**Syllabus**

**Introduction to Latin American and Caribbean Studies**

**LACS 101, Sec 001**

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

**Fall 2019**

**Instructor:** Prof. Aims McGuinness  
**Email:** smia@uwm.edu (mailto:smia@uwm.edu)  
**Office:** Holton 328.

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 11am-12pm and by appointment.

**Class Meetings:** MW, 9:30-10:45 p.m.

**Classroom:** Curtin Hall 124 (First Day, 9/4/19)

**Final Exam:** Monday, 12/16, 10:00-12:00 p.m. in Curtin Hall 124

**Note:** After the first day of class on 9/4/19, we will meet for most of our classes in the American Geographical Society Library (Golda Meir Library Building, 3rd Floor, East Wing). The professor will inform students in advance of any changes in venue. All exams (Exam 1, Exam 2 and Final Exam) will be held in Curtin Hall 124.

**I. Course Description and Goals**

**Q: “What is this course about?”**

This course provides students with an introduction to the field of Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Our approach is primary historical. We start with the formation of the continents of the Americas and proceed to the present day. Among the topics we will consider are the histories of agriculture, indigenous empires, colonialism, slavery, revolution, and nationalism. Throughout the course, we will also address issues of contemporary importance, including migration, refugees, climate change, trade, literature, and the arts.

**Q: “What are the goals of this course?”**

Students who succeed in this course will gain an introductory-level grounding in the following areas:

- Latin American and Caribbean Studies.
- Analysis of primary and secondary sources, especially maps.
- Writing, presenting, and storytelling.

**II. Required Work and Other Course Requirements**

**Q: “What are the required assignments for this course and how are they weighted?”**

- **Attendance and Participation** 20%

https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/213068/pages/syllabus?module_item_id=3123824
Presentation 1 (In Class) 5%

Exam 1 (In Class--Quiz and Short Essay) 5%

Paper 1--750 Words 5%

Presentation 2 (In Class) 5%

Exam 2 (In Class--Quiz and Short Essay) 10%

Paper 2--1,000 Words 10%

Presentation 3 (In Class) 5%

Final Paper--1,500 Words 15%

Final Exam (Quiz and Short Essay) 20%

Final Grade 100%

Q: “How do I learn about due dates?”

For an overview of due dates in the course, see “Schedule/Due Dates,” below.

Q: "How much reading is required for this course?"

This class requires a substantial amount of reading. The typical unit requires students to read at least 100 pages, and sometimes significantly more.

Q: “Does the class go outside?”

The class may take occasional “mini field trips” to relevant parts of the campus and surrounding neighborhoods during class time. Please dress in clothing that will permit you to be comfortable and safe outdoors. If you have a disability or any medical or other issues that prevent you from moving around the campus or surrounding neighborhoods, please bring them to my attention at the start of the semester or as soon as possible so that I may make appropriate accommodations.

Q: “Is there potentially disturbing content in this course?”

This course requires students to engage content that has been chosen because of its historical significance and relevance to the goals of the course. Some of the content is disturbing or potentially disturbing, including references to colonialism, conquest, discrimination in different forms, genocide,
sexual and other forms of violence, slavery, and war. The professor strives to address all content in a manner that is true to the past, scholarly, and respectful. If you have any concerns, please communicate directly with the professor via e-mail or in person.

III. Required Materials

Q: “What are the required materials for this course?”

Required materials consist of the following:

Required Book

Author: Chasteen, John Charles
Title: Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America
Publisher: Norton
Date: 2016
(either paperback or e-book is fine)

Q: "How do I gain access to the required book?"

There are three options for accessing the required book. Regardless of the option you choose, it is crucial that you secure regular access to the required book within one week of the start of the course. A lack of access to the readings is not a valid excuse for failing to complete an assignment on time.

Option 1: Check out the required book at the UW-Milwaukee Libraries Reserve Desk.

The required book may be checked out for a 2-hour period from Reserve Desk (Course Reserve) of the UW-Milwaukee Libraries Media and Reserve Library, which is located in the Golda Meir Library Building. For more information, visit: http://uwm.edu/libraries/media/.

