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LAH 4483: CUBA SINCE 1959
FALL 2019
[DAY/TIME TBD]
[CLASSROOM TBD]

A Global Learning Course

INSTRUCTOR

Michael J. Bustamante, Ph.D., Department of History
mbustama@fiu.edu

Office: DM 385-C
Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course invites students to complicate simplified narratives of Cuba's post-1959 history that continue to dominate popular understandings of the island. Rather than treating "the Revolution" as an abstraction or inevitability, we will consider the complex road by which Cuba's revolutionary process came to be and subsequently unfolded. We will assess evolving debates over what it meant to be "revolutionary" in the post-1959 context; we will evaluate the Cuban government's conflicting legacies of empowerment and repression; and we will dissect the politics of race, gender, and culture alongside readings about Cuba's economic policies, state socialism, and foreign policy. Against accounts that treat Cuban history as primarily a function of the island's relationship with the United States, or as a series of Cold War flashpoints, we will explore the dynamic relationship *between* local, national, and international forces. To that end, we will also pay close attention to the formation and evolution of the Cuban diaspora. Course materials incorporate significant engagement with primary sources (speeches, film, memoir, etc.) as well as new works of scholarship that pay particular attention to the importance of culture and ideas at junctures of political transition and conflict.

OBJECTIVES

This is a discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your Global Learning graduation requirements.

Course Objectives. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Describe in detail the major events, political forces, and trends that have shaped Cuba's history since 1959 and the growth of the Cuban diaspora in the United States.
- Make informed arguments about the roots of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the role of national and international forces in pushing dramatic change, and the consequences of the revolution for diverse sectors of Cuban society.
- Document the varying ways Cubans have defined and understood concepts like "revolution," "nation," "nationalism," "socialism," "communism," "state," and "exile."
- Be your own devil's advocate, questioning pre-established points of view about Cuba (if you have them), if only to confirm them in the end.

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- Apply your knowledge of Cuban history to analyze the island's present and make informed arguments about its future.

Global Learning Objectives. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Construct an evidence-based argument demonstrating knowledge of the ways local, national, *and* transnational processes shaped the radicalization of the Cuban Revolution between 1959 and 1962. (Global Awareness)
- Construct an evidence-based argument that draws on multiple perspectives to reflect on the meaning of Cuba's post-Soviet crisis in the 1990s. (Global Perspective)
- Use historical knowledge to intelligently participate in contemporary conversations about Cuba's present and future. (Global Engagement)

REQUIREMENTS AND DUE DATES

1. Attendance and Participation (15%)

You are expected to come to class prepared to listen actively, engage with class material, and discuss the readings. As a collective enterprise, this class succeeds to the degree all of us devote the time, focus, and energy required to foster an enriching exchange of ideas.

2. Discussion Questions (10%)

By each Monday's class meeting, you are expected to post two discussion questions provoked by that week's readings to a shared forum on Canvas. Questions should demonstrate a deep engagement with the reading and will be graded on a complete/incomplete scale to hold students accountable. Questions will also be used as a starting point for conversation in class.

3. First Writing Assignment (15%)

You will write a 4-page critical review of the film *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. Set between the Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the movie follows a fictional character who neither embraces the Revolution, nor identifies with those friends and family members leaving the island. Instead, the main character watches perplexed as the Revolution unfolds around him, both as a process of domestic transformation, and one firmly in the crosshairs of the Cold War. Your task is to critically assess how the film portrays the balance of domestic and international forces operating in Cuban society at the time. Does this presentation accord with what you have read? Or does the film offer a unique perspective on this question that written sources do not? The film is available for streaming with English subtitles via the FIU Libraries website.

4. Mid-Term Exam (15%)

In CLASS. Term IDs and Essay Question.

5. Second Writing Assignment (20%)

Between 1989 and 1994, Cuba's GDP plummeted by 30% in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union. But if this euphemistically dubbed "Special Period" was an economic catastrophe, it also raised more existential questions about the Revolution's future. Drawing on primary sources from multiple perspectives and at least three different genres (i.e. film, memoir, travelogue, literature, oral history, or the visual arts), students will write a 6- to 7-page paper that explores

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the “Special Period” as not only a crisis of economics, but also a crisis of ideas. Students will be provided a list of suggested sources, writers, artists to choose from (divided by genre), but will also be encouraged to identify sources of their own in dialogue with the professor. The essay must also cite appropriate secondary sources in providing requisite background knowledge that helps to contextualize the primary sources to be analyzed.

