best of their ability. Not having finished a given set of readings is not reason for missing a class. Read as much as you can, but do so in a way that will allow you to engage in conversation and push our discussions in new and interesting directions. For example, you should learn to probe the archival research used to construct the author’s argument, make connections to other readings (both from our course and in other areas), situate the text within a wider theoretical framework, and so forth. The “Recommended Readings” are meant to provide students with a minimal historiographical bibliography in which the assigned text is situated. Where possible (and as required, per below) students should try to familiarize themselves with some of these additional texts as a way of grasping how a particular historiography has emerged around the topic.

**Oral & Writing Requirements:**

1. Every student will be responsible to make a presentation for one week’s reading assignment. Presentations should last no more than 20 min. and address the following four questions that will guide our discussions throughout the semester: 1. What is the thesis of the work (the argument in as succinct a distillation as possible)? 2. What is the methodological strategy or research approach used by the author to construct the argument? 3. What are the underlying epistemological or theoretical assumption(s) used by the author to frame the argument? 4. What do you see as the historiographical significance of this text in relationship to the field of Latin American history? Students presenting on a given week’s primary text are expected to familiarize themselves with at
least two of the “recommended” texts for that week, in order to help place the book in its appropriate historiographical context. Presenters will receive written feedback in lieu of an assigned grade.

2. There will be four 3-page response papers due over the course of the semester. You may submit these at any stage, but it is recommended that you submit at least one no later than Week 4. Each paper should focus on one of the four aspects outlined above (i.e., thesis, method, theory, historiography), rotating among these components so that each is addressed in the four respective papers. I do not want a simple recitation of the contents of the work, but rather your own effort to present and interpret the work in light of one of these guiding questions (thesis, method, etc.). You should freely cite from other readings from the class and other courses as appropriate, for example when establishing a theoretical context or question about method. Intellectual risk and demonstration of a wider field of vision beyond the narrowness of the text itself will be rewarded! NOTE: Papers are due no later than 4pm on the day of class, distributed via email to every member of the seminar. Please come to class having read each other’s work so that we can incorporate the papers into our discussion. You may, if you choose, also submit a paper for the day you are presenting on the readings. Papers are each valued at 15% (60% total).

3. For Week 8 you will be required to submit a 3-4 page paper that critically analyzes a document, broadly defined, of your choice: cartoon, advertisement, photograph, newspaper editorial/story, government document, etc. You should choose a document that is of interest/relevance to your own teaching or research, but it must be a primary source document (not taken from a secondary collection of documents). Please submit a copy of the document along with your paper and be prepared to present in class (10 min. approx.) For this week, you do not need to submit your paper in advance of class but must bring a hard copy to class for me. (15% total)

4. There will be a final historiographical essay (12-15 pages) due at a date to be assigned. This paper should explore in greater depth a body of texts (on/related to Latin America) taken from your own research interests, either thematically or by country, and that incorporates some of the principal works that we have been discussing over the course of the semester. The expectation is that you will organize this paper by exploring shared and divergent aspects that link this body of texts into a historiographical “field” of knowledge. MAT students may, if they so choose, construct a course syllabus for a proposed class in Latin American history that demonstrates a close engagement in the critical ways of thinking about this topic that we have been discussing over the semester. (25% total)

NYC Latin American History Workshop (NYCLAHW): Throughout the semester, there will be monthly meetings of the NYC Latin American History Workshop. This is a congenial gathering at which area and visiting Latin American historians and graduate students present aspects of their research. Meetings are held Fridays, 11am-1pm at the CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, and are followed by a free luncheon. It is strongly encouraged, especially for PhD students, that you attend these workshops as they
offer a vibrant setting for intellectual exchange and critique. To receive the paper in advance, please send an email to the workshop coordinator, Julia del Palacio (ajd2128@columbia.edu) asking to be placed on the email list.

