

Spring 2009 courses

ANTH 328: The Maya

Instructor: Cynthia Robin

What was life like for the ancient Maya people who inhabited what is now Central America? This course examines one of the best-known pre-Columbian civilizations in the New World: Ancient Maya civilization. The course will focus on the achievements of the ancient Maya – considered one of the most advanced civilizations in history – prior to the Spanish conquest in ca. 1500 AD. We will look at the archaeology – from temples and cities to farmers’ homes and fields – to explore ancient Maya daily lives. We will explore the Maya hieroglyphic writing system which gives us insight into Maya beliefs, religion, and worldview. Major topics will include the rise of ancient Maya civilization and the ancient Maya social, economic, and political systems, subsistence, and religion.

ART_HIS 228: Introduction to Pre-Colombian Art

Instructor: Mary J. Weismantel

This course surveys the major artistic traditions of the Americas in the millennia before Columbus, including the Aztec, Maya, and Inca. In addition to introducing students to these art styles, the focus of the course is on the relationship between art and other facets of intellectual and social life, including science and the management of the environment; mathematics and calendrics; gender and social inequality; religion and cosmology; politics and empire.

ART_HIS 367-20: Special Topics in American Art: Colonial Latin American Art

Instructor: Ana-Maria Reyes

Colonial Art in the Viceroyalties of New Spain (Mexico) and Peru: This course looks at the visual production in the Spanish colonies of New Spain (Mexico) and Peru (Andes) between the moment of conquest to the eve of independence. It asks fundamental questions for the study of art such as: How does one reconcile Western notions of “art” with non-Western indigenous traditions? How does one account for the colonial context (violent exchange, subjugation, and resistance) in image production? The concept of “Art” was foreign to the American pre-conquest world and therefore the clash of two cosmologies, Amer-Indian and Euro-Christian, produced a visual culture that rests uneasily on any traditional definition. “New Spain” and “Peru” were products of Western imagination constructed upon notions of socio-economic exchange. This course is divided into two geographical sections which correspond roughly to modern Mexico and modern Peru/Bolivia; and is subdivided into three temporal sections, each addressing their own socio-historical challenges: an early period (conquest) period, and middle period (roughly coincides with a Hapsburg dynasty) and a late period (The Bourbon dynasty and proto-nationalist era). These categories are all fluid, and in relation to art, are more relevant in terms of context than style since the very nature of the colonial society connotes a coexistence of different styles and agendas. Underlying the general sequence of the

course is the understanding that BOTH Amerindian and Western traditions were fundamentally changed by each other. **PREREQUISITES:** One prior art history course, or permission of instructor.

HISTORY 392/395-31: The British Caribbean, 1834-1945

Instructor: Darcy Heuring

Britain's West Indian colonies were the oldest in its Empire, and for the first 150 years, its wealthiest. But by the early twentieth century, these colonies were known as the slums of the Empire. This seminar will explore the ways peoples of these colonies—both colonized and colonizer—were involved in and affected by crucial political, economic, social and cultural changes that occurred between the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 and the end of the Second World War, when Britain began to recognize a measure of self-government in the region. Major themes of the course will include the meaning of 'freedom' and the responsibilities of imperialism, social and moral as well as political and economic.

POLI_SCI 353: Latin American Politics

Instructor: Gabriela Nava-Campos

This course introduces students to the politics of Latin America. The main goal is to develop a general understanding of the most important trends in the region's contemporary history such as authoritarianism, economic liberalization, and democratization. The course will also explore the main implications of these major transformations – including inequality, social unrest, problems of institutional design and consolidation, and economic development. While the focus is on the whole region, the politics of specific countries will also be considered. No previous knowledge of Latin America is required or expected.

PORT 397: Brazilian Culture and Civilization

Instructor: Ana C. Thome Williams

Possible topics include Festivals, Celebrations, Music and Dance, Regional Economy and Traditions, Orality and Oral Culture in the Lusophone World, Socio-linguistic Issues. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

SPANISH 261: Literature in Latin America since 1888

Instructor: Jorge Coronado

A survey of the modern period, including modernismo, the historical avant-garde, the "Boom," and recent literary trends. Authors such as Delmira Agustini, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Rubén Darío, Gabriel García Márquez, José Martí, Pablo Neruda, Cristina Peri Rossi, Elena Poniatowska.

