



**Latin American Studies Program  
(Department of History)**

LAST 311  
Critical Contemporary Issues in Latin America  
Winter 2020

**Instructor:** Hendrik Kraay  
**Office:** SS 624  
**Phone Number:** 403-220-6410  
**Email:** kraay@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** MF 11:00-11:50, W 9:00-9:50  
**Class Time:** MWF 10:00-10:50  
**Location:** EDC 388

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to contemporary Latin America (the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of the Americas). The first two-thirds of the course provide an overview of recent social and economic trends in the region, while the last third of the course focuses on a selection of problems and issues. This semester, these are likely to include migration; protest movements in the region (especially in Chile and Bolivia); and crime and corruption. Other issues to be considered may include the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, the Bolivian election, Canada–Latin America relations, democracy, social welfare programs, and natural resource extraction. Additional issues may become important in the next three months and we will endeavor to take them into account.

**Course Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to do the following:

1. Identify and explain the significance of the major issues in contemporary Latin America and their relevance for Canada.
2. Explain the significance of major socioeconomic indicators for Latin American countries and the differences among them.
3. Analyze (orally and in writing) news articles on Latin America by identifying the type of article and assessing the assumptions that frame the article.
4. Write an analysis of a major issue in contemporary Latin America, either in the form of a briefing based primarily on media articles or in the form of a research essay based primarily on academic sources.

**Required Texts:**

Phillip Berryman, *Latin America at 200: A New Introduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).

*The History Student's Handbook* (available on the course D2L site).

Additional Newspaper and Magazine Articles To Be Announced Weekly and Delivered via D2L.

**Evaluation:**

<b>Assessment Method</b>	<b>Due Dates (See Below for Description)</b>	<b>Weight</b>
News Article Analysis Essay I	5 February	10%
Mid-Term Examination	28 February	20%
News Article Analysis Essay II	2, 9, 16, 23, or 30 March (Date To Be Selected)	10%
Participation in News Articles Discussions	Throughout the Semester	5%
Proposal for Research Paper or Contemporary Issue Briefing	13 March	5%
Research Paper or Contemporary Issue Briefing	3 April	25%
Final Examination	18-29 April (To Be Scheduled by the Registrar)	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Class Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Textbook Reading</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Due Dates</b>
13-17 January	<b><i>Introduction to Latin America</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , introduction and chap. 1.	
20-24 January	<b><i>Urban Challenges</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 2.	20 Jan.: News Articles Discussion

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Textbook Reading</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Due Dates</b>
27-31 January	<b><i>Agriculture in Transition</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 3.	27 Jan.: News Articles Discussion 29 Jan.: Library Session (TFDL 440, Learning Room)
3-6 February	<b><i>Economic Structures</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chaps. 4, 13.	3 Feb.: News Articles Discussion 5 Feb.: News Article Analysis Essay I Due
10-14 February	<b><i>Growth with Sustainability</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 5.	10 Feb.: News Articles Discussion
17-21 February	No Classes – Reading Week	
24-28 February	<b><i>Class and Inequality</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 6.	24 Feb.: News Articles Discussion 28 Feb.: Mid-Term Examination
2-6 March	<b><i>Overcoming Legacies of Conquest and Slavery</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 7.	2 March: News Articles Discussion
9-13 March	<b><i>Gender and Religion</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chaps. 8-9.	9 March: News Articles Discussion 13 March: Research Paper Proposal or Contemporary Issue Briefing Proposal Due
16-20 March	<b><i>Governance and Corruption</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chaps. 14-15.	16 March: News Articles Discussion
23-27 March	<b><i>Governance and Corruption</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chaps. 14-15.	23 March: News Articles Discussion
30 March-3 April	<b><i>Latin America in the World</i></b> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chap. 16-17.	30 March: News Articles Discussion 3 April: Research Paper or Contemporary Issue Briefing Due

Date	Topic & Textbook Reading	Assignments & Due Dates
6-8 April	<i>Latin America in the World</i> Berryman, <i>Latin America</i> , chaps. 16-17.	
13 April	Non-Instructional Day – No Class	
15 April	<i>Review</i>	

### Description of Course Assignments

**Submission of Written Assignments:** All written assignments should be submitted in Word format to the D2L course dropbox.