6. Final Exam (20%). IDs, Short Primary Source Analysis, Essay Question.

7. Co-Curricular Activity (5%) The Cuban Research Institute at FIU is constantly hosting film screenings, panel discussions, or other events related to contemporary Cuban and Cuban American affairs. Once over the course of the semester, you must attend one of these events. Afterward you must write a brief (1-1.5 page) critical reaction paper reflecting on what you learned and how historical perspective you have gained in the course informs your understanding of the issue being discussed. I will maintain a running list of events on Canvas, updated weekly. Students may attend similar events outside of FIU (sponsored by community organizations, museums, etc.) with instructor approval.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES AND RULES OF THE ROAD

All views welcome: The Cuban Revolution and contemporary Cuban affairs are often polarizing topics, provoking sharp differences of interpretation and opinion. Rigorous debate is encouraged. Yet all viewpoints are welcome and will be respected. As instructor, my job is to play devil’s advocate where relevant and share my own knowledge and interpretations in ways that will be conducive to continued dialogue. I will not assess your assignments through the filter of my own views but rather upon the basis of your ability to think critically and creatively, write clearly, and, most importantly, construct cohesive arguments.

No laptop challenge: I HIGHLY encourage you to take notes using pen and paper rather than using a laptop. Numerous studies have shown that students retain information more efficiently when they are a) not distracted by social media and b) compelled to *synthesize* relevant information rather than copy the professor’s words verbatim.

See: <http://www.technic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/61478/>

Communicating with Professor: My email is mbustama@fiu.edu, and I am happy to hear from you. I generally try to respond to emails within 1 business day. If you don’t hear back from me within 2 business days, feel free to send me a follow up email. I maintain weekly drop-in office hours as a time dedicated to answering your questions and helping you succeed in the course. You are also welcome to contact me to schedule a separate appointment. I respond to formally composed emails only, and never Facebook/Twitter/Instagram messages. Remember, you are not writing an email or text to a friend. This means you should begin the email with “Dear Professor Bustamante” (or “Dear Dr. Bustamante”). Use please and thank you when appropriate, and sign your name at the end of the email. I will never discuss grades over email—you must make an appointment or come to office hours.

Late Assignments: Unless accompanied by a doctor’s note or other legitimate excuse (such as

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conflict with a religious holy day), assignments lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every day late (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.) Exceptions to these rules may be granted in the form of a deadline extension. If you need a deadline extension due to extenuating circumstances, please contact me with as much advance notice as possible. I will grant deadline extensions in cases of serious illness or emergency, religious holidays, military service, and legal requirements such as jury duty. But I will require proof—namely, a formal letter from a doctor, employer, etc., and not from a family member. Basic rule of thumb: if you think you will have a conflict or a hard time meeting a deadline, get in touch with me ahead of time.

Attendance and Absences: You will register your attendance on a sign-up sheet at the start of each class. Please arrive on time and stay until the end of class. This is a matter of respect for me and for your classmates. If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so with as little disturbance as possible. While I understand that emergencies may arise, please use the restroom before class to avoid leaving in the middle. I know FIU students live busy lives. To this end, absences will begin to count against your participation grade after 2 absences. The legitimate reasons that students may have an *excused absence* are those listed above. To excuse an absence, I once again need a formal letter describing the circumstances, and a note from a parent or relative will still not count. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, you are responsible for finding out what we did that day **from a classmate**. I will not email you my lecture notes. Instead, talk to your classmates about what we did, and ask to see their notes. Of course, this is no substitute for being present in class.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing (representing someone else's work as your own), cheating on assignments or examinations, or engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work. It will result in a penalty ranging from zero on the assignment to failure in the course and reporting to the University. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, see me or consult: Graduate Academic Misconduct Definition and Procedures. http://www.fiu.edu/AcademicBudget/misconductweb/Graduate_academic_misconduct_final.pdf

Note to Students who are differently abled: If you have or believe you might have a need for reasonable accommodations in this course, contact the Disability Resources Center (drc.fiu.edu). I am very happy to work with you and them to accommodate you in the best way possible.

Assistance with Writing Papers: The FIU History Department employs peer writing tutors who are trained to help students write stronger papers. This is an excellent, free resource. You can contact them by emailing histutor@fiu.edu or calling the main History office at 305-348-2328. FIU also has a writing center whose mission is to help students improve their writing. I encourage all students to make an appointment in advance to use this service. <http://w3.fiu.edu/writingcenter/>.

Code of Conduct: Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the

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University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

It is against FIU policy to harass and/or discriminate against any student, faculty member, or employee on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, marital status, ethnic/national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or other legally protected categories. For more information or to make a complaint, please contact the [FIU Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#).

