REL. 3381/LAS 3930: RELIGIONS OF LATIN AMERICA  
MWF: 6th PERIOD  
2306 TURLINGTON HALL  
FALL 2013  

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Office Hours: Mondays: 11AM to 12:30PM, Thursdays: Noon to 1:30PM, and by appointment.

DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad survey of the main religious traditions in Latin America, namely, indigenous religions, Catholicism in its various forms, Protestantism, and African-based religions, including Brazilian Candomblé, Cuban Santería, and Haitian Vodou. Through a comparative study of these religious traditions, the course seeks not only to identify commonalities, but to highlight theological, ritual, and symbolic specificities. Special emphasis will be placed on the issue of syncretism, that is, the on-going cross-fertilization among various religions which has given the Latin American religious arena its particular flavor. We will also focus on the social and political roles religion plays in contemporary Latin America, exploring the ways in which those at the margins of society (i.e., the poor, women, Latin Americans of African descent, and indigenous people) use religious beliefs, practices, and institutions to make sense of rapid social change and globalization.

OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize students with the diversity and complexity of religious expressions in Latin America.

2. To teach students to approach critically studies on the relationship among religious, cultural, and societal dynamics.

3. To help students enhance their writing and expository skills.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Three in-class, closed-book unit exams. Each exam will have definitions of key terms and identification of important figures, as well as two or three essay-questions addressing issues raised in the readings, class discussions, and lectures for each of the course sections. Please beware that exams will cover not only all aspects of the readings, but also issues discussed in class. Exams I and II will each be worth 20% of the final grade. The final exam, which will have at least one cumulative essay-question, will be 30%. Total: 70%.

2. Quizzes: There will be six quizzes (on 08/28, 09/09, 09/23, 10/07, 10/28, and 11/15) representing 20% of the final grade. The instructor reserves the right to give additional quizzes on the required readings at any time. Quizzes will serve to "encourage" students to keep up with the readings.
3. **Participation:** You are expected to attend class and participate actively in class discussion. Active and informed participation demands that students read the material carefully before coming to class. Participation represents 10% of your final grade.

**RULES**

1. **Plagiarism or cheating:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. On the issue of plagiarism and cheating, I operate under a **zero tolerance policy**. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive a grade of zero on the assignment in question and will fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. See [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm) & [www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm) for more information on UF policies.

2. **Incompletes are strongly discouraged** and will be given only when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final requirements due to unforeseen events, such as a medical emergency. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete before the end of the semester.

3. **Make-up quizzes and exams** will only be given to students who can present proper, legitimate written documentation (in the form of a medical excuse or a funeral notice, for example) to justify their inability to take a quiz or an exam during the scheduled time.

4. **Late assignments** will be marked down half a grade (from A to A-, for example) for each day they are late, unless the student can present proper, legitimate written documentation to justify the tardiness. Late assignments will not be accepted a week after the deadline. In that case, the student will receive a 0 (zero) in the assignment.

5. **Grading Scale:**

   - A: 100-95; A-: 94-90; B+: 89-87; B: 86-84; B-: 83-80; C+: 79-77; C: 76-74; C-: 73-70; D+: 69-67; D: 66-64; D-: 63-60; E: <60.

   Please keep in mind that grades below C will not count for your major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or College Basic Distribution credit.

6. Given that religion is often a very personal and potentially contentious topic, we **expect students to treat each other with civility and respect**. I hope that our debates will be lively and that people will feel free to express their opinions and disagree with each other. However, these opinions and disagreements have to be presented in a manner that is appropriate to an academic setting.

7. Students engaging in any sort of disruptive behavior, including passing notes, reading a newspaper, playing computers games, checking their e-mail, or chatting while lectures and class discussions are taking place, will be asked to leave the classroom. They will be counted as absent for that particular day. **Please turn phones and pagers off during class.**

8. **Please make sure to arrive to class on time.** Late arrivals break the rhythm of the lecture/discussion, particularly for one-period classes. Also, unless you have requested permission, do not leave in the middle of the class. If you do so, it will be counted as an absence.
9. **Students with Disabilities.** Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then give this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.

**READINGS**

Students are responsible for **ALL** of the following readings:

**Books (on Reserves):**


**Additional Articles (available on Sakia)**


http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/01/18/mcalister.haiti.faith/


http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/atheologies/7217/just_what_kind_of_revolution_is_francis_calling_for/

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Wed. 08/21: Introduction to the Course  
No Readings

Fri. 08/23: Understanding Religion and Society in Latin America  

**Part I: Indigenous Religions**

Mon. 08/26: Mayas and Aztecs I  
Wed. 08/28:  Mayas and Aztecs II  
Read: Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, Chapter 2;  
**QUIZ # 1**

Fri. 08/30:  Mayas and Aztecs III  
Read: Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, Chapter 3

Mon. 09/02:  No Class – Labor Day

Wed. 09/04:  Mayas and Aztecs IV  
Read: Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, Chapter 4;  
Petersen and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 33-44  
Video: The Blood of the Kings

Fri. 09/06:  Amazonian Indigenous Religions I: The Yekuanas  

Mon. 09/09:  Amazonian Indigenous Religions II: The Yekuanas  
Read: Guss, *To Weave and Sing*, Chapters 3 and 4 (“Culture and Ethos” and “All Things are Made”);  
Petersen and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 29-32 and 49-54.  
Video: Watunna  
**QUIZ # 2**

Wed. 09/11:  Amazonian Indigenous Religions III: The Yekuanas  
Read: Guss, *To Weave and Sing*, Chapters 5-7.

