

**OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
FALL 1 - 2021**

Latin American Studies I

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AGENDA

WEEK 1 - WHAT IS LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (LAS)?: DISCIPLINARY INTRODUCTION, HISTORY, AND CONCERNS

- Introduction to Course Structure, Schedule
- *Casta* series (1763), Miguel Cabrera
- Philip Swanson Introduction
- Philip Swanson Time Chart
- *The First Mass in Brazil* (1861), Victor Meirelles

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

WHAT IS LATIN AMERICAN
STUDIES (LAS)?:
DISCIPLINARY INTRODUCTION,
HISTORY, AND CONCERNS

WEEK 2

THE COLONIAL ERA:
CONTACT TO 1800

WEEK 3

THE COLONIAL ERA:
1800-PRESENT

WEEK 4

NATIONALISM AND THE
AFTERLIVES OF COLONIAL
VIOLENCE

WEEK 5

LAS APPROACHES TO THE
CARIBBEAN

WEEK 5

LAS APPROACHES TO
LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS

<https://prestontaylorstone.com/2021/07/17/las1/>



*DE ESPAÑOL Y INDIA PRODUCE MESTISA (LEFT) &
DE ESPAÑOL Y MULATA PRODUCE MORISCA (ABOVE),
MIGUEL CABRERA, CASTA 1763 SERIES*



WHAT/WHERE IS LATIN AMERICA?

- The term 'Latin America' is first used by the Chilean politician Francisco Bilbao in 1864, who believed the Americas represented two sentiments: individualism in the North and sociability (*sociabilidad*) in the South; Anglo-Saxon in the North, Latin in the South. After this, Napoleon III will begin to use the term *Amérique latine* to describe all of the colonized areas in the so-called 'new world' under the Spanish and Portuguese crowns.
- The region geographically stretches the southern border of the United States to Puerto Toro at the tip of Chile, the southernmost town on the planet. Encompassing over 8 million square miles, the 20 countries that make up Latin America are home to an estimated 600 million people who speak in at least five European-based languages and six or more main indigenous tongues, plus African Creole and hundreds of smaller language groups.
- In short, Latin America is one of the most diverse areas of the globe, with histories connected to every other region in the world, including Eastern, Western, and Northern Europe, the Indian subcontinent, China and Japan, Western Africa, and, of course, the United States.
- As Teresa A. Meade has noted, "The sheer diversity of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean has made the region extremely interesting culturally, but has also affected the level of economic and political equality."

WHAT/WHERE IS LATIN AMERICA?

- "The thrust...of much of Latin American studies..is to question and problematize the very idea of Latin America and to present it as a complex and varied phenomenon that has to be understood on its own terms as well as on European or North American ones, even if the nature of those terms is itself highly mobile and irreducible."
- **eurocentricity/eurocentrism** – the examination of Latin American and other culture "by means of paradigms that were inherited from European criticism and that are now seen to underpin much thinking not only in Europe but also in North America and what has come to be known at various times as the First World, the West or the North."
- **modernity** – the time period roughly beginning at the start of global capitalism (1400-1500s) and, debatably, ending after the Second World War (some consider modernity to still be happening); characterized by reformations and revolutions of governmental and economic forms as well as social and intellectual problems, questions, and debates
- **imaginative geographies** – connections across geographic fields based on theme (finanscape, technoscape, ethnoscape); diasporic connections



LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (LAS)

- Latin American Studies is part of what is known, collectively, as **area studies** or studies specific to particular regions (regional studies), cultural areas (cultural studies), and national/geographic areas (Chicano studies, Latinx studies, Mexico studies, Caribbean studies, etc.). Methodologically, this means that LAS is a multi-disciplinary field with a variety of different hermeneutics and epistemologies based on which discipline from which one comes to LAS.
- LAS first develops in the 1940s out of conferences on American studies hosted by the French academy across Europe (*Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*). In these early days, the interests were primarily anthropological, linguistic, and archaeological. It isn't until the Cold War when the U.S. particularly becomes interested in expanding area studies throughout universities in an effort to "know the enemy" that LAS and other area studies develop into legitimized disciplines.
- After the shift in British and American universities toward cultural studies after the 1960s and the restructuring of the French and European universities following 1968, LAS becomes much more diversified, adding literary studies, cultural studies, historiography, economics, international relations/business, and other perspectives to the multidisciplinary approach to the region, its history, and its people

