

Professor Okezi T. Otovo
Florida International University
Department of History
LAH 4600: The History of Brazil
Spring 2015

Class Meetings: Tues and Thurs, 9:30-10:45am; PC 214

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

“History of Brazil” explores the distinctive political, economic, social, and cultural experiences of this large, diverse, and dynamic nation. The course is framed around seemingly opposite categories: legacies and change over time, local stories and national trajectories, and individual experiences and societal patterns. Our intellectual endeavor will be to bring together these apparent opposites into one historical analysis that amplifies our understanding of Brazilian history. We will focus on three chronological periods: the colony and Empire, the Republic and Estado Novo, and finally the dictatorship and return to democracy. Our readings highlight the real lived experiences of diverse Brazilian citizens, those in positions of power and those who struggled against social exclusion. In addition to an introduction to academic scholarship on Brazilian history, this course will also provide opportunities for students to investigate and analyze primary sources. Students will leave this course with a new understanding of the experiences and challenges of Brazil’s national past as well as an introduction to how historians tackle research, analysis, and interpretation.

Student goals and skill objectives for this course include:

- gaining an introduction to major themes in Brazilian history
- understanding the critical intersection of social, political, cultural, and economic structures, as well as change over time
- improving reading comprehension of scholarly texts, including drawing comparisons across texts
- identifying and articulating historical themes and questions
- practicing and sharpening critical-thinking skills
- writing critical, well-crafted responses to a work of history
- practicing analysis orally through class discussion

GLOBAL LEARNING & OUTCOMES

- **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of diverse lived experiences of Brazilians over time, including contextualizing systems of inequality and privilege that historically undergird structures of power.
- **Global Perspective:** Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of problems in Brazilian history set forth in our assigned monographs.
- **Global Engagement:** Students will demonstrate a willingness to conceptualize problems from multiple angles and identify how historians approach reconstructing social and political problems in their time and context.

Please note that we will use Blackboard extensively in this course. After each lecture, you can access the corresponding power point presentation on our Blackboard site. This class is taught in a mixed lecture and discussion format. You will use Blackboard to prepare for class discussion sessions by reviewing the "Questions for Discussion." Paper assignments can be found on Blackboard, and you will also submit your papers through that system. If you need help or training on how to use Blackboard, visit this link fiu.blackboard.com. Please make sure that you are comfortable with using Blackboard from the beginning of the class so you have full access to course content and assignments.

Required Readings

The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore. They are also available on reserve in the library. All articles and book chapters can be found on Blackboard as noted in the class schedule below.

- Peter Beattie, *The Human Tradition in Modern Brazil* (SR Books, 2004).
- Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *Caetana Says No: Women's Stories from a Brazilian Slave Society* (Cambridge, 2002).
- Todd Diacon, *Stringing Together a Nation: Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon and the Construction of a Modern Brazil, 1906-1930* (Duke University Press, 2004).
- Bryan McCann, *The Throes of Democracy: Brazil since 1989* (Zed Books, 2008).

Recommended Text on Writing

- William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (Any year, any edition)

Assignments and Expectations

Class Participation, 15%. Class attendance is **mandatory** for this course as is informed and thoughtful participation in our weekly discussions. All assigned reading should be completed prior to the date of the corresponding discussion. Active participation is more than mere attendance and is obligatory for passing this class. Students will be graded on participation during every discussion session. If you own the books, bring them with you to the corresponding discussion.

Map quiz, 5%. Understanding the political geography of Brazil is absolutely fundamental to any study of national history. We will take the map quiz early in the semester (1/29) so that we can move into the history with a clear picture of where our local and regional studies took place.

4 HTMB Responses, 20%. On four dates, you are responsible for answering questions based on the articles prepared for discussion. These responses (1-2 pages) will be submitted via Blackboard following the instructions in the "Discussion Questions and Responses" folder. Each submission is worth 5% of the final grade. There are seven possible submission dates for the responses; choose any four. You may skip the written response for three discussion dates, BUT you must still complete the reading. The questions are due before class and cannot be turned in late. Absolutely no late submissions accepted.

3 Short Analytical Essays: worth 60% (20 points for each). We will write an essay after reading each of our three books. In each essay, you will analyze the book in light of the material we learn in our lectures. All essays require material from the book and the lectures. The full essay assignment with writing guidelines is on our Blackboard site. 4-5 pages each.

Late Policy

All three of our essays are due via Blackboard by 7pm on the date indicated. Late papers will be marked down for each day late. For example, a B paper becomes a B- after one day late and a C+ after 2 days. Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented medical or other emergency.

Academic Honesty

All assignments submitted for the course must be the sole creation of the student in accordance with the FIU Standards of Student Conduct http://www2.fiu.edu/~sccr/student_conduct_p.html. Violations including plagiarism, cheating, or academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, cheating, and any type of academic dishonesty will be officially reported and likely result in failure of the course.

Writing Resources

FIU has a writing center whose mission is to help students improve their writing. I encourage all students to make use of this service. The Center for Excellence in Writing also offers individual help on your course writing assignments. Visit <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu>.

Disabilities

If you have a disability-related need for modifications or accommodations, please contact and register with the Disability Resource Center 305-348-3532, GC 190 and <http://drc.fiu.edu/>.

Electronic Devices

Out of respect for the professor and for the other students in the course, I require that all cell phones, ipods, and other wireless devices be turned off for the duration of class. Texting during class is disrespectful and disruptive. I expect that laptop computers be used for the purpose of taking notes, not for surfing the web or checking email during class. I will ask students to leave class if I find that you are not following these policies.

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