

# SOC 110: Latin American Society

Department of Sociology  
Tufts University  
Fall 2022

**Instructor:** Prof. Anjuli N. Fahlberg

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**Class Meeting:** M/W 3-4:15pm

**Class Location:** Lincoln Filene Center, Room 201

**Office Hours:** Mon 4:40-6pm; Thurs 1-3pm

**Grader:** Guilherme Baratho

**Email:** [Baratho.g@northeastern.edu](mailto:Baratho.g@northeastern.edu)

## Course Description

Although colonial rule over Latin America officially came to an end nearly two centuries ago, its people continue to suffer from high rates of poverty, oppression, corruption, and violence. At the same time, communities across Latin America resist inequality through a range of political, social and cultural practices and discourses. After reviewing the larger historical trajectories that led to contemporary realities, this course will examine many key themes that traverse the populations who inhabit Latin America. Some of the core questions we will explore include: How do colonial legacies continue to play out in contemporary political, economic and social structures? How do these interact with race, class, gender and sexuality to produce uneven relations of power? What are the consequences of globalization and neoliberalism on Latin America's poor? And finally, what forms of resistance do marginalized populations employ to survive or subvert forces of domination? By focusing on case studies of several countries across Central and South America we will draw upon a range of examples and theoretical frameworks to consider the changes and continuities across Latin American society.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define and provide examples of core concepts affecting the historical and contemporary economic, political, and social systems in Latin America and reflect on their inter-connectivity;
2. Identify and discuss the multiple spheres of power that produce inequality in Latin American Society;
3. Describe the connections between the colonial past and its contemporary renditions;
4. Identify the effects of macro-level forces on the localized experiences of groups and individuals;
5. Identify the multiple forms of violence and resistance that operate across Latin American history, society and geography;
6. Apply the analytical tools gained during the class to current events, policies, and issues.

## **Required Texts**

1. Vega, Rosalynn. 2018. *No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico*. University of Texas Press.

## **Classroom Policies**

### **Respect and Inclusivity in the Classroom**

Classrooms are spaces for learning. For this to happen, we must first and foremost respect the humanity of all students, instructors, and anyone else in the classroom. Therefore, no discriminatory remarks towards members of any individual based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc will be tolerated. Students are encouraged to treat the classroom as a space for learning about and working through multiple perspectives, and are encouraged to reflect critically on their own views and experiences and the dynamics that engender alternative perspectives.

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions by critically engaging with the material and with key concepts, themes, and stories. Questions or comments that challenge traditional assumptions or normative values are encouraged, though these should always be provided in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

### **Technology in the classroom**

Studies consistently show that the use of technology is distracting and contributes to students' low performance. Therefore, you should refrain from using laptops in class. If your reading materials are on your computer or tablet, you may refer to these during class discussions. However, the use of Facebook, email, Amazon, or any other such sites is NOT permitted. I also reserve the right to look at screens or to ask you to put away your laptop if it appears to be distracting. Cell phones should be on silent at all times, and students should not check their phones during class.

### **Food**

Remaining engaged in class—alert, attentive, and participative—will make the class more interesting and productive for all of us. Students are therefore welcome to bring food and drinks, as these can be helpful to remaining alert. However, please do not be late due to waiting in lines to purchase food.

### **Plagiarism & Academic Integrity**

Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask me for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.

The general rule on plagiarism is that you should cite any fact that is not widely known and any idea that is not your own—which will be much of what you write! Keep track of what you are reading and where you are obtaining your information, and become comfortable with including the authors' last name(s) and dates of publication after each "borrowed" fact or idea. Citing what you have read not only prevents you from inadvertently committing plagiarism, but also demonstrates to your reader that your writing is well-researched.

As part of this course, I will utilize TurnItIn in the Canvas learning management system to help determine the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of websites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work.

