

History 481/581
Understanding History: Revolutions in Modern Latin America

Winter 2007
MW 1:30-3pm
Room: Randall 116
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Office hour: MW, 11-1pm, by appt

Course Description

This course introduces students to the historian's craft through the development and completion of a research project related to revolutions in twentieth-century Latin America. We will begin with a general introduction to the work of history, and to revolutions in Latin America. The course will then focus on the process of selecting and carrying out a serious work of historical scholarship. By the end of the class, all students will have completed their own original research project on a topic of their choice related to modern Latin American revolutions.

Course Outcomes

This course fulfills an essential requirement for all history majors. As a result, the class promotes a systematic engagement with the historian's craft in its many facets. By the end of the course, you should be able to, among other things:

- (1) Identify the most important revolutions of modern Latin American history, and analyze their principal causes and consequences
- (2) Analyze and value the histories of Latin America and its peoples
- (3) Embrace the historian's craft of empathy and interpret sources from this perspective
- (4) Locate primary and secondary sources through the use of multiple finding aids
- (5) Distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and utilize them in developing your own critically arrived at original arguments
- (6) Identify the relationship between historical fact and interpretation
- (7) Compare and contrast opposing historical interpretations, and come to your own conclusions through a careful consideration of relevant materials
- (8) Organize, present, and communicate your own opinions in a thoughtful, coherent fashion in both oral and written form
- (9) Learn formal source citations and avoid plagiarism

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I firmly believe that learning is not a passive process. Students must actively participate in order to foster life skills that go well beyond their knowledge of history. Thus, my teaching method is necessarily interactive. While there will be times for students to "listen and learn" during lectures, this class devotes most of its time to active participation and a dialogue between instructor and students. This will be done through regular class discussions. In the end, learning is achieved only through an active engagement with the course materials, the instructor, and fellow students alike.

Required Reading

There are three required texts for this course, all of which are available for purchase at the campus bookstore. They are:

Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 5th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2005).

Selbin, Eric. *Modern Latin American Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Grading

Your grade will be determined by attendance, class participation, and many assignments related to a final research paper. Following is a breakdown of the grading scale:

Attendance	Pass/Fail
Class Participation	20%
Primary Source Analysis	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Outline	10%
Rough Draft	20%
Final Draft	30%

While **attendance** does not count toward your participation grade, it does matter. The policy is simple: if you have more than five unexcused absences during the quarter, you will fail the class.

Class participation is comprised of three elements. First, you will receive a grade for your performance during our class discussions. Again, attendance does not count toward your participation grade. You must ask questions, voice opinions, etc. in order to receive a good grade. Second, you will be assessed on the quality of your performance during peer review sessions, which comprise an important component of the class. You will be expected to provide useful and respectful critiques of your colleagues' work throughout the quarter. Finally, part of your participation grade will come from unannounced pop quizzes on the readings.

Please be aware that I take your participation very seriously. In fact, I may at my own discretion increase the percentage of participation in the final course grade if I feel that a student deserves it (i.e. participation could be worth 25% or even 30% of the final course grade). I will not do this to hurt your grade, only to help it.

The **primary source analysis** will be due at the beginning of class on Monday, January 29, and should be a three-page, typed, and double-spaced analysis of two primary sources that you have uncovered during the course of your research. Your essay should respond to the following question: How do the primary documents that you have chosen help support a broader thesis regarding the subject matter at hand? Your answers should address a number of related issues.

Do the sources complement or contradict one another? What are the implications for your broader thesis? Where might you need corroborating evidence? What kinds of sources would provide corroboration? Your answers should include direct citations from the sources, and address the contexts (who, what, when, where, why) of each document.

The **annotated bibliography** will be due at the beginning of class on Monday, February 5, and should include treatments of a minimum of ten sources, primary and secondary. Annotated bibliographies provide the reader with citations and descriptions of the books/articles/documents that you will be using to prove a thesis. Thus, begin by laying out your tentative thesis. Following should be full paragraph descriptions of each source (divided into primary and secondary), their arguments, and their usefulness in helping to prove your thesis. You are required to include at least one source from each of the following: scholarly article, on-line site, book-length primary and secondary sources from our library, a Summit item, and an item received via interlibrary loan. The more sources you have, the richer the analysis will be.

