

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)

Credits: four semester credits

Departmental Cross Listings

This course is cross-listed as both a Religion and a Women's Studies course. You may choose either discipline. Regardless of whether or not you register for Religion or Women's Studies credit, this course will help you explore the diversity of human experiences and encourage you to examine your forms of communication and persuasion, your powers of reason, sympathy, and imagination, your needs as individuals and roles as global citizens, and your relationship to the beautiful, the transcendent, and the divine.

Augsburg General Education Requirements

Augsburg students who take this course can receive credit for the Humanities LAF (Liberal Arts Foundation), as well as credit for the Critical Thinking (CT) skill requirement. This course can also meet the "Search for Meaning II" Signature Curriculum requirement at Augsburg. However, if you are an Augsburg student, you must choose whether you want to take it for Humanities LAF credit or "Search for Meaning II" credit. It cannot fulfil both.

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.

Purpose of the Course

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.

Course Description

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 20th century. You will have the opportunity to examine primary and secondary sources as well as oral histories.

The course includes V units: I) Introduction to conflict and change; II) US expansionism, occupation and Sandino; III) the Somoza period; IV) the emergence of revolutionary movements (sub theme- women and land tenure); and 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.

Required Readings

Walker, Thomas and Christine Wade. *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle, 5th Edition*. Westview Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0813343877

Rivera, Victoria Gonzalez. *Before the Revolution: Women's Rights and Right-Wing Politics in Nicaragua, 1821-1979*. Penn State University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0271048710.

Randall, Margaret. *Sandino's Daughters Revisited: Feminism in Nicaragua*. Rutgers University Press, 1994. ISBN: 978-0813520254

Overarching Educational Goals

1. Trace the historical development of gender, class-based and racial oppression in Central America
2. Apply feminist analysis 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 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 reasoning 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 Design

Weekly Schedule of Topics, Required Readings, Speakers and/or Experiences will be given on the first day of class in a separate document

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 and leading a class discussion with 3-4 other classmates on Units II and III; or V (10%)
2. One essay of approximately 1500 words (25%)
3. Poster Board assignment option or Critical Analysis Paper (25%)
4. Final Project and Oral Presentation (30%)

Written criteria will be provided for each assignment

Additional Comments

Honesty Policy: Augsburg College has adopted an Academic Honesty Policy, which is printed in the CGE Program Manual. You are expected to read the Honesty Policy and abide by it.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. If you qualify, please identify yourself to the instructors so that we may assist you with your course progress.

Late Assignments: All assignments that are submitted within 24 hours after the due date will be graded down a ½ letter grade, (From a 4.0 to 3.5 or 3.5 to 3.0, etc.). Assignments submitted more than 24 hours late will be graded down an entire letter grade, or 10%. (From a 4.0 to 3.0, etc.). If you think you might need an extension due to illness or an emergency please contact me.

Office hours: Any time after a class session contact me personally to set up a time to meet.

Grading Policy & Criteria

| Number | Letter Equivalent | Percentage | Augsburg Definition |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------|---|
| 4.0 | A | 93-100% | Achieves highest standards of excellence |
| 3.5 | A-/B+ | 88-92% | |
| 3.0 | B | 83-87% | Achieves above basic course standards |
| 2.5 | B-/C+ | 78-82% | |
| 2.0 (and above) PASS | C | 73-77% | Meets basic standards for the course |
| 1.5 (and below) NO CREDIT | C-/D+ | 68-72% | |
| 1.0 | D | 63-67% | Performance below basic course standards |
| 0.5 | D- | 60-62% | |
| 0.0 | F | Under 60% | Unacceptable performance (no course credit) |