**News Article Analysis Essay I (Due 5 February):** Students will select a news article on Latin America from a newspaper or newsmagazine to which the University of Calgary subscribes, published in the previous 30 days, of at least 700 words in length, and write a short essay (no more than 500 words) that identifies the type of article that it is (news report, editorial, opinion, analysis), identifies the periodical in which it was published, summarizes the main points of the news article, considers how the journalist frames the issues, and relates it to the themes of this course. Questions that may be addressed in these short essays include the following: What assumptions are embedded in the article? Is the journalist in favor or opposed to the developments discussed in the article? How does the journalist frame the issues? How does this article relate to themes of this course? What does the issue addressed in this article (or the way that it is presented) tell us about contemporary Latin America?

The assignment should include both the full citation of the newspaper article (e.g. John Smith [if there is a byline], “Bolivian Election Likely To Be Interesting,” *Podunkville Times*, 15 January 2020.) and the URL that links directly to the article through the University of Calgary library. After you paste the URL into your document, test it to make sure that it works.

Further instructions for this assignment will be distributed in January. On 29 January, LAST 311 will meet in TFDL 440 (Learning Room) for a hands-on session about conducting research in news media in the library’s databases.

**Mid-Term Examination (28 February):** The in-class mid-term examination will consist of short-answer questions in the form of “Identify and explain the significance of four of the following seven terms for contemporary Latin America.” It will be based on the lectures and the readings for first six weeks of this course.

**News Article Analysis Essay II (and Small-Group Discussion Leadership) (Due on Dates to Be Selected in March):** This is a multi-part assignment that includes the following steps:

1. By noon on the Thursday prior to the Monday class during which you will lead a

- group discussion, submit the full publication information and the University of Calgary Library URL of the news article that you have chosen on the course D2L site. Please ensure that your article is not one that has already been discussed. This article should be from a newspaper or newsmagazine to which the University of Calgary subscribes, published in the previous 30 days (7 days is preferable), and at least 700 words in length. Depending on the size of the class, you may be asked to pair up with another student when selecting your article.
2. By 8:00 am on the Monday that you will lead a small-group discussion, submit your News Article Analysis Essay on the course D2L site. This essay should follow the same format as your first News Article Analysis Essay (see the instructions above).
  3. Prepare a three-minute presentation on your article, based on the points raised in your News Article Analysis Essay, and consider how it relates to the other articles selected for discussion that day.

By 5:00 pm on the Thursday prior to the Monday discussions, links to the news articles will be posted on the course D2L site. All students should read all of the articles prior to the Monday classes in preparation for the discussions.

Students are encouraged to select a news article that relates to their research paper or to their contemporary issue briefing topic or to one of the course themes.

**Participation:** This is an often-misunderstood component of the course grade. It is based on the quality and frequency of your participation in the news article discussions that will start most Monday classes. It is not a grade for attendance but, of course, attendance is a necessary prerequisite for quality participation. These discussions will involve group work.

**Research Paper or Contemporary Issue Briefing:** You will write either a research paper on a contemporary issue in Latin America or a briefing on a contemporary issue in Latin America directed at a government agency, non-governmental organization, or business. Both the essay or the briefing should be about 2,000 words in length and must include footnotes and a bibliography that conform to the style mandated in *The History Student's Handbook*. It is your choice whether you will write a research paper or a contemporary issue briefing.

**Additional Requirements for the Research Paper:** The research paper should be based primarily on academic sources, both academic books and scholarly articles. The bibliography should include at least six to eight substantial academic or scholarly sources. This is a minimum, and good research papers always have substantially longer bibliographies. This bibliography should be supplemented by two to four news articles related to the topic. There are two parts to this assignment.

- a) **Proposal (Due before 13 March):** The proposal should include your preliminary bibliography and a set of questions, the answer(s) to which will constitute your thesis. The following questions may give you some ideas for how to approach this part of the research paper proposal for a research paper on the issue of corruption in Latin America: What explanations have scholars from different disciplines offered for the prevalence of corruption in the region? What do scholars from different disciplines consider to be the main social, economic, and political results of corruption? How do scholars explain the

different levels of corruption in the region? What solutions to the problems of corruption have scholars offered? Why, according to them, have these solutions succeeded or failed? If your grade on the research paper is higher than the grade on your proposal, I will raise the latter to the same grade as the research paper. Proposals received after 13 March will not be eligible to be raised to the same grade as the research paper.

- b) **Research Paper (Due 3 April):** The final research paper should be submitted to the D2L dropbox by the end of the day on 3 April. Late research papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day.