The **outline** will be due in my office by 5pm on Friday, February 16, and should detail, paragraph-by-paragraph, your rough draft's tentative organization. Begin with your thesis, which will probably be different from the thesis of your annotated bibliography. Following should be the topic sentences and supporting evidence to be included in each paragraph in support of the wider thesis. Your topic sentences and supporting evidence should be stated in complete sentences. A good outline provides you with a blueprint for your entire essay.

The **rough draft** will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, February 28, and should be a minimum of ten pages, typed, and double spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins all around. You cannot receive a grade for a final draft if you have not first turned in a rough draft. The **final draft** will be due (with the graded rough draft attached) in my office by 5pm on Tuesday, March 13. The paper must be a minimum of 15 pages, typed and double spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins all around. You cannot receive a grade for the final draft if it is an unedited copy of the rough draft. For **graduate credit**, the final draft must be a minimum of 20 pages and include at least 15 sources. For more information, see "guidelines" below.

Special Needs

Students who have special needs or disabilities that may affect their ability to access information or material presented in this course are encouraged to contact me or the office of Disability Support Services at 509-963-2171 for additional disability-related educational accommodations.

Statement on Plagiarism

I will strictly enforce all university regulations regarding plagiarism. If you copy the words or use the ideas of someone else without giving that author credit (i.e. citing the source), you will fail the class and university authorities will be notified. The rules for plagiarism can be confusing. Most often, I have found that students who plagiarize do not realize they have done something wrong. Remember, plagiarism is copying someone else's words or ideas. When in doubt, cite the source. There are no second chances.

Schedule of Classes

This course begins with a three-week introduction to history and Latin American revolutions in the twentieth century. We will then focus the majority of class time on systematically developing and carrying out original research projects, from topic selection to final draft. Following is a weekly and daily breakdown of activities, assignments, and due dates:

Week One (Wednesday, January 3 to Friday, January 5): Introductions

Assignment: Read Marius/Page (M/P), Chapter 1

Wednesday, January 3: Introductions and Syllabus; An Introduction to the Historian's Craft and Revolutions in Modern Latin America

Week Two (Monday, January 8 to Friday, January 12): Modern Latin American Revolutions, Part I: Mexico and Cuba

Assignment: Preliminary Topic Due by Friday

Reading Assignment: begin reading Selbin

Monday, January 8: The Mexican Revolution

Wednesday, January 10: The Cuban Revolution

Week Three (Monday, January 15 to Friday, January 19): Modern Latin American Revolutions, Part II: Other Revolutions and Topic Selection

Assignment: Definitive Topic, Research Questions, and Preliminary Primary Source List Due Wednesday Morning (Prior to Class)

Reading Assignment: finish Selbin; M/P, Chapter 2

Monday, January 15: No Class, MLK, Jr. Day

Wednesday, January 17: Discussion of Selbin, other Revolutions; Peer Review of Topics

Week Four (Monday, January 22 to Friday, January 26): Gathering Information, Part I

Reading Assignment: Plan of Ayala (available on-line); and M/P, Chapter 4

Monday, January 22: Searching for Primary and Secondary Sources in the Brooks Library (visit Library from 2-3pm)

Wednesday, January 24: Primary Source Analysis; Discussion of Plan of Ayala

Week Five (Monday, January 29 to Friday, February 2): Gathering Information, Part II

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis Due Monday

Reading Assignment: M/P, Chapter 4

Monday, January 29: Finding Secondary Sources; The Historiography of Latin American Revolutions

Wednesday, January 31: Peer Review of Primary Source Analyses

Week Six (Monday, February 5 to Friday, February 9): Devising a Thesis

Assignment: Annotated Bibliography (with Thesis) Due Monday

Reading Assignment: M/P, Chapters 5 and 6

Monday, February 5: The Elements of a Good Thesis; Discussion of M/P

Wednesday, February 7: Peer Thesis Review

Week Seven (Monday, February 12 to Friday, February 16): Organization and Evidence

