

**Topics in Latin American History: Social History of the Cuban Revolution
HIST 355/555 • Spring 2017**

**University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Tuesdays 11:00 am to 1:50 p.m., 212 CCC**

Instructor: Dr. Anju Reejsinghani Office Hours: Mondays, 5 to 8 p.m.
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Course Description

This course explores the Cuban Revolution of 1953-1958 and its institutionalization in the Cuban state since 1959. While keeping in mind the fraught geopolitical context caused by decades of Cold War with the United States, we foreground the Revolution's efforts to eradicate racial and gender discrimination in Cuba while addressing other aspects of its ambitious social and cultural project. These include remaking its educational and health care systems in the wake of a massive brain drain; initially rejecting but ultimately embracing LGBT populations; by turns preventing and permitting the flow of dissident opinion in music, literature, and the arts; and building spaces for diverse religious, spiritual, and civic expression. We conclude by examining how U.S.-Cuba relations – particularly since the Barack Obama/Raúl Castro normalization announcements of December 17, 2014 – are contributing to transformations in Cuban society, culture, politics, and economics.

This is a seminar class – a small, close-knit educational environment that requires a high level of commitment and involvement from all its members in order to succeed. Each class comprises a mixture of instructor and student commentary and group discussion. While no previous knowledge of Cuban, Caribbean, Latin American, or world history is required, students will build upon their knowledge of these areas as they develop competency in the historiography of the Revolution.

Goals and Objectives

This course has several aims for students, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) To obtain a general understanding of modern Cuban social history;
- (2) To explore impacts of the Cuban Revolution using primary and secondary sources; and
- (3) To write an original research paper utilizing strong supporting evidence and analysis.

Grading

Grading in this course is based on the following:

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| Attendance/Participation | 20% |
| Student Commentary | 15% |
| Interactive Timeline | 15% |
| Paper Prospectus | 10% |
| Paper Consultation | 10% |
| Final Paper | 30% |

There are no grade curves in this class. Course grades are determined based on the above criteria and are determined according to the following point system:

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| 92.5 points and above | A | 72.5 to 76.4 points | C |
| 89.5 to 92.4 points | A- | 69.5 to 72.4 points | C- |
| 86.5 to 89.4 points | B+ | 66.5 to 69.4 points | D+ |
| 82.5 to 86.4 points | B | 62.5 to 66.4 points | D |
| 79.5 to 82.4 points | B- | 59.5 to 62.4 points | D- |
| 76.5 to 79.4 points | C+ | 59.4 points and below | F |

Required Texts

Textbooks (available for purchase at the UWSP University Store)

- Michelle Chase. *Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Devyn Spence Benson. *Antiracism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

Additional readings (on E-Reserves)

- Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999. Chapter 2: “Persistence of Patterns,” pp. 96-164.
- Robert Whitney. *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Chapter 7: “The Architect of the Cuban State: Fulgencio Batista and Populism in Cuba, 1937-1940,” pp. 149-176.
- Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Fifth edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Chapter 10: “The Eclipse of Old Cuba,” pp. 216-245.
- Denise F. Blum. *Cuban Youth and Revolutionary Values: Educating the New Socialist Citizen*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2011. Chapter 2: “The Revolution in Education,” pp. 41-71.
- John M. Kirk and H. Michael Erisman. *Cuban Medical Internationalism: Origins, Evolution, and Goals*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Chapter 2: “The Cuban Medical System,” pp. 25-57.
- Samuel Farber. *Cuba since the Revolution of 1959: A Critical Assessment*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011. Chapter 7: “Dissidents and Critics – from Left and Right,” pp. 222-267.

- Susan Eva Eckstein. *The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the U.S. and Their Homeland*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 7: “Dollarization and Its Discontents: Homeland Impact of Diaspora Generosity,” pp. 207-228.

Required Films

- *Fidel Castro*. PBS American Experience. Directed by Adriana Bosch. 2005. 110 min.
- *Maestra*. Directed by Catherine Murphy. 2012. 33 min.
- *Black in Latin America: Cuba: The Next Revolution*. Directed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. 2011. 51 min.
- *Three Cubans*. Directed by Robert Carl Cohen. 2006. 56 min. [Originally released as *Three Faces of Cuba*, 1965.]
- *Mariela Castro's March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution*. Directed by Jon Alpert. 2016. 40 min.

(The instructor may schedule additional film screenings as circumstances permit.)

