

Lehman College of the City University of New York

LEH 300 ONA6W**“Poets, Priests, Painters, Punkers: Voices of Dissent in Latin America”
Spring 2007**

Instructor: Tim Fujioka
tim.fujioka@lehman.cuny.edu

Course Description

This course will consider how official narratives have been questioned during 500 years of Latin American history. In doing so, we will examine a panorama of materials, including poetry, narrative literature, essays, visual art, music, political manifestos, historical and critical studies. We will consider how these documents challenge political and economic structures, class and gender dynamics, and conventional notions of racial, ethnic, and national identity. No knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese is required. This is a writing-intensive course, and students will be required to conduct complete numerous informal and formal writing assignments.

Learning Goals

At the end of the course, students will be able to analyze Latin American works of visual art, literary texts and musical compositions in relation to major political and historical trends in Latin America. Students will be able to discuss how these texts contradict or undermine accepted visions of the societies they comment upon.

As a writing-intensive course, a secondary but very important goal of this course is for students to advance their critical thinking, research, and compositional skills. Participants will be challenged to consider materials from a variety of disciplines and develop their own original ideas regarding the

interrelationships involved.

Contacting Me

Write to me at tim.fujioka@lehman.cuny.edu. Please do not attempt to use any other e-mail address for me. During the semester, I check tim.fujioka@lehman.cuny.edu every day Monday-Friday, and generally on the weekend also. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Be sure to sign your e-mails, especially if your identity is not obvious from your address. Also, write to me from the e-mail account you want me to reply to, as I will reply directly to whatever address your message comes from.

If you need a response from me, and especially if you need it in a timely fashion, do not attempt to contact me by posting messages on the course Discussion Board or in the “comments” section of the Digital Drop Box in Blackboard. Send me an e-mail.

I welcome your questions and encourage you to contact me whenever you have concerns or whenever I can otherwise be of help. Please make sure, however, that you have read carefully this syllabus and any the other information posted under “Course Logistics.” Many common questions are answered in these documents.

Accessing the Course

The course is accessed through the CUNY portal (www.cuny.edu). Instructions on activating and accessing your CUNY portal account are posted at the Lehman College Online home page. Go to www.lehman.edu and click on “Lehman Online.”

Please note: I do not control your access to the course, and you need no username and password from me. As long as you are registered for the course, logging into the CUNY portal is all you need to do.

If you are have problems accessing your CUNY portal account, contact one of the following numbers:

CUNY Help Desk
212-541-0981

Lehman Help Desk
Shuster Hall S106
718-960-8809

Attempt to log on as soon as possible after the initial course meeting. Contact me by e-mail if you are unable to get logged on. The course begins immediately. If you do not get logged on within the first week, you will fall behind, and your grade will suffer.

Required Text

The only text you are required to purchase is the following:

Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 2001.

Books are on order in the Lehman College bookstore. You may also find used copies online at such vendors as Amazon.com or Powells.com. If you are ordering your book online, do so immediately, as you will need the text beginning with Topic 01.

We also will be making extensive use of the following:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Sixth Edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

You are not required to purchase this book; there are several reserve copies available in the Lehman College library. You will, however, need to make reference to this book during the semester, so you may find it is useful to have your own copy of this book. The book has usefulness beyond this course, because it outlines the research and writing standards used in most college courses that deal with the humanities. If you decide to purchase, be sure you are buying the Sixth Edition (2003). If not available in the Lehman College bookstore, you'll find this handbook at any major bookseller or online vendor. I strongly advise you to purchase this book, especially if you have limited experience writing academic papers.

Getting Started

The following tasks should be completed in the first week of the course:

1. Log into the course, following the instructions provided above.
2. Complete all tasks listed under "Assignments," Topic 00.

If you are unable to log on or to do any of the items listed under Topic 00, you must contact me to let me know what the problem is. **Don't fall behind**; late work is not accepted, and you'll find it very hard to catch up again.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Please note: A "week" in this course begins on Tuesday and ends on Monday at midnight (one minute after 11:59 PM Monday night). For assignment due dates and the complete breakdown of points for the course, see "Course Schedule and Point Breakdown" under Course Logistics in Blackboard.

Weekly Writing Assignments

Each week I will post reading assignments. After completing each week's assignments, you will be required to submit a written response to a question or set of questions I will provide. Your response should be at least 500 words (Paper length can be easily verified using the "word count" feature under "Tools" in Microsoft Word). Your response should show that you have reviewed the week's reading/listening assignments and that you have thoughtfully considered the materials presented and the relationships between them.

Note that these assignments will not be graded on technical aspects such as spelling, grammar and word usage. However, mechanical problems that detract from the meaning of your work will inevitably impact your grade. In other words, a few misspellings or grammatical errors are not an issue, but if these problems are so numerous that your meaning is unclear, your grade will suffer.

Unlike in the two major papers, which are formal academic writing assignments, it's okay (and often required) to express personal opinions in these assignments. However, be sure to back up your opinion with facts. In other words, if you feel a certain way about something, explain your reasons why. If you're taking a certain position on an issue, back up your position – provide evidence from our readings, from the music we're listening to, or from your experiences outside the class.

Please do not answer in a "Question and Answer" format (by cutting and pasting my questions into your response and answering them directly one at a time). Rather, consider the questions I ask, formulate your response, and present your ideas as a standard (although brief) essay, with a central idea and structured in paragraphs.

As a policy, I won't be handing these weekly writing assignments back with comments. However, if you have a question about the points you received or you would like feedback on your writing, contact me and I will be happy to help you out.