Assignment: Paper Outlines Due Friday

Reading Assignment: M/P, Chapter 8

Monday, February 12: The Elements of Good Organization and Evidence (Bring Turabian)

Wednesday, February 14: No Class

Week Eight (Monday, February 19 to Friday, February 23): Writing Style and Grammar

Reading Assignment: M/P, Chapter 7

Monday, February 19: No Class, Presidents' Day

Wednesday, February 21: Grammar and Writing Style

Week Nine (Monday, February 26 to Friday, March 2): Rough Drafts

Assignment: Rough Draft Due on Wednesday

Monday, February 26: Problems and Pitfalls; Peer Review of Paper Outlines

Wednesday, February 28: Rough Drafts DUE; Private Consultations

Week Ten (Monday, March 5 to Friday, March 9): Review Rough Drafts

Assignment: none

Monday, March 5: Return Rough Drafts; Private Consultations

Wednesday, March 7: No Class; Revise, Revise, Revise

The **final paper** is due in my office by Tuesday, March 13 by 5pm.

History 481 Writing Guidelines

Writing is an essential skill, no matter what career you choose. As a course devoted to the historian's craft, History 481 places special emphasis on developing your writing abilities. Following are the criteria upon which your research papers will be evaluated.

I. INTRO/THESIS

Your papers must include an introduction that sets the contours and context of the research project and presents a thesis or argument that you will set out to prove. Formulating an argument is possible after having read primary and secondary sources, listened attentively during lecture, and participated in our discussions. Your intro/thesis will be graded on many components:

A. Context: Is the topic contextualized well?

Your introductory paragraph should introduce the reader to the topic and the thesis of your essay. Assume you are writing for an educated audience that is unfamiliar with the specific issue at hand. When setting the context for your reader, consider the who, what, when, where, and why questions of the topic under consideration.

B. Clarity and Conciseness: Is the thesis stated clearly and concisely?

A thesis should be easy to understand. The reader should not be left wondering what the argument of the paper was. Most times, the thesis appears at the end of the introduction. Do not save the punch line until the end. The reader should know exactly what it is that you are setting out to prove from the very beginning.

C. Originality: Is the thesis original to you?

Original thought has as its base critical thought. Your thesis tells me a great deal about the amount of time and effort you have put in to your paper. Did you merely summarize and copy the arguments that I made during lecture, that others made in class during discussions, or that your secondary sources have provided for you? Or have you deeply engaged your sources, both primary and secondary, to arrive at an interpretation that is original to you? The best research papers do the latter.

D. Support/Persuasiveness: Is the thesis supported by the organization and evidence?

All arguments must be presented persuasively. See below for more information on organization and evidence.

II. ORGANIZATION

Any paper must be organized well. Rather than a hodge-podge of disparate facts, an essay should have a coherent organization, one that is often suggested by the question, your thesis, or the materials covered. In short, each paragraph must have a purpose. By that I mean that each paragraph should, in some way, advance the proof of your thesis/argument. Without good organization, arguments become murky, contradicted, and eventually easy to discount. Your organization should be aimed at proving your thesis as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The elements of good organization include:

A. Relation to Thesis: Does each paragraph make one point that helps you prove the thesis?

Each paragraph needs a purpose related to the thesis. If the material in no way advances a proof of the thesis, you should eliminate the material. Some times it is very difficult to eliminate stories or anecdotes that are interesting, but unrelated to your thesis. Have the discipline to either throw it into a footnote of interest, or throw it out altogether. You may have time in a future paper to share the tidbit. For now, if the story/evidence is unrelated to a proof of the thesis, do not include it in the paper.

B. Topic Sentences: Does each paragraph include an introductory sentence that summarizes all material contained in the paragraph and relate it to the thesis?

Each paragraph's purpose should be announced in an opening sentence that links the material contained in a common analytical framework. Good topic sentences mean that you have carefully crafted and considered the argument and organization.

C. Transitions: Does each paragraph flow from the previous paragraph in logic and narrative?

Each paragraph should flow from the ideas elaborated in the previous paragraph. Usually the final sentence of one paragraph addresses an issue or raises a point that allows the writer to jump into the next paragraph seamlessly, but good transitions are an art. You do not want to litter your essay with clumsy and awkward transitional sentences.