Option 2: Purchase a book at UW-Milwaukee’s Virtual Bookstore.

You can find the website for the virtual bookstore here: http://uwm.ecampus.com/. Look for our term and course number and follow the instructions. In some cases, it may also be possible to rent the book.

Option 3: Purchase the required book from a non-university vendor.

You may find the required book for sale online by entering the ISBN number into an Internet search engine. This procedure will produce a list of businesses that sell the book. Make sure that the seller sends you the correct edition in time for you to complete assignments in a timely manner.

Q: “What happens if I buy the wrong edition of a book?”

Be careful that you do not purchase the wrong edition of a book. Only the edition of the book identified in the syllabus will enable you to pass this class. If you purchase the wrong book, you will have no choice but to secure access to the correct book.

IV. Grading and Assessment
Q: “What is the grading scale? Are grades curved?”

A: 93-100  C: 73-76  
A-: 90-92   C-: 70-72  
B+: 87-89   D+: 67-69  
B: 83-86     D: 63-66   
B-: 80-82    D-: 60-62  
C+: 77-79   F: 0-59

Course grades are not curved.

Q: "How do you assess and grade students' written work?"

For an overview, consult “Writing for this Course: Assessment and Grading,” located on the course website under Course Materials.

Q: “How does the professor calculate the grade for ‘Attendance and Participation’?”

Attendance is mandatory. After a student's fourth absence for any class, twenty (20) percentage points will be subtracted from the student's overall grade for “Attendance and Participation” for every subsequent absence. The only valid excuse for an absence is a medical emergency such as an accident or the contraction of an illness that either prevents the student from participating in class or poses a health risk to others, such as influenza. For a given absence to be excused, the student must present a signed note or other official documentation from a doctor, a nurse, or a similar medical professional.

Students will face a reduction in their grade for “Attendance and Participation” for a given class of twenty (20) points for each instance in which a given student arrives late or departs early. More points may be deducted for a given class if the lateness or earliness is more egregious.

The professor expects students to act in a respectful manner. Students are responsible for upholding and abiding by the community standards established by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin System. To review these standards and related policies, visit:

http://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/conduct_procedures/non-academic-misconduct/  
http://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/policies/

The participation component of the grade for “Attendance and Participation” reflects the professor’s assessment of the quality (not the quantity) of a student's contributions to discussions and participation in class activities, including any in-class writing assignments, storytelling exercises, games or pop quizzes. The professor uses different strategies to promote student learning in class, including nonfiction storytelling and games drawn from improvisational theater. Be prepared to participate and be called upon by the professor regardless of whether you have raised your hand or not. (The professor also strives to be a nice person.)

V. Technology
Q: “What technology is required for this course? Where can I get help?”

This course requires use of a web-based LMS (Learning Management System) named “Canvas,” which is available to all enrolled students at UW-Milwaukee and fully supported by the UW System.

For more about Canvas, including help and information about other technical requirements, visit: [https://uwm.edu/canvas/home/](https://uwm.edu/canvas/home/)

Regular, daily access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection is vital for use of Canvas and this course. Do not try to take this course using only a smartphone or a tablet.

I recommend that students take any required quizzes on a computer with a wired Internet connection, as any interruption in Internet service can result in loss of work. If students do not have a wired connection at home, they may use any computer in a UW-Milwaukee campus computer lab or visit a public library.

In addition, students must have access to the following:

- Word. (Word is available at no additional charge to all enrolled UW-Milwaukee students via Office 365.)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader. (Reader can be downloaded for free at the Adobe website.)
- Digital camera. (A smartphone camera is fine.)
- Pens and pencils.

It is imperative that students have regular access to adequate, reliable, technology throughout the term. A computer glitch, lost file, interrupted wireless connection, or any other technical problem cannot serve as an excuse for failure to complete an assignment on time.

Q: “Where do I go for help with other technology questions?”


Q: “What will I find on the course website?”

The specific tools in Canvas that I use vary from course to course and may include the following: Home, Announcements, Assignments, Discussions, Grades, and Syllabus.

Home

“Home” is the page that welcomes you after you have logged into Canvas and selected our course. This home page offers an overview of the entire course and access to each of the areas described below. “Home” is the by far the most useful of all the pages/tools in Canvas. When in doubt, go to “Home”!