## **Sources**

We now suffer from an over-abundance of information, and it is easy to get overwhelmed by these sources and not know how to find them or which ones are credible. We will discuss this in greater detail in class, but students should be thoughtful about the credibility of each source. As a general rule, these sources are valid: books, scholarly articles, news articles by a mainstream newspaper, and reports issued by the government or major NGOs. You can find many of these on scholar.google.com. Invalid sources include: Wikipedia, blogs, and websites not affiliated with a credible organization.

## **Diversity and Accessibility**

The diversity of students' experiences, perspectives, and abilities is essential to an informed and holistic classroom learning environment. Students with unique learning needs or who require special accommodations should speak to me at the beginning of the semester so provisions can be made accordingly. Please also contact the Student Accessibility Services office at [Accessibility@tufts.edu](mailto:Accessibility@tufts.edu) or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an SAS representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that, per Tufts University guidelines, accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

## **Communication**

Please email me or stop me after class for any questions or concerns or to talk further about the course material. I will be happy to provide you additional ideas and resources relevant to your areas of interest. While out-of-class communication with me is not required to get a good grade, students who actively email or talk to their instructors are much more likely to understand the assignments, gain greater insights into the topics, and perform well.

I will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends and holidays. Feel free to email again if I have not responded within that time frame (and you need a response right away), as sometimes things fall through the cracks.

## **Office Hours**

I hold regular office hours and all students are encouraged to attend. If you have class during those times, come speak to or email me and we can find another time.

While it is not necessary to visit all professors all the time, getting into the habit of talking to your professors outside the classroom is very important and will, in the long run, contribute to your relationships with faculty, your own thinking and reflection, and your overall success as a student. Good reasons to come to office hours include: (a) there was something about the class you didn't understand

or have additional thoughts you'd like to discuss; (b) you would like to talk about your class project and brainstorm ideas; (c) you are having personal challenges and are afraid they might impact your participation in the class; or (d) you would like to discuss any other academic/research/work issues that fall within my areas of study or experience.

## Grades

Please note that all grades are given with careful consideration, based on the description of the project and the rubric. Comments will also be provided to explain your grade. If, however, you feel like your grade does not reflect your performance, you may request that I review your grade. Please keep in mind that a revision of your assignment could result in your grade staying the same, rising, or potentially even going down. Please note that I will not review your grade because you are applying to Medical or Law school, as I do not give grades: you earn the grade you receive. If you are not doing as well in the course as you hoped, come see me **early in the semester** and I will be happy to brainstorm a game plan.

Below is the conversion scale I use when calculating final grades. I round up for scores that end in 0.5 or higher.

A+ 98-100  
A 94-97  
A- 90-93  
B+ 87-89  
B 84-86  
B- 80-83  
C+ 77-79  
C 74-76  
C- 70-73  
D+ 67-69  
D 64-66  
D- 60-63  
F 59 or below

## Assignments:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Current events presentation	15%
Exams (2)	40% (20% each)
Final Paper	30%
Total	100%

## Grader: Guilherme Baratho

Guilherme will be assisting me with grading the exams for the course and the final paper. Please consult with him if you have questions about your exam grades. He can be reached at [barathog@northeastern.edu](mailto:barathog@northeastern.edu).

Guilherme is interested in Brazil's politics and urban structure. Before joining Northeastern in 2021, he completed his Master's in Sociology at the University of Chicago and holds a B.A. in Sociology, minor in Portuguese, from the University of California, Los Angeles. Outside of academia, he enjoys discovering music on vinyl and playing guitar.

### Late Policy

All written assignments should be submitted by the due date and time. **Late assignments will be docked 3 points for each day late.**

- **MAJOR ILLNESS OR EMERGENCIES:** Exceptions may be granted for major illnesses, family emergencies, or jury duty. Serious illnesses must have documentation from health services or your doctor, and all other serious emergencies must first be reported to and documented by your advising dean.
- **MINOR ILLNESS OR STANDARD OUTSIDE OBLIGATIONS:** Exceptions for assignments will generally not be granted for minor illnesses or standard outside obligations, including travel, work, performances, job interviews, games, and so forth. If you have a question about whether your circumstance qualifies, please ask at least two weeks in advance. Extenuating circumstances are more likely to be considered with advance notice rather than at the last minute.
- **ANY ONGOING ISSUES:** If you have ongoing issues (i.e., chronic or mental or physical health conditions), please speak either to the Student Accessibility Services office or to your advising dean and I will be happy to work with them to put a plan in place.