READINGS / COURSE MATERIALS

The following monographs are available for purchase at the FIU bookstore. You are of course welcome to purchase in ebook form or as used books via third party sellers. Copies have also been placed on 2-hour reserve at Green Library.

Richard Gott, *Cuba: a New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) ISBN: 978-0300111149.

Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012) ISBN: 978-1469618869. [ALSO AVAILABLE AS FREE E-BOOK THROUGH FIU LIBRARY].

All other readings will be made available online via Canvas and consist mostly of individual book chapters, excerpts, and articles in PDF form. Occasional supplementary materials, like films, will be placed on reserve at Green Library or otherwise made available to students directly (uploaded to Canvas, YouTube links, etc.)

Note: Students interested in recommendations for further reading on many of the subjects we will be engaging over the semester are encouraged to checkout #CubanRevolutionSyllabus, an online resource for readings and primary sources that loosely maps onto the thematic structure of this course: <https://ageofrevolution.com/cuban-revolution/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Note: Readings for each week are to be completed by the **beginning** of the week they are assigned. (IE, before Monday's meeting.) Come prepared to discuss the readings in class.*

Week 1.
August 26. The Challenge of Cuba's Post-1959 History: Key Questions and Debates
August 28. Counterpoints of Cuban National Identity
Readings. Damián Fernández, "Cuba and *lo Cubano*, or the Story of Desire and Disenchantment," in *Cuba, the Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity*, eds. Damián J. Fernández and Madeline Cámara Betancourt, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 79-98; Wilson P. Valdés, "Cuban Political Culture: Between Betrayal and Death," in *Cuba in Transition: Crisis and Transformation*, edited by Sandy Halebsky and John M. Kirk (Westview Press, 1992), 207-228.
Primary Sources. None.

Week 2.

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September 2. LABOR DAY. NO CLASS.

September 4. Cuba Before 1959: In the Shadow of the North

Readings. Richard Gott, *Cuba: a New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 70-146. (You are welcome to read 1-70 as well.)

Primary Sources. Leland Jenks, *Our Cuban Colony* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928), excerpt.

Week 3.

September 9. Cuba Before 1959, Continued: Prologue to Revolution?

September 11. “*El Adalid*” y “*El Hombre*”: Split Personalities, Split Nationhood in the 1950s

Readings. Frank Argote-Freyre, “The Political Afterlife of Eduardo Chibás: Evolution of a Symbol,” *Cuban Studies* 32 (2001): 74-97; Yeidy Rivero, “Havana as a 1940s-1950s Latin American Media Capital,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26:3 (2009): 275-293.

Primary Sources. Jean Stein, “All Havana Broke Loose: An Oral History of ‘Mujer Campesina,’” *Vanity Fair*, August 4, 2011; *El Mégano*, dir. Julio García Espinosa (Havana: 1954).

Week 4.

September 16. The Anti-Batista Insurrection from Without: U.S. Reactions

September 18. The Anti-Batista Insurrection from Within: Female Struggles

Readings. Michelle Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1959* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 19-76; Alejandra Bronfman, “‘Batista is Dead’: Media, Violence, and Politics in 1950s Cuba,” *Caribbean Studies* 40:37 (2012): 37-58.

Primary Sources. Fidel Castro, “History will Absolve Me,” 1953, excerpt.

Week 5.

September 23. Year 1: The Revolution of Power

September 25. 1960-1962: From “Olive Green” to “Red”

Readings. Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2012), 37-74; Lillian Guerra, “To condemn the Revolution is to condemn Christ”: Radicalization, Moral Redemption, and the Sacrifice of Civil Society in Cuba, 1960,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89:1 (2009): 73-109.

Primary Source. *Memorias del Subdesarrollo*, dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (1968)

Week 6.

September 30. Exiles, “Campesinos,” and “Counter”-Revolutionaries in a Cold War Vortex

October 1. *Alzados* and “*Bandidos*” in the Escambray

Readings. Annika M. K. K. K. K., “Drug Wars: Revolution, Embargo, and the Politics of Scarcity in Cuba, 1959-1964,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 49:3 (August 2017), 489-516; Joanna Wanger, *Rebellious Lands of Cuba: The Campesino Struggles of Oriente and Escambray, 1934-1974* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 215-244.

Primary Sources. Exile Organization Manifestoes (translated sample).

Week 7.

October 7. Race and Revolution **1ST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

October 9. Gender Roles and Sexuality in the 1960s: Rebellion, Resistance, Repression

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Readings. Devyn Spence Benson, *Antiracism in Cuba: the Unfinished Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 30-71; Michelle Chase, *Revolution in the Revolution*, 135-169; Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power*, 227-255.