SPANISH 361: Latin America: Studies in Culture and Society

Instructor:

Analysis of the history of culture in Latin America with an emphasis on the intersection of politics, society, and literature and on the relationship between literary and visual culture.

SPANISH 395: Special Topics: Real & Imaginary Spaces in Latin American Literature

Instructor: Margarita Saona

Latin American literature has imagined a variety of spaces throughout the 20th century: inhospitable forests, frontiers to be conquered, cities that transform themselves at a vertiginous rate, the Aleph as a spot that contains the Universe. The purpose of this class is to let students explore those spaces as they get acquainted with some of the most relevant texts of this period. The readings will be guided by questions such as “why does this story require this particular space?” “what are the verbal strategies used to construct this space?” “what does this representation of space tell us about the society in which this text is produced?”

THEATER 369: Latin American Theatre

Instructor: Ana E. Puga

This class focuses on how playwrights from Mexico, Cuba, and the United States grapple with Latin American and US Latina/o history. We start from the premise that exploring character psychology is important, but gives us only partial understanding of a theatrical work. To more completely appreciate and richly stage a play we must understand its artistic strategies as part of the historical and political conditions to which it responds. To put it simply: What world does this play come from and how does it try to change that world? If staged here and now, how might it change our world? We will read works by the Mexican playwrights Sabina Berman, Carlos Fuentes, Javier Malpica, and Hugo Salcedo; by the Mexican-American Luis Valdez; and by the Cuban-Americans Nilo Cruz, Maria Irene Fornes, Eduardo Machado, and Dolores Prida. The plays are divided into five units focused on different historical/political phenomena: the Mexican Revolution and the legend of Pancho Villa, the migration of Mexican divas to Hollywood, the post-1985 migration of Mexicans to the United States, the Cuban Revolution and the rule of Fidel Castro, and the post-1959 exile of Cubans to the United States. Students will independently research, with the professor’s guidance, at least two of these elements, in order to inform their analyses of the plays. Assignments are intended to challenge students to imagine how their historically informed reading would be applied in a real-world setting, as actors, designers, directors, or dramaturges involved in the staging of a theatrical work. Previous theatrical experience is not required.

LATIN_AM 251: Intro to Latino/a Studies

Instructor: Beatriz Badikian Gartler

This course seeks to introduce students to the range of issues and analytical approaches that form the foundation of Latin@ studies. By tracing the history of the “Latina/o” concept in relation to

key elements of sociocultural life, such as time, space, identity, community, power, language, nation, and rights, students will develop understandings of the particular ways in which Latina/o studies takes shape as an intellectual and political enterprise. On a practical level, this course aims to balance depth and breadth in its study of the variety of perspectives and experiences that come to be understood as Latin@. Thus, we will analyze the histories of predominant Latina/o sub-groups, such as Mexicans, Chicanas/os, and Puerto Ricans, while also incorporating broader considerations of the ways in which Central America, South America, and the Caribbean play crucial roles in constituting Latinidad.

LATIN_AM 351: Language, Ideology & Latina/o Identity

Instructor: Jonathan Daniel Rosa

This course aims to shed light on the history, creation, experience, and implications of Latin@ identities by focusing on language as a starting point for analysis. Such an approach positions ideas about language as lenses through which to investigate aspects of identity that too often escape both popular and scholarly attention. We will address issues such as socialization, standardization, symbolic power, linguistic nationalism, stigmatization, bilingualism/bidialectalism, codeswitching/styleshifting, “accent,” and language policy. These areas of concentration will interrogate folk notions about the nature of Spanglish,” “Ebonics,” and what it might mean to “sound Latin@.” The goal is to draw upon tools developed in linguistic anthropology, anthropological linguistics, and sociolinguistics, as well as other approaches to social and cultural analysis, in order to contribute to understandings of the complex ways in which Latin@ identities take shape in the contemporary moment.