Course Requirements (Attendance, Interactive Timeline, and Commentary)

Attendance/Participation. Active class discussion is an integral part of this course, as well as an important factor in your final course grade. Should you need to arrive late or leave early, please inform me ahead of time. Documented absences due to serious medical or personal reasons will be excused. Attendance/participation comprises 20% of students' course grades.

Interactive Timeline. Students will take part in a group exercise to complete an interactive timeline on women and the Cuban Revolution. More information is forthcoming shortly. Students will not have a formal class session on March 14 to enable them to have sufficient time to complete their timeline assignment. The timeline is worth 15% of the overall course grade.

Student Commentary. From Week 3 on, one student will introduce the day's assigned readings in a 10-to-15 minute presentation. Students should summarize the reading(s) briefly and provide the class with 3 to 4 questions for discussion. We will go over how to conduct an effective commentary during our Week 2 class. The commentary grade is 15% of the overall course grade.

Course Requirements (Final Paper)

The culmination of the course is an original final research paper that you will write in consultation with the professor. There are several steps in the process:

Final Paper Topic. Your final paper is on a topic of your choice relevant to the Cuban Revolution. By March 7, you may consult lists of suggested topics and sources on D2L, but you are encouraged to develop your own topic if you choose. You may submit a one-paragraph description of your topic as early as March 28 to obtain my feedback and make suggested

changes before writing your prospectus. Paper topics will be accepted until April 4. This assignment is not graded.

Final Paper Prospectus. Students will submit a final paper prospectus of 1-2 pages of narrative with attached 1-to-2-page bibliography by April 11. This assignment is worth 10% of your course grade.

Final Paper Consultation. You are required to have one 15-minute in-person consultation with Prof. Reejhsinghani on your progress toward completing your final paper. Consultations will be held during our class period on April 25 (we will not have a regular class on that date). Your participation in this consultation is worth 10% of your course grade.

Final Paper. Your final paper should be between 2,250-2,500 words (approximately 9 to 10 double-spaced pages), not including title, bibliography, and citations. The final paper is due during our scheduled final exam meeting time and will count for 30% of your course grade.

Reading, Make-Ups and Extensions, Extra Credit, and Accommodations

Reading. You are expected to finish all reading assignments by the start of the class for which they have been assigned.

Make-Ups and Extensions. Should there be reasons outside of your control (major personal or family issues or illness) that prevent you from submitting an assignment, please contact me immediately and we shall discuss your situation. I require documentation for absences prior to scheduling a make-up or extension.

Extra Credit. Extra-credit opportunities bolster students' attendance/participation grades and are limited to three per student per semester. Each makes up for one-half of one unexcused absence; those with perfect attendance may earn attendance/participation grades in excess of 100 points (105 points maximum). Should more opportunities arise during the semester, I will post them to D2L and announce them in class. These are specific to your attendance/participation grade and are not applicable to any other coursework in this class.

Accommodations. Students with learning and/or physical disabilities requiring special accommodations must provide appropriate documentation to UWSP Disability Services (609 Albertson Hall, tel. (715) 346-3365, <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>) at the start of the semester. Disability Services staff will work directly with the instructor to provide suitable learning accommodations.

Policy on Electronic Devices

You are not permitted to use laptops, cellular phones, MP3 players, headphones, or any other electronic devices during our class meetings. Nor may you videotape, audiotape, photograph, or otherwise reproduce images and data from our class discussions or any of materials presented in class by the instructor. This policy will be strictly enforced and violators may be subject to Academic Misconduct charges (see below). Exceptions may be made for students with written documentation of a disability from the Office of Disability Services.

Student Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and other forms of student academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this class. They are a mark of disrespect to your peers, your instructor, your university, and yourself. Students who violate University policy on this matter will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including (but not limited to) the possibility of failing this course. Please consult Chapter 14 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, “Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures” (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11>), for more information on what types of activities are considered “academic misconduct” and what the disciplinary sanctions are for students who engage in them.

Course Drops and Withdrawals

Students wishing to “clear drop” this course may do so via myPoint until the end of the business day on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. After that, students withdrawing from this course no later than Friday, April 7, 2017, will receive a “W” on their transcripts. After April 7, drops are generally not permitted. See <http://www.uwsp.edu/regrec/Pages/AddDropSchedule.aspx> for information.

Use of Email for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible for keeping the university informed about changes to your email address. Please check your email regularly and frequently to stay current with course-related communications, some of which may be time-critical.

Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change (though major change is unlikely). Should there be a modification of discussion topic, reading assignment, deadline, or other item, I shall strive to give you adequate notice.

Course Schedule

All times listed below are in Central Standard Time (CST).

Week 1 (January 24): Introduction

Reading: None

Week 2 (January 31): Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934

Reading: Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, Chapter 2

Week 3 (February 7): Cuba under Fulgencio Batista, 1933-1958

Reading: Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*, Chapter 7
Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Chapter 10

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| Assignments: Student commentaries begin today. |
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Week 4 (February 14): Gendered Resistance to the Batista Dictatorship

Reading: Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, Introduction and Chapters 1-2

Screening: *Fidel Castro* (2005)

Week 5 (February 21): Mothers and Insurrectionists

Reading: Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, Chapter 3-4

Week 6 (February 28): The Revolutionary Family

Reading: Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, Chapter 5-6 and Conclusion

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| Assignment: The interactive timeline guidelines will be distributed and discussed. |
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Week 7 (March 7): Education and Health Care

Reading: Blum, *Cuban Youth and Revolutionary Values*, Chapter 2
Kirk & Erisman, *Cuban Medical Interventionism*, Chapter 2

Screening: *Maestra* (2012)

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| Assignment: We will discuss guidelines for choosing your final paper topic. Suggested final paper topic and outside reading lists are now on D2L. |
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Week 8 (March 14): Women and the Revolution

No in-person class today. Work on your timelines and start thinking over your final paper topics.

Reading: None

Assignment: Interactive timelines are due by 11:59 p.m. today.

— SPRING BREAK (March 20-24) —

Week 9 (March 28): Race and the Revolution

Reading: Benson, *Antiracism in Cuba*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Screening: *Three Cubans* (2006) – originally *Three Faces of Cuba* (1965)

Assignment: Submit final paper topics for my feedback by 11 a.m. today to receive emailed feedback by Friday, March 31.
Interactive timeline grades and comments will be available by today.

Week 10 (April 4): The Color of Exile

Reading: Benson, *Antiracism in Cuba*, Chapters 2-3

Assignment: Submit final paper topics for my feedback by 11 a.m. today to receive emailed feedback by Friday, April 7.
The guidelines and grading rubrics for writing the final paper prospectus and the final paper will be distributed and discussed.
Consultation preference forms will be collected today. Students who fail to submit a form will be randomly assigned a consultation time.

Week 11 (April 11): Paper Prospectuses

No in-person class today. Finish the prospectus/bibliography and begin your outside reading.

Reading: None; read for your final paper

Assignment: The prospectus and bibliography are due by 11:59 p.m. today.

Week 12 (April 18): Blackness and Revolutionary Nationalism

Reading: Benson, *Antiracism in Cuba*, Chapters 4-5 and Epilogue

Screening: *Black in Latin America: Cuba: The Next Revolution*

Assignment: Prospectus comments and grades will be available on D2L by today.
The guidelines for and schedule of consultations will be distributed.

Week 13 (April 25): Paper Consultations

In lieu of class today, attend your assigned consultation with Dr. Reejhsinghani.

Reading: None; read for your final paper

Assignment: Consultations will be held in scheduled 15-minute intervals from 11:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. in 457 CCC. Please arrive 5 minutes early, bring a hard copy of your paper prospectus and something non-electronic to write with, and be ready with your own questions as well as ready to answer the professor's.

Week 14 (May 2): Political, Economic, and Social Transitions

Reading: Ferber, *Cuba since the Revolution of 1959*, Chapter 7
Eckstein, *The Immigrant Divide*, Chapter 7

Screening: *Mariela Castro's March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution* (2016)

Assignment: Consultation grades and comments will be available on D2L by today.

Week 15 (May 9): U.S.-Cuba Relations

Do not come to class during our regular time; instead, attend tonight's lecture on U.S.-Cuba relations. Attendance will count toward your attendance/participation grade, so be sure to sign the attendance sheet and to stay for the duration of the event.

"Rebuilding U.S.-Cuba Relations"
COLS Community Lecture Series
Featuring Prof. Reejhsinghani and Prof. Jennifer Collins, UWSP
Pinery Room, Portage County Library (1001 Main Street, Stevens Point)
6:30 p.m.

FINAL PAPERS are due by the end of our regularly scheduled final exam meeting time, which is Wednesday, May 18, 2017, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. To avoid late penalties, you will need to upload your final paper to the relevant D2L drop box by 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2017.