**Recommended historical surveys:** For MA students who have not taken an in-depth survey course in modern Latin America, the following texts (available cheaply in used editions) will be very helpful for piecing together the historical narrative and addressing questions of periodization:


**Required Books for Purchase:**


**Week 1 (Aug. 27): Introduction**


**Week 2 (Sept. 3): Peasant Politics & Nation-State Formation**

Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics and the Formation of Mexico’s National State, Guerrero, 1800-1857*

**Recommended:**
- Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*
- Friedrich Katz, ed., *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*
- Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*
- Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940*
- Aldo Lauria-Santiago, *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society and Community in El Salvador*
- Richard Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History*
- John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940*

**Week 3 (Sept. 10): Indigeneity and Nation**


**Recommended:**
- Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in this Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965*
Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America*
Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*

**Week 4 (Sept. 17): Urban Popular Politics & Culture**


**Recommended:**
William Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes in Porfirian Mexico*
Susan Deans-Smith & Gilbert Joseph, eds., *Mexico’s New Cultural History: ¿Una Lucha Libre?* (Special Issue), *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79:2
Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein & Eric Zolov, eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Popular Culture in Mexico Since 1940*
William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*
Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies and Other Threats to the Nation*

**Week 5 (Sept. 24): NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)**

**Week 6 (Oct. 1): Working-Class Histories**

**Recommended:**
Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*
Paulo Drinot, *The Allure of Labor: Workers, Race, and the Making of the Peruvian State*
Thomas Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, Gender and Politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951*
Michael Snodgrass, *Defence and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890-1950.*
Week 7 (Oct. 8): Cinema Histories

Laura Isabel Serna, *Making Cinelandia: American Films and Mexican Film Culture Before the Golden Age*

**Recommended:**
Joanne Hershfield, *Mexican Cinema/Mexican Woman, 1940-1950*
Matthew Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*
Donald Stevens, ed., *Based on a True Story: Latin American History at the Movies*

Week 8 (Oct. 15): Document Analysis

Week 9 (Oct. 22): Musical Nationalisms

Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*

**Recommended:**
Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*
Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afro-cubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940*
____________, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*
Deborah Pacini-Hernandez, *Bachata: A Social History of a Dominican Popular Music*
Peter Wade, *Music, Race and Nation: Música Tropical in Colombia*

Week 10 (Oct. 29): Pan Americanisms

Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua Under U.S. Imperial Rule*

**Recommended:**
Lauren Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*


Gilbert Joseph, Catherine LeGrand and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*

Alan McPherson, *Yankee No!: Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations*


Eric Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*

Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman, eds., *Imagining Our Americas: Toward a Transnational Frame*

**Week 11 (Nov. 5): Cold War**

Daniela Spenser *In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War*

Recommended:

Hal Brands, *Latin America’s Cold War*

Jean Franco, *The Decline of the Lettered City*

Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*

_____________ and Gilbert Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America’s Long Cold War*

Tanya Harmer, *Allende’s Chile & the Inter-American Cold War*


Stephen Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism*

_____________, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America*

Rebecca Schreiber, *Cold War Exiles in Mexico*


**Week 12 (Nov. 12): Youth Cultures**

Valeria Manzano, *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, & Sexuality from Perón to Videla*

Recommended:

Sebastian Carrasai, *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies*

Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*

Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of a New Left*


Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*

**Week 13 (Nov. 19): State Monumentalism & Visual History**

Luis Castañeda, *Spectacular Mexico: Design, Propaganda, and the 1968 Olympics*

**Recommended:**

Mary Coffrey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State*

Fernando Coronil, ed., *Can the Subaltern See?: Photographs as History* (Special Issue), *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84:1

Leonard Folgarait, *So Far From Heaven: David Alfaro Siqueiros’ The March of Humanity and Mexican Revolutionary Politics*


Joanne Hershfield, *Imagining La Chica Moderna: Women, Nation and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936*

John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity*

Laura Podalsky, *Specular City: Transforming Culture, Consumption and Space in Buenos Aires, 1955-1973*

Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*

James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*

Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World’s Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*

Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945*

**Week 14 (Nov. 26): NO CLASS**

**Week 15: (Dec. 3): Last Class**