**Additional Requirements for the Briefing on a Contemporary Issue:** The briefing on a contemporary issue should be based primarily on news articles. The bibliography should include at least ten news articles published in the last year on the issue that you choose. This is a minimum and good briefings always have substantially longer bibliographies. This bibliography of news articles should be supplemented by two to four academic books or scholarly articles on the topic. Note that you will only be able to do this assignment for a topic that has received sufficient media attention in the last year.

The briefing should be directed at a government agency, non-governmental organization, or business and should provide a background discussion of the issue, an analysis of the implications of this issue for the organization or institution to which the briefing is directed, recommendations for what the organization or institution should do, and an evaluation of the risks that it faces if it takes or does not take the recommended actions. The analysis should be informed by the news articles and the scholarly sources.

- a) **Proposal (Due before 13 March):** The proposal should include a preliminary bibliography of at least ten news articles on the topic, as well as two to four scholarly sources. It should clearly indicate the organization to which it is directed and should include a list of questions or issues that the briefing will address. The following questions could structure a briefing on the Venezuelan refugee crisis for the Canadian government: Why have so many people left Venezuela? Who are they? Where have they gone? What are the principal obstacles that they face in the places that they are finding refuge? In what ways is this refugee crisis affecting Canada? What can Canada do about this? What has Canada done about this crisis? What should Canada do about this crisis? What will be the likely results of these policy decisions? If your grade on the briefing on a contemporary issue is higher than the grade on your proposal, I will raise the latter to the same grade as the briefing. Proposals received after 13 March will not be eligible to be raised to the same grade as the research paper.
- b) **Briefing on a Contemporary Issue (Due 3 April):** The final briefing should be submitted to the D2L dropbox by the end of the day on 3 April. Late briefings will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day.

**Final Examination:** A comprehensive final examination will be held during the examination period (18-29 April). Do not make travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted.

## Additional Information

**Access to Readings:** The textbook is available for purchase at the bookstore and one copy is available on library reserve. All additional readings owned by the University of Calgary Library will be made available through the links on the course D2L site in conformity with the University of Calgary's interpretation of the Copyright Act.

**Policy on Electronic Devices in the Classroom:** During class time, please turn off and put away your cell phones. If you use tablet or notebook computer to the class to take notes, please disable the wireless access so that you are not distracted by incoming e-mail or tempted by Facebook or the many other distractions that the internet offers.

**Office Hours:** Please come to see me during scheduled office hours, especially if you are having difficulty with this course. If you cannot meet me during this time, we can consult briefly after class or schedule an appointment for another time. Feel free to telephone me during office hours, or to e-mail me at any time. I usually answer e-mails at the end of the workday and normally do not attend to student e-mails on weekends.

**Do You Need Any Other Help?** This course is intended for all University of Calgary students, and I am committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you have any foreseen or unanticipated conditions or circumstances that require reasonable accommodations, you are encouraged to contact the campus resources outlined below or to contact me by e-mail, phone, or during office hours to discuss how I can help you to be successful in this course.

**Departmental Grading System:** The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

### Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC) in SS 102, call 403-220-3580, email [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca), or book an appointment with an ASC advisor at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate>.
- For further information on academic advising and degree planning for arts students, see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising>.
- For registration issues, paying fees, and assistance with MyUofC, contact Enrolment Services in MacKimmie Tower Room 116, call 403-210-ROCK (7625), or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/>.
- **Attention history majors:** History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.
- Registration Changes and Exemption Requests: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals>

**Writing:** All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in the History Student's Handbook.

D2L: Throughout the course, important material such as lecture outlines and study guides will be regularly posted on D2L. Students are advised to check this regularly.

**Red Box Policy:** If your instructor requires paper copies of an essay and/or assignment, and the essay/assignment can be handed in outside of class, you can drop them in the red box located outside of the History Department office (Social Sciences, Room 656). Please include the following information on your assignment: 1) **course name and number**, 2) **instructor**, 3) **your name**, and 4) **your student number**. Assignments received after 4:00 p.m. are date stamped the next business day. We do not time stamp any papers. Please do not bring your paper into the office to be stamped. The box is emptied at 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.



**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. Please see [The History Student's Handbook](#).

Plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar*, [Section K](#).

**Academic Accommodations:** The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy). Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy). Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should contact, preferably in writing, the course instructor.

**Copyright:** The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

**Other Useful Information:**

- Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

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