## Attendance and Participation (15%)

Discussion is critical to our best learning—and “unlearning.” You are therefore expected to attend every class and to come prepared, having done the readings and reflected on your opinions of them. A good grade depends on your (a) arriving on time, (b) not missing more than two classes, (c) paying attention during class and participating (aim for at least two comments per class), (d) making contributions that demonstrate you’ve done the readings and reflected on them, and (e) completing short class assignments. Please email me before class if you will be absent—I will notice!

**Note:** Some students struggle with regular participation due to shyness or concern that their comments/questions are not “good enough.” If you are one of them, please come see me in office hours at the beginning of the semester so we can develop some strategies to help with participation. And remember, the only difference between you and talkative students is that the latter’s ideas get heard and yours don’t. You are all learning—no idea or question is “better” than another—so tell us what’s on your mind. Class is better with your voice in it!

## Current Events Presentation (15%)

Each student will be responsible for presenting on a current event in a country of their choice. These presentations will be on a pre-selected date during the semester. The presentation must identify a major event happening in that country and relate it to the relevant topics we’ve discussed in class so far. Each presentation should be **no more than 8 minutes in duration**, followed by 3 minutes of Q&A. **Please practice ahead of time.** The presentation must include a description of the issue(s), some brief history, the most pertinent debates or perspectives, and a set of explanations or take-aways that explicitly connect to course concepts and readings.

## Exams (2 exams, 20% each= 40%)

We will have two in-class exams during the semester. Exams will be in an essay/short-answer format and will test students’ understanding of the readings, class discussions, and student presentations conducted to date. Students will not need to have memorized details from the readings. Instead, focus on (a) the main arguments of the texts or course discussions; (b) the main concepts, their definitions and some examples; (c) major questions and themes discussed in class; (d) information and ideas gained from students’ presentation.

Exams will be on 03/09 and 04/27.

## Final Paper (30%)

The final paper should be 10-12 pages long (double-spaced, not including bibliography). It should reference and engage with at least 7 course readings and cite an additional 5-8 outside references (at least 3 of these should be academic journals or books).

You have two options for the final paper:

1. A research paper, in which you apply the ideas and concepts learned in the course to a current issue in any one or more countries in Latin America.
2. A reflection paper based on an interview conducted with a recent migrant from Latin America. Because this course is focused more on Latin America than on the lives of immigrants living in the US, the interview participant should have spent most of their lives in Latin America and be willing and able to share those experiences with you. While you are certainly welcome (and encouraged) to discuss their migration experience, this should not compose the bulk of the paper.

In both cases, a good paper should contain:

1. An introduction identifying the issue (or person) and the main themes/topics to be covered in the paper;
2. An historical overview of the issue or the context of the person's life;
3. Three distinct sociological themes, to be discussed in separate sections and tied back to course concepts and ideas. Papers will be graded on their ability to properly apply course concepts AND to demonstrate how your case study extends them or helps us develop new concepts;
4. A conclusion that identifies the main take-aways from the paper and reflects on how public policies or societal attitudes might be improved.

An abstract detailing what your paper will be about and how you're thinking of structuring it will be due on Saturday, 02/27. The final paper will be due on 05/11 by midnight.