REGIONAL/AREA STUDIES

- Regional studies versus Area studies
 - **Regional studies** has always been related to the concept and analysis of *territory*, and focuses mainly on the geographical region, and the methods, concepts and procedures follow from the research objective 'a region is defined in territorial terms.' Normally, regional studies includes interdisciplinary research on themes such as urban or rural development, municipal organization and finance, distribution of population, migrations, sustainable regional development, human ecology, etc. While a great variety of research material is used, the data mainly comes from economics, geography, history, sociology, political science, demography, urban studies and ecology. Regional studies are liable to take the nation state as a unit of analysis, and the regions under study are inside this classical entity of modernity
 - **Area studies** has had a bearing not only on the concept of territory but also on the notions of *culture* and *civilization*. In area studies, the region is not only the space inside the nation state, but it also includes the idea of culture(s) and civilization(s) – something that goes further than just national cultural elements. There are sufficient supranational unifying components, which can be constructed as a kind of continental culture.
- In Latin American studies, the object of analysis is a huge and heterogeneous region, which can also be conceived as a civilization or a sum total of cultures. The concept of 'area' is thus probably more relevant than 'region' (although the difference is minimal), and Latin American studies can be defined as **area and cultural studies**, where the subject matter focuses on **the unifying cultural attributes or comparative perspective**. The interest of the researcher is, then, to **explain that which is common or particular for a region or culture larger than a state or nation**. This obviously requires a research angle which looks beyond themes defined strictly in terms of national sovereignty – and, like regional studies, area and cultural studies are per se **interdisciplinary**.



DEPENDENCY THEORY V. MODERNIZATION

- Dependency School vs. Modernization School: "These challenging and still fairly fashionable traditions have defined contemporary Latin American studies in many academic institutions, especially in the United States. The focal point has been a critical attitude toward Western cultural, racial and gendered interpretations of Latin American heterogeneity, and a critical analysis of globalization and literature."
 - "**The Dependency School** puts emphasis on the *political economy, historical sociology, world economy and world-system*, explaining the problems of the poor or peripheral countries and regions mainly by external factors. The idea of dependency theories, against the **modernization school** and the classic trickle-down effect, is that resources flow from a 'periphery' of poor and underdeveloped states to a 'core' of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. Dependency theories, together with political science and studies of militarism and democracy, remain a vigorous and seminal base for Latin American studies in spite of the discursive turn and the boom of postmodern and postcolonial studies since the 1980s and the subaltern perspectives of the 1990s." – Jussi Pakkasvirta, "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on LAS" (2010)

WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS IN LAS



- "During the last fifty years, the weighty tradition of Cepalist structuralism and the dependency school has led to a macro analysis privileging external factors, such as economic dependency and the examination of global structural history and world-system. At the same time, however, there are many interesting studies seeking to identify the impact of the external with the internal.
 - "One classic example of such a research question is how the United Fruit Company (UFCo) was able to create in a few decades at the end of the nineteenth century a huge and influential exporting dynasty inside the sovereign nation states in Central America. How was it possible that a foreign-owned company could so easily win control over a significant part of, for example, Costa Rican national territory? The answer lies in a combination of external and internal explanations. Historical studies of multinational companies have generally called attention, in an interdisciplinary way, to the importance of political power relations, economic and transnational aspects."





WORLD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF UFCO

- "It is indeed obvious that global needs, demands and power relations were at the core of multinational fruit business. Many internationally active businessmen saw the potential, and a way to get rich quick, of the Caribbean tropical coasts, especially with the newly introduced export product, banana. External factors behind the banana business are manifest, but a similarly manifest factor, though much less studied, lies in the internal political, cultural and territorial problems of the Central American republics at the beginning of the 1900s. Such nations as Costa Rica were nationally, territorially and mentally fragmented states, and it is this perspective that is more internal than external for the success of the bananeras.
- "The national Central American elites controlled export-oriented businesses such as coffee and cotton production and cattle-breeding. These were key economic and commercial enterprises along the Pacific coast and in the central valleys, controlled by liberal or conservative local elites. In countries such as Costa Rica, the Caribbean coast and lowlands were not understood as truly national territory. It could be claimed that there were 'two nations' inside contemporary Costa Rica.
- "It has been amply proved how the people of the Pacific coasts and central valleys defined what was national. To make the matter even more focal, in most Central American states the majority of the population lived in the central valleys. Although officially within national territory, the Caribbean territories remained mentally outside the nation. For them, the Caribbean signified, and still does, barbarity, Indians, Negroes, diseases, jungle and other frightening 'anti-national' elements. "