Primary Sources. Carlos Moore, "Silence on Black Cuba" (1987).

Week 8.

October 14. The Politics of Culture/Art: "Within the Revolution, all; against..., nothing."

October 16. The Revolutionary Offensive and the 10-Million-Ton Harvest

Readings. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "Ideological, Political, and Economic Factors in the Cuban Controversy on Material versus Moral Incentives," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 14:1 (February 1972): 49-111.

Primary Sources. *Coffea Arábica* (1968), dir. Nicolás Guillén Landrián.

Week 9.

October 21. **MID-TERM EXAM**

October 23. 1970s: Institutionalization, Sovietization, Socialist Modernization

Readings. María Antonia Cabrera Arús, "The Material Promise of Socialist Modernity: Fashion and Domestic Space in the 1970s," in *The Revolution from Within: Cuba, 1959-1980*, eds. Jennifer Lambe and Michael Bustamante (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

Primary Sources. *La Nueva Escuela*, dir. Jorge Fraga (Havana: ICAIC, 1973), CLIP.

Week 10.

October 28. The Impact of the Cuban Revolution Abroad: Latin America

October 30. The Impact of the Cuban Revolution Abroad: Africa

Readings. Eric Zolov, "¡Cuba Sí, Yanquis No!": the Sacking of the Instituto Cultural México-Norteamericano in Morelia, Michoacán," in *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 214-252; Piero Gleijeses, "The View from Havana: Lessons from Cuba's African Journey, 1959-1976," in *In From the Cold*, 112-133.

Primary Sources. *Fredy Ilango en Guevara: un Swahili Translator*, dir. Katrin Hansing (2009).

Week 11.

November 4. Détente with the United States: 1975-1980

November 6. The Mariel Boatlift: Epilogue (Ironically) to the Revolution's Golden Age?

Readings. Michael Bustamante, "Anti-Communist Anti-Imperialism?: Agrupación Abdala and the Changing Contours of Cuban Exile Politics, 1968-1985," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 35:1 (Fall 2016): 71-99; Emilio Capó, Jr., "Queering Mariel: Mediating Cold War Foreign Policy and Citizenship among Cuba's Homosexual Exile Community, 1978-1994," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29:4 (Summer 2010): 78-106.

Primary Sources. "Citizenship," *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* (Miami: WPBT Channel 2, 1977).

Week 12.

November 11. The 1990s: Economic and Existential Crisis

November 13. The "Special Period" as Seen through the Visual Arts

Readings. Sujatha Fernandes, *Cuba Represent: Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 85-134; Ariana Hernández-Reguant, "Copyrighting Che: Art and Authorship under Cuban Late Socialism," *Public Culture* 16.1 (2004): 1-29.

Primary Sources. Felicia Guerra and Tamara Álvarez-Detrell, *Balseros: Oral History of the*

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Cuban Exodus of '94 (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1997), excerpt.

Week 13.

November 18. Exit Fidel, Enter Raúl

November 20. IN CLASS SCREENING AND DISCUSSION: *El Futuro Es Hoy*, dir. Sandra Gómez (Cuba/Switzerland: Peacock Film, 2009).]

Readings. Julia E. Sweig and Michael J. Bustamante, "Cuba After Communism," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2013); Armando Chaguaceda, "The Promise Besieged: Participation and Citizen Autonomy in Cuba," *NACLA Report on the Americas* (July/August 2011).

Primary Sources. None.

Week 14.

November 25. D17: Or, Everything Old is New Again **2ND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**
November 27. NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING.

Readings. Peter Kornbluh and William LeoGrande, "Inside the Crazy Wars: Chamorro Negotiations that Revolutionized our Relationship with Cuba," *Mother Jones* (September/October 2015); Esther Allen, "Cuba: We Never Left," *New York Review of Books*, August 14, 2015.

Primary Sources. "Remarks by President Obama to the People of Cuba," March 22, 2016.

Week 15.

December 2. *Somos Continuidad, No Ruptura* Díaz-Canel, the "Cubana Syndrome," and the Uncertainty that Awaits

December 4. Course Wrap-Up: Cuban History as Obsession and Disenchantment

Readings. Michael J. Bustamante and Jennifer L. Laube, "In Fidel's Shadow: Cuban History (and Futures) One Year On," *Age of Revolutions* (blog), December 1, 2017; Michael J. Bustamante, "Cuba After the Castros," *Washington Post*, April 18, 2018.

Primary Sources. None.

FINAL EXAM: WEEK OF DECEMBER 9