

*Center for*  
**GLOBAL EDUCATION**  
*and EXPERIENCE*

**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:** Kathleen McBride, M.Ed., Harvard University ([cgenica@gmail.com](mailto:cgenica@gmail.com))

**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, i.e. "What is our responsibility now?" approaches history from the perspective of the active historian. The primary purpose of this course is to explore the history of conflict and social change in Central America by examining the social, political and economic dynamics of the region since the 1900's. The course will explore the impact of United States foreign policy on Central America from the perspective of the active historian. It will also examine women's distinct voices in Central American history through the application of feminist analysis.

This course provides a historical introduction to issues of conflict and social change in Central America giving special emphasis to the frequently undocumented and forgotten role of women. US expansionism, national resistance, and identity will be studied in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. You will have the opportunity to examine primary and secondary sources as well as oral histories.

The course includes five units: I) Introduction to conflict and change; II) US expansionism, occupation and Sandino; III) the Somoza period; IV) the emergence of revolutionary movements, the Sandinista Revolution and US Foreign Policy; V) Lessons in the post-war period. You will explore the roles that women played in each historical period in and their efforts to challenge the gender roles ascribed to them while defining 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 in the of critique 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 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 (10%) includes a demonstrated effort to dialogue with speakers, ask probing questions, relate assigned reading to class discussion topics, student-led class discussion for Unit II and III, or V (10%)
2. One essay of approximately 1500 words (25%)
3. Group Presentations on UNIT IV (poster board, power point or a critical analysis paper (25%))
4. Final Project and Oral Presentation (30%)

Written criteria will be provided for each assignment.

### **Additional Comments**

#### **Explanation of Grades**

Augsburg's grading system uses the following definitions:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
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 (from a 4.0 to a 3.5 or 3.5 to a 3.0, 3.0 to a 2.5, 2.5 to a 2.0, etc.) 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.

### **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.