On “Home,” you will find most of the content you need for the course organized by kind or “module,” including links to instructions for required readings and assignments.

Announcements

“Announcements” is where I put course announcements and reminders.
Assignments

“Assignments” is where you will find a list of graded assignments for the course, including discussions, quizzes, and essays. “Home” offers a much better overview of the work required for this course than "Assignments."

Discussions

"Discussions" is where you will find discussion assignments. (They can also be found under "Home" and "Assignments.")

Grades

“Grades” is where I will post your grades for the course as well as feedback in the form of completed rubrics. You will be able to access this section to see your extant grades throughout the term.

Syllabus

“Syllabus” is the place where you will find the course syllabus and links to specific assignments.

“Home” offers a much better overview of the work required for this course than “Syllabus.” The “Course Summary” feature of Canvas is poorly designed.

Q: “When is Canvas not available to me?”

Canvas may occasionally be taken down for scheduled maintenance. You can find information about any upcoming "outages" at the welcome screen that greets you after you log on.

Q: “How often do I need to log in to Canvas?”

You should expect to check the course website at least once per day to stay informed about any announcements, additions to the course website, posts to the Professor’s Blog, and the like. If religious observance or anything else prevents you from checking the website on any given day, please inform me at smia@uwm.edu.

Q: “How should I contact the professor if I have a question? What e-mail account should I use?”

All course-related e-mail communication should be conducted using UW-Milwaukee e-mail addresses. Your UW-Milwaukee e-mail address is your ePanther ID + @uwm.edu. Example: smia@uwm.edu.

Students who are new to UW-Milwaukee will receive an ePanther ID and a corresponding UW-Milwaukee e-mail address upon their enrollment.

I understand that it can feel like a nuisance to have to switch to a UW-Milwaukee e-mail account if you are not accustomed to using that account, especially if you are using the account only for the purposes of this course. Nevertheless, for technical reasons, I am only able to send messages to your UW-Milwaukee e-mail account. The good news is that you can easily forward e-mail received by your UW-Milwaukee account to your regular e-mail account if you wish. Consult the UW-Milwaukee Campus IT Support (Help Desk) for assistance: http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/ (http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/).
Although the most reliable way to reach the professor is via e-mail at smia@uwm.edu, you can also use the “Conversations” (“Inbox”) tool in Canvas to communicate with the professor.

Important: Please put our course number (132, 293, 600, etc.) in the subject line of all your e-mail messages to me. I receive many messages every day. By placing the course number in the subject line, you make it easier for me to locate and respond to your message.

VI. Course and University Policies

Q: “What is the course policy on late assignments?”

This course moves very quickly. To discourage students from falling behind, the course places severe limits on the submission of late assignments.

Any assignment that is turned in one (1) day after the due date will be subject to a grade reduction of 10%.

Any assignment that is turned in two (2) days late will be subject to a grade reduction of 15%.

Any assignment that is turned in three-seven (3-7) days late will be subject to a grade reduction of 20%.

Papers that are not turned in within one week (7 days) after the due date will receive a "0." In other words, if a paper is due on the seventh (7th) day of the month, it will automatically receive a "0" if it is not submitted by the fourteenth (14th) day of the month.

Q: “What are UW-Milwaukee's policies regarding students with disabilities, religious observances, etc.?”

Please consult the following link for a list of official, university-wide policies:


Q: “What are the university and course policies regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct?”

The University of Wisconsin System defines academic misconduct as follows:

"Academic misconduct is an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation [plagiarism], uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise, forges or falsifies academic documents or records, intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others, engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance, or assists other students in any of these acts."

Plagiarism is an instance of academic misconduct. According to the official policy of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, plagiarism includes:

1. Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them; or,

2. Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them; or,
3. Paraphrasing materials or ideas of others without identifying the sources.

The UWM policies and procedures concerning plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are available here: [https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/](https://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/).

It is the policy of this course that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized sharing of answers to quizzes will result in the failure not only of the assignment in which the misconduct occurs but also of the entire course.