D. Description/Narrative vs. Argument/Analysis: Does the paper analyze and argue a point or merely describe/narrate historical events?

The heart of any historical paper and the historian's craft is analysis. Remember, historical events are only the building blocks of interpretation. If you find yourself retelling a chronological story of events, you are not analyzing. Your paper needs to be organized around the proof of an analytical point, not the narration of events.

III. EVIDENCE

The basis for any successful argument is the evidence marshaled for its proof. No thesis can be proven without providing specific evidence from your sources to demonstrate your claims. Thus, your essays must include direct quotes, statistics, etc. from the sources gathered, as well as correct citations of the sources. It matters not which form you choose to cite your sources (parentheticals, footnotes, endnotes; MLA, Turabian, Chicago), but I do care that you are consistent (see "Required Reading" above for example of citation methods). In the end, think of evidence as the building blocks of believability. How can I believe a word you say if you provide no specific examples/evidence that demonstrate your claims?

The elements of good evidence include:

A. Quantity: Do you marshal an array of primary/secondary sources in support of your thesis?

The sheer amount of sources is never enough to prove an argument persuasively, but it's a good place to start. Have you exhausted the available sources? Have you checked article databases like J-STOR, Project Muse, and others? Are there other periodical

sources available through interlibrary loan? What primary sources were cited in your secondary sources? Can you get access to them? While it is difficult from Ellensburg to get your hands on a wide variety of sources on Latin American revolutions, the topic is broad enough to obtain a good quantity of both primary and secondary sources.

B. Quality: Are the sources appropriate/adequate for the proof of the thesis?

In addition to the number of sources, their quality is crucial to the proof of your thesis. Most importantly, you need to ensure that your source material is adequate to prove the point made in your paper. It would be inappropriate, for example, to attempt to prove a thesis regarding the causes of the Cuban Revolution if all of your primary sources dealt with the revolution in action (cause vs. course). Sometimes quality trumps quantity. You may have a great number of sources, but no smoking gun that helps you prove your point definitively. There's no greater joy for an historian than to find that indisputable piece of evidence that firmly establishes a thesis unquestionably for readers.

C. Interpretation: Have you interpreted your sources correctly/faithfully?

I say "correctly" with caution, because there are very few completely "correct" or "incorrect" interpretations of history. But there are incorrect interpretations and uses of documents. I'll give you an example from my own work on Mexico's agronomists' efforts to redistribute land to poor peasants in the 1920s and 1930s. Since the agronomists confronted corrupt political elites in Mexico City, many of them sought to do their work in the provinces, far from crooked politicians. With that argument in mind, I came across a letter from one agronomist, Eduardo Morillo, who while trying to get away from Mexico City bosses, hated his work in Chiapas, which was a dangerous place to redistribute land in the 1930s. Thus, he wrote to a friend that "It would be better to go far from Chiapas" to do his work elsewhere. It would be unfaithful to the source, however, to chop off the "Chiapas" part, and add "Mexico City," even though that's what Morillo wanted to do (just not in Chiapas). The historian must always remain faithful to the context and content of the documents. Especially when dealing with documents in another language, the historian must ensure that s/he has faithfully interpreted the intent and meaning of the document's author/s.

D. Documentation: Have you provided adequate documentation of all your sources?

A final element of evidence is its documentation. Scholarly work is a collective endeavor. While each historian adds his/her own voice and arguments to the mix, no piece of historical scholarship begins with a blank slate. Thus, we must give credit to other authors whose ideas we are building upon to reach new conclusions and interpretations. Good documentation of sources not only gives credit where credit is due, but it also allows the interested reader to track down the evidence if s/he so desires. Thus, good documentation not only polices against plagiarism, but it more importantly advances a very human thirst for knowledge, and allows future historians to build upon the knowledge that your sources and interpretations have added. Thus, I care not what style of documentation you choose to use, but I do care that you do it, and do it consistently. The Turabian book is just one among many models that you can use, but it's probably the easiest since it's required reading for the course.