INDIGINEITY AND PATERNALISM

- In short, "the two most powerful political groups, liberals and conservatives, both saw the national and political community as comprising the Hispanic section only. The national, or 'own', project was to cultivate coffee, sugar and cotton, while the production of bananas and other tropical fruit by the Caribbean coast and the lowlands was a 'foreign' project. This was the internal explanation for the easy takeover of the banana production by the multinational companies."
- "This internal explanation also helps to appreciate the ethnic and cultural problems of many Latin American countries. The indigenous and African elements of the 'national cultures' represented the genuine 'Other' of the nation in postcolonial terms. This is reflected also in the writing and periodization of Latin American national historiographies. The Pre- Colombian past is described somewhat briefly in mainstream Latin American national histories as 'Historias Patrias'. And only countries such as Mexico and Peru, which were able to present great indigenous civilizations as 'high cultures' of their past, comparable with ancient European cultures, have included an indigenous chapter in their national histories, even if in quite paternalist or picturesque ways.
- "In Latin American countries with heavy European migration, such as Argentina, the neglect of all non-European elements was more systematic. Such major nineteenth-century Argentinean liberal intellectuals as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi argued – from quite different standpoints – that a genuine national civilising process required definite and convincing signs of a republican institutionalization. Their message was clear: eliminate every trace of nomadic cultures, eliminate all vestiges of indigenous peoples and gauchos...Especially Sarmiento was an enthusiastic admirer of protestant English colonization and 'efficiency'. To him, slow economic development and cultural deprivation stemmed from two sources: the Spanish legacy and miscegenation with indigenous peoples. He compared the results of Spanish and English colonizations. The difference in the development between Latin America and North America was, in the opinion of many Latin American liberal nationalists, the result of a difference of civilization"

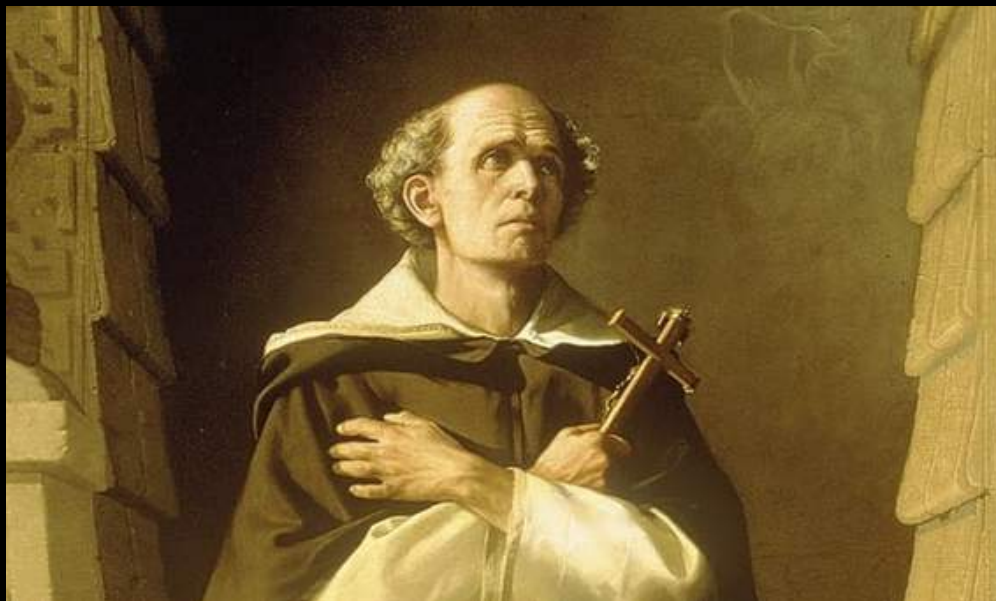


*THE FIRST MASS IN
BRAZIL (1861),
VICTOR MEIRELLES*

NEXT CLASS...

WEEK 2 - THE COLONIAL ERA: CONTACT TO 1800

- Intro & Ch 1 from *Promiscuous Power: An Unorthodox History of New Spain* (2018) by Martin Austin Nesvig
- Ch 4 "The Colonial Church" from *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond* (2011) by John Frederick Schwaller
- Ch 3 "Cultures of Colonialism" (Restrepo) from *The Companion to Latin American Studies* (2003), ed. by Philip Swanson



"Christ seeks souls, not property... He who wants a large part of mankind to be such that ... he may act like a ferocious executioner toward them, press them into slavery, and through them grow rich, is a despotic master, not a Christian." - Bartolomé de las Casas