**Q: "How much time do I need to devote to this course?"**

This is a 3-credit course. In conformance with a mandate from the U.S. Department of Education, students may expect to devote as many as 135 hours to this class during the term in order to achieve the learning goals of this course. Work in this context includes completing the required readings, writing discussion posts and essays, and preparing for and taking quizzes.

**Q: "How do I become a LACUSL major or minor?"**

Find more information here: [https://uwm.edu/latin-american-caribbean-us-latino-studies/](https://uwm.edu/latin-american-caribbean-us-latino-studies/)

Remember that all students in the College of Letters & Science need to declare and complete an academic major to graduate. If you have not yet declared a major, the College encourages you to do so as soon as possible, even if you're just starting your college career.

**VII. Schedule/Due Dates**

**Q: “How does a ‘time slot’ work”?**

A “time slot” is a window of time during which an assignment is available. Instructions, requirements, and other basic information about an assignment become visible to students at the start of the time slot. The deadline (due date) of any given assignment is at 11:59 p.m. (one minute before midnight) on the last day of the time slot.

All times/dates in this class are in Central Time (Wisconsin).

For example, imagine that “Unit 1 Quiz” has a time limit of 60 minutes and is located in the following time slot: 6/30-7/3. This means that the quiz becomes visible to students at 12 a.m. on 6/30. Students may start the 60-minute quiz at any point during the time slot. Once they start the quiz, however, they only have 60 minutes to complete it. The quiz must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on 7/3.

My advice is to pick a window of time to take the quiz at some point during the time slot—in this case, 6/30-7/3. Do not wait too long to start the quiz. You can still start the quiz on the last day of the time slot, but don’t stress yourself by starting to close to the final deadline, which is always 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the time slot.

**Note:** The information below is subject to change. Always refer to the course website for official due dates as well as specific instructions for readings, discussion posts, quizzes, and essays.
See the Canvas website for individual unit assignments, including readings and other required work.

Unit 1 (9/4): Introduction to the Course

Unit 2 (9/9 & 9/11)

- Readings (see Canvas website for this and future reading assignments)

Unit 3 (9/16 & 9/18)

- Readings

Unit 4 (9/23 & 9/25)

- Readings
- Presentation 1 (In Class on 9/23 and 9/25)

Unit 5 (9/30 & 10/2)

- Readings
- Exam 1 (In Class--Quiz and Short Essay) on Wednesday, 10/2 in Curtin 124
- Paper 1 due 10/4

Unit 6 (10/7 & 10/9)

- Readings

Unit 7 (10/14 & 10/16)

- Readings

Unit 8 (10/21 & 10/23)

- Readings
- Presentation 2 (In Class on 10/21 & 10/23)

Unit 9 (10/28 & 10/30)

- Readings
- Exam 2 (In Class--Quiz and Short Essay) on Wednesday, 10/30 in Curtin 124
- Paper 2 due Friday, 11/1

Unit 10 (11/4 & 11/6)

- Readings

Unit 11 (11/11 & 11/13)

- Readings

Unit 12 (11/18 & 11/20)

- Readings
Unit 13 (11/25--No Class on 11/27 due to Thanksgiving Break)

- Readings

Unit 14 (12/2 & 12/4)

- Readings

Unit 15 (12/9 & 12/11)

- Readings
- Presentation 3 (In Class on 12/9 & 12/11)
- Final Paper due Friday, 12/13
- Final Exam: Monday 12/16, 10:00-12 p.m. in Curtin 124

Summary of Due Dates for Papers, Exams, Presentations and Poster

Presentation 1 (In Class)
Unit 3--Classes of 9/23 & 9/25

Exam 1 (In Class--Quiz and Short Essay)
Wednesday, 10/2 in Curtin 124

Paper 1
Due: 10/4

Presentation 2 (In Class)
Unit 8--Classes of 10/21 & 10/23

Exam 2
Wednesday, 10/30 in Curtin 124

Paper 2
Due: Friday, 11/1

Presentation 3 (In Class)
Due: Unit 15--Classes of 12/9 & 12/11

Final Paper
Due: Friday, 12/13

Final Exam
Monday, 12/16, 10-12 p.m. in Curtin 124