IV. GRAMMAR

Put simply, grammar matters. In order to prove a point effectively, a writer must pay close attention to sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, etc. A reader is less likely to be persuaded by an argument if s/he is constantly encountering basic grammatical errors which do nothing more than distract. If you want the reader to pay attention to what you have to say, then you must master basic grammar.

A. General Rules: Clearly books have been written about correct grammatical structure, and all of the material cannot be summarized here. For an excellent summary of many issues, see Turabian and Marius/Page for more details on the important rules to follow.

B. Common Mistakes: Following is a list of commonly encountered grammatical errors that are usually easily fixed by paying close attention to your word processor's red and green squiggly lines calling attention to errors.

(1) Capitalization

capitalizing things that do not require it
not capitalizing things that require it
consistency (be sure to pick one form and stick with it)

The Church collapsed.

The church fought back.

(2) Run-on sentences

(3) Possessives

Zapatas' for Zapata's

Protestant's for Protestants'

see Turabian for an extensive list

(4) Agreement

The Socialist Party thought that **they** could win back the hearts and minds of Christian Democrats (party is singular; and "parties" cannot "think")

(5) Sentence fragments

Which meant that everyone could go home. (not a complete sentence)

(6) People "who" not "that"

Fidel Castro led the revolutionaries **that** wanted to overthrow Batista.

(7) Parallel construction

The Sandinistas sought to ameliorate poverty, educate citizens, and expropriate land.

(8) Their, they're, and there

(9) Its and It's

These are just a few of the many common errors that I have encountered. As stated above, please see especially Turabian for more.

V. STYLE

Related to grammar is the more difficult question of style. A paper's "readability" is an important element of persuasiveness. If your sentences are choppy, your words are imprecise, and your phrases are awkward and unclear, the net result is a less persuasive argument. Thus, every writer needs to pay close attention to writing style. Do your sentences flow and reflect your intended meaning? Do you insert direct quotes in flowing, well written sentences? As with grammar, entire books have been written on style. For more, see Marius and Page, Chapter 7.

A. Verb Choice/Tense

(1) passive vs. active voice

"There were problems with counter-revolutionaries"

"Revolutionary dogma was being challenged"

solution: decide who the actor is, and select active verbs

(2) "would" conditional (eliminate)

(3) past not present tense

B. Word Choice

(1) Be Precise

"thing" (too vague)

"this" (not as a noun)

"it" (what?)

"the biggest change" (changes are not large in terms of size. Maybe "most important"?)

"people" (who? which ones?)

"they" (who? make sure the reader knows to whom you are referring)

"the Cuban Revolution saw" (revolutions cannot "see," people do)

(2) Narrative Voice

keep "I" and "me" and all personal pronouns out of the narrative

always go with third person impersonal

C. Quotes in flowing, complete sentences

In an extraordinary moment of labor support on the campaign trail, Salvador Allende proclaimed to Amador Yarur, owner of Chile's most important textile factory, that "while I am your friend, I will take this factory away from you" and return it to the workers.

D. Simplicity, Directness

- (1) Manageable Sentences
- (2) Avoid wordy/excessive description
 “very” should be avoided
- (3) Avoid semi-colons (they are easy to over-use)

VI. PAPER FORMAT

Also included in determining your paper grade is the format. Your papers must be a minimum of fifteen pages of text in length, typed, and double-spaced. All papers should have a title page with a title, your name, course number (History 481), and the date you actually turn in the paper (Tuesday March 13 for the final draft). The essay should then appear starting at the top of page 2, in twelve-point font (Times New Roman), with one-inch margins on each side, and with no extra spaces between paragraphs or at the beginning of the essay. You cannot earn points for following the correct format. You can only lose points for not following it. For graduate credit, the final draft should be a minimum of 20 pages and utilize a minimum of 15 sources.

VII. GRADES

Each final and rough draft will be evaluated according to the six criteria listed above. The rough draft is worth 20% of the course grade, and the final paper counts for 30%. You cannot receive a grade for the final paper without first turning in a rough draft. Moreover, you will not receive a grade on the final draft unless you have incorporated the editorial comments that I have made to the rough draft. Final drafts must reflect that you have engaged the editing process.