

## **History/Women's Studies 355**

### **Cultural Conflict and Social Change in Latin America: The Central American Context**

*"We are what we know and when what we know changes, we change" - James Burke*

**Instructor:** Fernanda Soto, Ph.D., Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin

#### **Augsburg University General Education Requirements**

This course meets a Humanities Liberal Arts Foundations (LAF) requirement at Augsburg College. It is also course cross-listed as a Women's Studies (WST) course and a History (HIS) course, so you may register for credit in either discipline.

#### **Humanities Liberal Arts Foundation Statement**

This Humanities Liberal Arts Foundation will help you explore the range and possibilities of human experience. Depending on the course, you may investigate the diversity of human nature and culture, our forms of communication and persuasion, our powers of reason, sympathy, and imagination, our needs as individuals and roles as citizens, and our relationship to the beautiful, the transcendent, and the divine. As the philosopher Martha Nussbaum has written, however, all Humanities disciplines have something in common: they help students use reason and imagination to enter broader worlds of cultures, groups, and ideas.

Augsburg's Humanities departments are Communication Studies, English, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, and Religion. These six disciplines engage human experience from different perspectives using different modes of discourse, but they share a common goal of rigorous inquiry into the ways written and spoken language can record, discover, and creatively express the truths of human experience.

#### **Introduction and Course Description**

The study of history traditionally aims to examine the past in order to better inform the present context and future decisions. However, the question posed by acclaimed historian Howard Zinn, "What is our responsibility now?" approaches history from the perspective of the active historian. The primary purpose of this course is to provide a historical introduction to issues of conflict and social change in Central America by examining the social, political and economic dynamics of the region since colonial times, at the same time reflecting on our role as potential agents of social change.

Through the close analysis of the history of Guatemala, the course will explore how indigenous people, the majority of Guatemala's population, were included and excluded from dominant historical narratives of the past, contrasting those narratives with indigenous scholars and intellectuals anti/decolonial analysis of the country's history. It will apply a feminist approach to examine dominant gender constructions, underlining the frequently undocumented and forgotten role of women—particularly indigenous women—in historical processes and introducing students to the thought of Guatemalan indigenous feminists. Finally, it will delve into how unequal racial, gender and class relations in Guatemala have being reinforced and/or shaped by the United States foreign policy in the region. You will examine primary and secondary sources as well as oral histories.

The course includes IV units:

- I. Introduction to Conflict and Change
- II. Indigenous lives, Colonial Paradigm and the October Revolution
- III. Struggling for Change in the Face of Repression: U.S. Intervention, Military Regimes and Guerrilla Struggle
- IV. Defying the Past: Social Change after War

You will explore the roles ascribed to women in each historical period and their efforts to challenge them and define their own place in history.

### **Educational Goals**

1. Trace the historical development of gender, class-based and racial oppression in Central America.
2. Apply a feminist lens to the critique of historical documents.
3. Describe the impact of U.S. interventions in Central America on peasants, women, indigenous peoples, and people of African descent.
4. Explain the inequities that have resulted from its colonial history as well as from occupation and intervention.
5. Compare and contrast divergent perspectives in specific periods of Central American history.
6. Identify key moments in the history of resistance by women and other marginalized groups in Central America.
7. Develop the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze and interpret historical events.
8. Reflect on your own role as a historical actor and potential agent of social change.

### **Course Expectations**

1. Effective class participation, includes a demonstrated effort to dialogue with speakers, ask probing questions, relate assigned reading to class discussion topics (10%).
2. Student-led class discussion: In groups, you will be in charge of presenting a summary of the assigned reading and the main arguments posed by the authors; analyzing the authors' divergent perspective on the same historical period or event (30%).
3. Weekly reaction papers, approximately 2 pages: reflect on weekly-readings, meetings and activities undertaken underlining their main arguments, drawing connections between them, and describing how the material challenges you (or not) (30%).
4. Final paper (30%).

Written criteria will be provided for each assignment.

## Bibliography

### UNIT I Introduction to Cultural Conflict and Social Change in Latin America: The Central American Context

Required

Grandin, Greg, Deborah Levenson-Estrada, and Elizabeth Oglesby. 2011. *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. The Latin America Readers. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011 (pp 1-8; 11-12; 39-41).

Fountain Megan. "From Servitude to Autonomy: A conversation with Aura Cumes on Maya Women's Struggles." In *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal*, 2018. Excerpt.

<http://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2018/5/28/student-interview-series-part-v-aura-cumes>.

Popol Vuh. Excerpt. *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. The Latin America Readers. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (pp 13-18)

### UNIT II: Indigenous lives, colonial paradigm and the October Revolution

Required

Otzoy, Irma. "Tecún Umán and the Conquest Dance." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp 51-61).