Fri. 09/13:  Andean Indigenous Religions  
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 27-29 and 44-49;  
Neuman, “Pitting Heaven and Earth.”

Mon. 09/16:  **FIRST IN-CLASS EXAM (Introduction and Part I)**

**Part II: Colonial Encounters and the Rise of Traditional Popular Catholicism**

Wed. 09/18  The Conquest  

Fri. 09/20:  The Virgin of Guadalupe: The Birth of Traditional Popular Catholicism  
Read: Brading, “The Woman of the Apocalypse.”

Mon. 09/23:  Religious Syncretisms: Domination, Accommodation, and Resistance  
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 72-88;  
**QUIZ # 3**

Wed. 09/25:  Brotherhods and Other Lay Specialists  
Read: De Theije, “Brotherhoods Throw More Weight”

**Part III: Religions of the African Diaspora**
Fri. 09/27: The African Diaspora
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 89-94, 100-112;

Mon. 09/30: Brazilian African Based Religions: Candomblé and Umbanda
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 44-58;
Video: Bahia: Africa in the Americas.

Wed. 10/02: Candomblé and Umbanda II: The *Orixás*
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 58-74;

Fri. 10/04: Candomblé and Umbanda III: The Ethics of the *Terreiro*
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 74-80;

Mon. 10/07: Regla Oricha (Santería)
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 81-104;
Petersen and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 119-123.
**QUIZ # 4**

Wed. 10/09: Regla Oricha (Santería) II
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 104-113;
Petersen and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 123-126;
Murphy, “Ifa.”
Video: The King Does Not Lie.

Fri. 10/11: Haitian Vodou I
Read: Murphy, *Working the Spirit*, pp. 10-43
Video: Divine Horseman.

Mon. 10/14: Haitian Vodou II
Read: McCarthy Brown, “Azili.”
McAlister, “Voodoo’s View of the Earthquake” and “Why Does Haiti Suffer so Much?”
Guest Lecturer: Prof. Benjamin Hebblethwaite

Wed. 10/16: **SECOND IN-CLASS EXAM (Part II and III)**

**Part IV: Religion in Latin American Post-Independence**

Fri. 10/18: Transformations in Church-State Relations

Mon. 10/21: Millenarian and Messianic Movements I: Canudos and Joaseiro
Wed. 10/23:  Millenarian and Movements II: Contestado  
Read: Diacon, “The Search for Meaning in a Historical Context.”

Part V: Progressive Popular Catholicism: Liberation Theology and Base Christian Communities

Fri. 10/25:  The Rise of Progressive Catholicism: Vatican II and Medellín  

Mon. 10/28:  Liberation Theology I: The Preferential Option for the Poor  
Read: Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion*, pp. 1-71;  
Gutierrez, Chapters I and II of *God of Life*;  
Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 219-221.  
**QUIZ # 5**  
Video: Romero.

Wed. 10/30:  Liberation Theology II: Christology  
Read: Sobrino, “The Historical Jesus: The Starting Point of Christology.”  
Video: Romero (Cont.)

Fri. 11/01:  Romero and the Question of Violence  
Read: Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion*, pp. 72-117;  
Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 229-238.  
Guest Speaker: Prof. Anna Peterson

Mon. 11/04:  Liberation Theology II: Ecclesiology – Base Christian Communities  
Read: Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion*, pp. 118-156;  
Berryman, “A New Model of Church”;  
Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 221-228.

Wed. 11/06:  Progressive Catholicism and the Catholic “Restoration”  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Instruction of Certain Aspects.”

Fri. 11/08:  No Class – Homecoming

Mon. 11/11:  No Class – Veteran’s Day

Part VI: Protestantism in Latin America

Wed. 11/13:  Mainline Churches  

Fri. 11/15:  Pentecostalism: Theology and Practices  
Read: Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil*, pp. 3-72;  
**QUIZ # 6**

Mon. 11/18:  Pentecostalism and Gender  
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 191-197;  
Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil*, pp. 72-125;
Brusco, “The Reformation of Machismo.”

Wed. 11/20: Pentecostalism and Politics
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 197-201;

Fri. 11/22: The Rise and Growth of Neo-Pentecostalism
Read: Kramer, “Spectacle and Staging of Power”

Mon. 11/25: Study Day – American Academy of Religion Meeting

Wed. 11/27: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Fri. 11/29: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

**Part VII: Contemporary Religious Diversity and Change**

Mon. 12/02: Pneumacentric and Alternative Christianities and Beyond
Read: Peterson and Vasquez, *Latin American Religions*, pp. 239-250; 260-278.
Chesnut, “Pragmatic Consumers and Practical Products;”
Vásquez and Fernandes, “Just What Kind of Revolution is Francis Calling For?”

Wed. 12/04: New Religious Movements

*** THIRD EXAM FRIDAY 12/13 FROM 12:30 TO 2:30 PM (Parts IV-VII) ***