## Course Readings

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
01/19	Welcome! Class on Zoom.
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Inequality at the Roots: Colonialism and Race</b>
01/24	Batalla, Guillermo Bonfil. 1996. <i>Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization</i> . Austin: University of Texas Press. Chapter 5.
01/26	Aníbal, Quijano. 2000. Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. <i>International Sociology</i> . (15) 2.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Resource Extraction</b>
01/31	Wade, Peter. 2009. <i>Race and Sex in Latin America</i> . London: Palgrave MacMillan. Ch 4.
02/02	Hesketh, Chris. 2020. Between Pachakuti and Passive Revolution: The Search for Post-colonial Sovereignty in Bolivia. <i>Journal of Historical Sociology</i> (33).  Begin “Even the Rain” in class
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Imperialism &amp; Development</b>
02/07	MacNeill. 2017. “Development as Imperialism: Power and the Perpetuation of Poverty in Afro-Indigenous Communities of Coastal Honduras.” <i>Humanity &amp; Society</i> (41) 2.  Finish “Even the Rain” in class
02/09	News presentations, 1
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Intersectionality in Mexico</b>
02/14	Vega, Rosalynn. 2018. <i>No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico</i> . University of Texas Press. Intro & Ch 1 (p. 1-59).
02/16	Vega, Rosalynn. 2018. <i>No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico</i> . University of Texas Press. Ch 2 & 3 (p. 60-130).
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Transnational Inequalities</b>
02/21	Presidents’ Day, No class
02/23	Vega, Rosalynn. 2018. <i>No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico</i> . University of Texas Press. Ch 4 (131-152).

	Anzaldua, Gloria. 1987. <i>Borderlands (La Frontera): The New Mestiza</i> . Gloria Anzaldua.
02/24	Vega, Rosalynn. 2018. <i>No Alternative: Childbirth, Citizenship, and Indigenous Culture in Mexico</i> . University of Texas Press. Ch 5 & Conclusion (152 -204).
02/27	Abstract for Final Paper Due by Midnight
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>States, Inequality and Violence</b>
02/28	López, Matias. 2018. "States, Elites and Inequality in Latin America." <i>Sociology Compass</i> .
03/02	Bobeja, Lilian. 2010. "Organized Violence, Disorganized State" in <i>Violent Democracies in Latin America</i> , edited by Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Golstein. Duke University Press.
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
03/07	News presentations, 2
03/09	Exam 1
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>The Politics of Urban (Non)Violence</b>
03/14	Auyero, Javier & María Fernanda Berti. 2015. "In Harm's Way." Chapter 2.
03/16	Fahlberg, Anjuli. 2018. Rethinking Favela Governance: Nonviolent Politics in Rio de Janeiro's Gang Territories.
3/19-3/27	Spring Break
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Globalization &amp; Social Movements</b>
03/28	Almeida, Paul & Amalia Pérez Martín. 2020. "Economic Globalization and Social Movements in Latin America." <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Latin America</i> .
03/30	Palacios-Valladares, Indira. 2020. "Chile's 2019 October Protests and the Student Movement: Eventful Mobilization?" <i>Revista de Ciencia Política</i> (40) 2.  Guest speaker: Maya Velasquez
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
04/04	No class, Veterans' Day
04/06	News Presentations, 3

<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Gender &amp; Resistance in a Transnational Perspective</b>
04/11	Hernández, Raúl Diego Rivera. 2017. Making Absence Visible: The Caravan of Central American Mothers in Search of Disappeared Migrants. <i>Latin American Perspectives</i> (216) 44.
04/13	Stout, Noelle. 2015. "When a Yuma Meets Mama: Commodified Kin and the Affective Economies of Queer Tourism in Cuba." <i>Anthropological Quarterly</i> (88) 3.
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Social Change and Action</b>
04/18	Patriot's Day, No Class
04/20	News presentations, 4
04/22	Robinson, William. 2020. Don't Cry for Me, Latin America. <i>Human Geography</i> (13) 1.  Begin documentary: Student choice
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Putting it all together</b>
04/25	Finish documentary  Finish remaining presentations  Review
04/27	Exam 2
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Putting it all together</b>
05/02	Wrapping Up
05/11	Final Paper Due