Few, Martha. *Women Who Live Evil Lives: Gender, Religion, and the Politics of Power in Colonial Guatemala, 1650-1750*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002 (pp 26-29 and 42-48).

Pollack, Aaron. 2011. "An Indian King in the Eve of Independence." In Grandin et al. *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. The Latin America Readers. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011 (pp 101-106).

Grandin, Greg. "Five Hundred Years." In McAllister, Carlota, and Diane M Nelson. *War by Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013 (pp 52-57).

Woodward, Ralph Lee. "Independence." In *A Short History of Guatemala*, 2008. (pp 35-54).

Smith, Carol A. 1995. "Race-Class-Gender Ideology in Guatemala: Modern and Anti-Modern Forms." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37:4 (pp 723-749).

Grandin, Greg. *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation. Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000. (pp. 1-5 and 110-129).

Grandin, et al. "Ten years of Spring and Beyond." In *The Guatemala Reader*, 2011. (pp 197-200).

Forster, Cindy. "Reforging National Revolution: Campesino Labor Struggles in Guatemala, 1944–1954." In Chomsky, Aviva, and Aldo Lauria-Santiago. *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean*. Comparative and International Working-Class History. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998 (pp. 196–226).

Schlesinger and Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. 1983 (pp. 60-63, 73-77, 98-108, 227-234).

Recommended

Taracena Arriola, Arturo. Marimba. In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp.150-155).

**UNIT III Struggling for Change in the Face of Repression: US Intervention, Military Regimes and Guerrilla Struggle**

Required:

Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. California Series in Public Anthropology, 8. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Excerpts.

ADMIN and Lykes Brinton. *Voices and Images: Mayan Ixil Women of Chajul*. 2000 (pp 96, 98, 100-103).

Sanford, Victoria. "The Silencing of Maya Women from Mamá Maquín to Rigoberta Menchú." *Social Justice* 27 (1), 2000 (pp. 128-151).

Recommended:

González Izás, Matilde. "Arbitrary Power and Sexual Violence." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp. 405-410).

**UNIT IV Defying the Past: Social Change after War**

Required

Mack, Helen. "What is Reconciliation." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp 450-453).

McAllister, Carlota, and Diane M Nelson. Introduction in *War by Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013 (pp.1-9 and 24-40).

Levenson-Estrada, Deborah. 2013. *Adiós Niño: The Gangs of Guatemala City and the Politics of Death*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013 (pp 21-23 and 39-52).

Smyth, Frank. "The Untouchable Narco-State." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp 480-486).

Hale, Charles. "The Authorized Indian." In the *Guatemala Reader* (517-522).

Velásquez Nimatuj, Irma Alicia. "Transnationalism and Maya Dress." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp 523-531).

Batz, Giovanni. "The Ixil University and the Decolonization of Knowledge." In Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang, eds. *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*. New York: Routledge, 2018 (pp 103-115).

Recommended:

Campbell, Greg. "Death by Deportation." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp 585-588).

Reineke, Robin Christine. "I Feel Enraged." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp.589-591).

Mack Myrna. "Assistance and Control." In *The Guatemala Reader* (pp. 421-426).

Fountain Megan. "From Servitude to Autonomy: A Conversation with Aura Cumes on Maya Women's Struggles." In *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal*, 2018.

<http://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2018/5/28/student-interview-series-part-v-aura-cumes>.

## Additional Comments

### Explanation of Grades

Augsburg's grading system uses the following definitions:

Grade	Grade Points	Description
A	4.00	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Poor
D-	0.67	
F	0.00	Failure

A "Pass" grade is 2.0 or above.

### Grading Policy and Late Assignments

You must submit assignments on time. If you need an extension, you must talk to us in advance to negotiate a new deadline. If you have not been given an extension in advance and you turn in a late assignment, you will be docked half a grade. If you are more than one week late, you will be docked a full grade. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original deadline; a "0" will be given after that. Assignments due near the end of the semester will not be accepted after the last day of the semester.

### Re-writing Assignments

If you receive a grade of B- or lower, you may revise a paper as long as you resubmit it within one week of the date it was returned to you. Your final grade will be an average of the two grades.

### Augsburg Honesty Policy

You are expected to follow the Augsburg Honesty Policy which is printed in the program manual. We assume that you have read the honesty policy, understand it, and are following it. Except when the assignment expressly encourages group work, it is assumed that all course work will be your own. You may not copy other students' work. The first occurrence of plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. A student who commits plagiarism a second time will fail the course.

### Students' Rights and Responsibilities

Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. Those who qualify should identify themselves to the instructor as soon as possible in order to obtain extra assistance.