CULTURES OF LATIN AMERICA
THEME FOR 2005-06: “THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEMOCRACY”
(ANT 150)

Course Syllabus

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course brings an anthropological lens to bear on a key characteristic of present-day Latin American societies: democracy. Since 1991, every country in Latin America except Cuba has been ruled by an elected leader, most of whom have been civilians coming to power in constitutional democracies and on the tails of authoritarian or dictatorial regimes. In the early years of the 21st century, most Latin Americans now find themselves living in societies where democratic governance is firmly established and where neoliberal development policies and projects (such as NAFTA) implemented in the 1990s have placed national economies in complex, dependent relationships with the economies of North America and Europe. While much scholarship has addressed the more formal aspects of these so-called “transitions to democracy” (e.g., regime shifts, political parties and formal political institutions), it is only recently that attention has turned to what it is like to actually live in one of these contemporary societies.

Course readings and lectures will focus on how ordinary citizens and grassroots groups have made sense of large-scale process of “redemocratization” and neoliberal economic policy, processes which have brought about complex re-positionings of state and civil society, increased economic inter-linkage throughout the Americas, expansion, intensification, and internationalization of mass media, and a proliferation of public discourses on democracy. A key focus in this course will be to consider how ordinary citizens are encouraged to view themselves in complex new ways in relation to nation, to government, and to the collective identities underlying many social movements. Drawing from a range of rich ethnographic accounts, framed with background historical readings, this course will focus on lived experience at the intersection of these local, national and transnational processes. Readings will address eight present-day Latin American nations, with particular attention on Brazil.

Throughout the course, case studies will be related to a range of contemporary theorizations of democracy and related concepts such as globalization, transnationalism, citizenship, economic development and the public sphere.

READINGS & SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS
There are two required texts for this course, both available for purchase at the Emory Bookstore. While copies of both books will be placed on reserve at Woodruff Library, it is strongly recommended that these books be purchased, given the amount of time to be invested in each. Additional readings will be available as PDF files, and can be accessed online at Woodruff Library’s eReserves (https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/reserves/). Readings should be carried out in the order listed for each class assignment.
Required Texts

A handful of films will be shown during this course. These are a required part of the course and to be taken as seriously as lectures and readings. Films will be shown at a mutually convenient time, typically the evening prior to the relevant class. When a student is unable to attend a group showing, the film can be viewed individually at the Multimedia Library. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm in advance availability for individual showings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION AND GRADING
Assignments & Grading
Final grades will be based on a total of 100 possible points (100-98 = A+; 97-93 = A; 92-90 = A-; 89-88 = B+; 87-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-78 = C+; 77-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-68 = D+; 67-63 = D; 62-60 = D-; 59-below = F), calculated from the sum total of the following four components: Analytic Papers (60 points), Reading Summaries (16 points), LearnLink Postings (10 points), and Group Presentations/Classroom Participation (14 points). Details on these assignments and grading are as follows:

Analytic Papers x 3 (60%)
During the semester, students are required to turn in three papers, each a critical engagement with one week’s material from the syllabus. Students will sign up at the beginning of the semester for weeks of their choice. Papers should draw from readings and lectures to engage key questions, debates and ethnographic accounts. Analytic papers are generally due on a Friday, one week subsequent to the completion of the given course section. These papers can be up to five double-spaced pages and should follow the written assignment guidelines below. Papers will be assessed and marked with a standard letter grade; each paper is worth 20% of the final grade, adding up to a total of 60 points possible.

Reading Summaries x 8 (16%)
Once a week (beginning Week 2), students are required to write a short summary of assigned readings. Students may choose whether they prefer to summarize readings for Tuesday or Thursday’s class, and this can vary by week according to the student’s schedule. These write-ups should be no more than one single-spaced page and should summarize key themes and questions, as well as arguments or theoretical frameworks, elaborated in the given set of readings. When the readings include ethnographic case studies, research setting and methodology should also be included; writing should be synthetic and concise. These summaries should be submitted via e-mail no later than Thursday at noon for summaries of Tuesday’s readings, and Friday at 5pm for summaries of Thursday’s readings. Late submissions will not be accepted. Students do not need to turn in summaries during weeks when they will turn in an analytic paper. With these three weeks (plus the first week) thus excluded, summary papers will be turned in on eight weeks.
Summaries will receive one of four possible assessments, corresponding to a 10-point scale: “excellent” (10 pts), “good” (8 pts), “needs improvement but acceptable” (6 pts) and “not acceptable” (0 pts). These totals will be divided by five to enter into calculations for final grade (with a total of 16 points possible). Students may elect to turn in more than eight summaries; the top eight grades only will enter into the final grade.

LearnLink Postings (10%)
Prior to each class (and beginning Week 2), students are required to post to the course’s LearnLink site up to three questions related to assigned readings. These can be questions raised in the readings or questions about the reading (including confusion about reading content or requests for clarification). These questions will then inform classroom discussion. Questions must be posted by midnight prior to the date on which the readings are due. Over the course of ten weeks of biweekly reading sets, 20 postings will be required. These postings will not be graded; rather, for each on-time posting made, a half point will be applied toward the final grade. Hence, students stand to gain 10 points.