As noted below, late work will not be accepted.

Discussion Board

An integral part of this course is your participation on the class Discussion Board. You can contribute to the Discussion Board at any point during the week.

Discussion on the topic will close at the same time the essay is due.

For each substantive contribution to the Discussion Board you will be awarded 3 points. A "substantive contribution" is one in which you respond to the topic in question, offering a new idea or an original viewpoint, or in which you otherwise advance the discussion in some meaningful way. Note that points cannot be awarded for postings that merely agree with what's been said or reiterate a point already made. Therefore, make sure you read through all comments posted on a given topic before contributing your own thoughts.

Although it's a somewhat arbitrary guideline, a substantive comment should generally be at least three sentences long. If the statement you'd like to contribute is shorter, think about how you can expand on it to make your ideas clearer. Provide an example, acknowledge other possible points of view, or in some other way elaborate upon your thoughts.

My expectation is that you will make three substantive contributions to each topic's forum, which will result in 9 points per week.

As with the weekly writing assignments, technical aspects of your writing (spelling, grammar, etc.) will

not impact the points you receive for your Discussion Board participation. However, make sure that your writing is clear; if others can't make out what you're trying to say, your contribution cannot be considered substantive.

Major Papers

In addition to the weekly writing assignments, two major research papers are required. Together, these papers account for over 50% of your grade. All necessary information will be included in the "Major Paper Guidelines" folder, which will be posted under Course Logistics in Blackboard later in the semester.

Examinations

There are no examinations for this course.

Monitoring your grade

At any time during the course, you can find out exactly how many points you have accumulated towards your final grade. As assignments are corrected, I will post grades in Blackboard (under "Tools->My Grades").

If you are concerned about how final grades will be distributed, you can follow the following minimal guidelines (i.e. if you accumulate at least the following number of points, you can expect the following final grade):

A = 475-500

A- = 445-474

B+ = 410-444

B = 370-409

B- = 335-369

C+ = 295-334

C = 240-294

C- = 200-239

D = 100-199

F = 0-99

Note that this point breakdown is only guideline for you to track your progress. It is not a guarantee of the grade you will receive. Final grades will take into account a student's overall performance during the semester. That may mean that your final grade could be higher or lower than what is reflected here.

Final grades also reflect how well you have completed all requirements of the course. In order to receive a passing grade, a student must consistently participate in the discussion board, turn in weekly assignments and both major papers.

Submitting your work

You should submit your weekly writing assignments and major papers through the Digital Drop Box in Blackboard. This allows us both to maintain a record of what was submitted and when. See "Digital Drop Box Instructions" under Course Logistics in Blackboard for more information.

Please submit these assignments as Microsoft Word documents (.doc). If you do not have access to Word, you can submit your assignments in Rich Text format (.rtf). Regardless of the format in which submitted, I will return your major papers as Word documents, because I will use Word's proofing features to provide feedback. Therefore, if you don't have Word on your computer, you'll need to review these returned documents on a computer that does have Word installed.

Please note that I don't report by e-mail whether I have received your assignments in the digital drop box. Within one week of the deadline, I will post announcement letting you know that the grades are

posted. If at that time your grades don't appear or you believe there is a problem, please let me know.

The only assignments I ask you to send me via e-mail are your topic, sources, thesis statements and outlines for your major papers. Handing these in via e-mail allows me to provide timely feedback. If these assignments are placed in the Digital Drop Box, my feedback to you may be delayed.

Policy on Late Work

Weekly writing assignments (A&W) are not accepted late. The same holds true for discussion board participation. No exceptions will be made.

Computer malfunctions or problems with your internet service provider are not acceptable excuses for turning work in late. If you are concerned about the possibility of such problems, my suggestion would be to do your work and submit it early. That way if you run into problems, you have time to find another computer to use.

A Major Paper will be subject to a 10% reduction in the total points awarded the paper for each week that the final paper is late, up to a maximum of a 50% penalty.

If you are going to miss a deadline because you are unable to log into Blackboard or because the CUNY Portal is down, **you can e-mail your work to me.** Please send your document as an attachment, instead of pasting the text into the body of an e-mail. Only e-mail me your assignments under these circumstances, unless I explicitly ask you to e-mail a particular assignment in my instructions.

If you find yourself in exceptional and truly unavoidable circumstances that will prevent you from getting your work in on time, contact me **before** you miss any deadlines. I cannot make special arrangements for you once a deadline has already passed.

My suggestions to help you succeed in this course

- Keep on track of all deadlines and turn all work in on time. This is extremely important.
- Manage your time wisely. Online courses are demanding. You will likely find you're doing more reading and especially more writing than in other classes. The trade-off, of course, is that you can do your work when you want to, where you want to, and you save time by not commuting back and forth to campus.
- Take the major papers seriously. If you don't have much experience writing academic papers, you will have to put in some extra work and probably ask some questions in order to get it right.
- Understand what plagiarism is, and don't let it happen. We'll discuss plagiarism early in the course. As your performance in this course is evaluated entirely through your writing, it is critical you completely understand the issues here.
- Get help if you need it. Free tutoring and help with your writing is available through the Academic Support Center (Old Gym Building, x8175). Please contact them, especially if you find yourself struggling with the major papers.

Students in the past have told me they have found this service extremely helpful. For hours and other information, see their website at <http://www.lehman.edu/issp>. I recommend calling to make an appointment, as they cannot always accommodate walk-ins. The earlier in the semester you seek help, the more you will benefit.