Classroom Discussion and Group Presentations (14%)
This course will be run as an intensive, focused seminar, with periodic lectures, but principally driven by discussion. Students are expected to come to each class meeting prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. Twice during the semester, each student will participate, along with 2-3 others, in a group presentation to introduce the day’s assigned readings, with 10-15 minutes of opening remarks. The quality of group presentations and regular class participation will be worth up to 14 points in final grading calculations.

COURSE POLICIES
Written Assignment Guidelines
Analytic papers and summaries should have one-inch margins and be in Times New Roman font (size 12). Ideally, summaries will be typed into a Microsoft Word document, to be e-mailed to the instructor. For analytic papers, hardcopy, stapled versions should be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. E-mailed or unstapled versions will not be accepted. Please spell-check your writing before turning it in.

Classroom Conduct
Students are expected to attend each class meeting, and attendance will be taken. More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final course grade by one half unit (i.e., from a “B” to a “B-”). Please arrive punctually. If you are late or miss class, contact a classmate as soon as possible to get class notes, assignments, etc.

Deadlines and Extra Credit
As the summary paper guidelines include an opportunity to raise one’s grade through extra work no extra credit assignments will be allowed. For the same reasons, no extensions (short of a documented health emergency) will be given.
Honor Code
All academic work must meet the standards of Emory University’s Honor Code (https://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/students/honor.html). Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards.

Student Support
Please let me know (either via e-mail or during office hours) if you experience substantial difficulty or distress for any reason. In addition to the resources of the department, there are several services available through the College and University to support your academic and personal success. Students are encouraged to drop by office hours to chat about readings and related course themes.

WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTIONS

Tuesday – Course Overview: Themes & Logistics

Thursday – “Post-Authoritarian” Latin American Societies: An Overview (lecture and discussion)

WEEK 2 – THEORIES OF DEMOCRACY & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Tuesday – What is “democracy”? An overview of theoretical approaches (lecture and discussion)

Thursday – Social Movements and Political Culture (lecture and discussion)
• Jeffrey Rubin. “Culture and Democracy in Latin America: Crucibles of Democracy and Circuitous Pathways of Historical Change.” Unpublished manuscript

WEEK 3 – INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENTS I: THE ZAPATISTAS, MEXICO

Tuesday – Chiapas

FILM: Blossoms of Fire (Date TBA)

Thursday – Juchitan
• Jeffrey Rubin. 1998. “Ambiguity and Contradiction in a Radical Popular Movement,” in Alvarez et al., eds., Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures, pp. 141-164

FILM: Todos Santos (Date TBA)

WEEK 4 – INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENTS II: GUATEMALA & BRAZIL

Tuesday – Guatemala: The Pan-Mayan Movement

Thursday – Brazil: Claims on the Amazon, Issues of Resettlement
WEEK 5 – EXPERIMENTS IN PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY:  
THE PORTO ALEGRE EXPERIENCE (BRAZIL)

Tuesday – Theories of Participatory Democracy; Introduction to Porto Alegre

FILM: *Doing the Right Thing* (in class)


Thursday – Discussion, continued; Ethnographic accounts

FILM: *Participatory Budgeting: Here Popular Participation Speaks* (in class)

- Benjamin Junge, Ethnographic Account of Participatory Budgeting Meetings

WEEK 6 – BRAZILIAN MOVEMENTS & MOBILIZATIONS, CONT’D

FILM: *Strong Roots and Land for Rose* (Date TBA)

Tuesday – Mobilization of Landless Rural Workers and New Relationships between State and Civil Society


FILM: *Batidania* (Date TBA)
Thursday – Music, Performance, and Resistance: The Afro-Reggae Cultural Group and Race in Brazil


WEEK 7 – BRAZILIAN MOVEMENTS & MOBILIZATIONS, CONT’D

Tuesday – The Lesbian & Gay Rights Movement: Questions of Identity and Globalization

- Richard Parker. 1999. Beneath the Equator: Cultures of Desire, Male Homosexuality, and Emerging Gay Communities in Brazil, pp. 101-123

Thursday – Brazil, continued


WEEK 8: STATE AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS: ARGENTINA, CHILE, AND COLOMBIA

Tuesday – Conceptual Framework and Case Study (Colombia)


Thursday – Case Studies (Argentina and Chile)


**WEEK 9 – MEXICAN EXPERIENCES OF NEOLIBERAL POLICY**

**Tuesday** – Experiences of NAFTA


**Thursday** – Migration and National Boundaries


**WEEK 10 – FURTHER TOPICS**

**Tuesday** – Microenterprise and Development Discourse


**Thursday** – Race, Ethnicity and Democracy


**WEEK 11 – DRUGS & CRIME**

**FILM: City of God (Date TBA)**

**Tuesday** – Brazil and Mexico


**Thursday** – Bolivia & Colombia

**WEEK 12 – CONSOLIDATIONS**

**Tuesday** –

**Thursday** – Review and Final Discussions; course evaluations