

Histories of Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Latin America

Summer 2021
Van Dyck Hall
Tuesday and Thursday 6:00-9:40 PM

Instructor: Lisette Varón-Carvajal (lv209@history.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment

Grading:

I. Rationale:

This course aims to provide a broad historical overview of women, gender, and sexuality in modern Latin American. The purpose then is not to provide in-depth knowledge of any given country or topic, but rather to give students the opportunity to encounter various and diverse literatures in order to think the histories of women, gender, and sexuality in Latin America. In this sense, students are invited to explore diverse topics and historical moments. We will specially pay attention to other important histories categories in Latin American histories such as race, class and ethnicity.

II. Course Aims and Outcomes:

Aims

- Students will have a broad and general sense of the main debates within Latin American history about women, gender, and sexuality.
- Through the study of the histories of women, gender, and sexuality, students will gain an understanding of some of the main historical events of modern Latin American History.
- Students will get a broad panorama of Latin American history, learning about the histories of different countries and regions.
- Students will practice their analytical and writing skills.

Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Students must understand key concepts such as gender and sexuality. They also must learn to identify the difference between histories of women, histories of gender, and histories sexuality.
- Students must be able to identify key topics of Latin American history, through the prism of women, gender, and sexuality. For example: independence, slavery, abolition, family, reproduction, science, revolution, amongst some others.

- Students must be able to identify differences and similarities amongst Latin American countries
- Students will learn how to identify primary and secondary sources
- Students will learn how to write an essay, with a proper introduction, argument, and conclusion.

III. Format and Procedures:

We will meet twice a week, each session lasts three hours and 40 minutes. I expect students to make the readings and engage with the text (if you don't understand you can ask questions). For each session you will usually be given the option to choose between two texts. We will divide the class into two groups and when it's time to discuss the topic, each group will explain to the other what they read. I don't expect you to meet with your group in advance, but you are welcome to do so. You can also share a google doc where you type what you think are the main arguments, things you didn't understand, or things you found interesting. There are a couple of sessions in which you are asked to read two texts, and we won't divide the class into two. Those classes are exceptional and the only reason why I am asking you to read more is because those readings are very important for the discussion and assignments. In class, besides discussing the readings, I will bring primary sources that we will read together, or we may watch small video clips, or even a film.

Some housekeeping rules: Phones are not allowed as they may interrupt class discussion.

Also, I ask you to be on time. If for some reason you cannot attend class please notify me, if you are able to do so, beforehand.

Finally, if you think you have good reasons for not following one of these rules please come to me and we will figure out a solution.

IV. Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation: You are required to attend class and participate. If you don't understand something please ask. The purpose is for all of us to learn together. If you are shy and you don't feel comfortable participating you can give me written feedback of the readings and class discussion so I know you are making the readings and following the conversation. If you do this 3 times during the semester you should be fine. If you want to do it more than that you are welcome to do so.

2. Course readings:

(a) Required texts: All the articles and book chapters will be found in Sakai.

(b) Suggested novel: I suggest you buy Fernanda Melchor's novel *Temporada de Huracanes* or *Hurricane Season* (in Spanish or English, however you prefer). One of the best ways to learn about Latin American history is through its literature (I can recommend other books as well if you are interested, also, if you want to propose another book, I can consider that as well). Take this optional assignment as a way to learn about the region from a different perspective.

(c) Every week I will be giving you a list of supplementary readings or films, in case you want to further explore the topic we are discussing. This will be particularly useful for your final assignment.

3. Presentation: You have to sign up for one of the weeks and make a 10-15 minute presentation about the texts that we are supposed to read for that particular day. You must tell us what the articles we are discussing are saying, who wrote them, in what year, what you found most interesting about them, what you didn't understand.

4. Mid-term: You will have one mid-term that will evaluate your knowledge of the three first weeks of class. I will ask questions of the topics we have discussed so far.

5. Temporada de Huracanes/Hurricane Season by Fernanda Melchor (optional): For the day we are discussing Fernanda Melchor's novel you will bring a 2-3 page essay in which you discuss how you see gender and sexuality in the book. You can answer important questions such as: who are the main characters of the novel? Are they men or women? How are they portrayed or represented? How do you see gender and sexuality at play in the story? You can pick one particular scene that drew you attention, or you can focus more broadly in the overall story of the book. Start reading the novel with time so you have plenty of time to write a creative and well-thought essay. Those who do this assignment will get 10 extra points to their final grade. This can be the difference between a B+ and an A, or C+ and a B

5. Final Exam: Pick one historical moment of modern Latin American history and use women, gender, or sexuality as key concepts to discuss it and analyze it. You may choose from one of our weekly topics and you may use the recommended bibliography I will hand out every class (although you don't have to). While it's acceptable that you use the readings we all did together, I expect you to use minimum 3 other secondary sources (book chapters or articles). I also expect you to use 1 or 2 primary sources. You must write between 5-10 pages (double space). Please talk to me, or send me an email, so I give you the green light in your topic. We can discuss your ideas and doubts, and I can suggest you relevant literature.

V. Grading Procedures: Grades for the different credit options will be based on:

- (a) Class attendance and participation (40%)
- (b) Presentation (15%)
- (c) Mid-term (20%)
- (d) La Fiesta del Chivo essay (extra 10%)
- (e) Final Paper (25%)

VI. Academic Integrity

In all course work you are expected to uphold the university's standards for academic integrity. (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>). Lapses in

academic integrity include but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarisms, and facilitating dishonesty—these will not be tolerated.

VII. Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you have any learning disabilities or need other accommodations you must register with Disability Services and inform the instructor by the second week of class. See information here: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

VIII. Tentative Course Schedule

Unit 1 - Theoretical tools: history of women, gender, and sexuality: Key concepts and debates

In this unit we will be exploring key theoretical texts that will guide our discussions throughout the semester. The purpose is to give students analytical and conceptual tools that they will use to read and approach the historical readings of the following weeks. Additionally, students must utilize concepts such as gender and sexuality in their future assignments: both in the essay about *La Fiesta del Chivo*, and in their final paper.

Monday — Class Introduction and Third World Women

- Student's introduction. Who they are, why are they taking this course, their expectations
- Reading the syllabus

Assigned reading:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 2007. (Chapters 1, 2 and 7)

Or

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2* 12/13 (1984): 333–58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/302821>.

Wednesday — Gender and Sexuality in Latin America

Assigned reading: Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1864376>.

Pete Sigal. "Latin America and the Challenge of Globalizing the History of Sexuality." *The American Historical Review*, no. 5 (2009): 1340.

Optional: Tinsman, Heidi. "A Paradigm of Our Own: Joan Scott in Latin American History." *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1357–74.

Unit 2 —Colonial Period and Independence: Women in the conquest and independence movements

In this week we are going to discuss how women participated in the Conquest of the Americas, what were their gender roles during the long colonial period, and finally how they participated in independence movements.

Monday— The Conquest and Colonial Lineages (Limpieza de Sangre, Castas, and Gender in Colonial Mexico)

Assigned reading:

Townsend, Camilla. *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*. UNM Press, 2006 (Introduction.)

Or:

Martínez, María Elena. *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford University Press, 2008. (chapter 9 "Changing Contours: Limpieza de Sangre in the Age of Reason and Reform,")

Wednesday—Honor, Gender and Politics in Peru and Did Independence Change Women's Gender roles?

Assigned readings:

Chambers, Sarah C. *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854*. Penn State Press, 2010 (Chapter 5: "From Status to Virtue: The Transformation of the Honor Code" or Chapter 6 "The Limits of Citizenship: Gender and Republican Morality")

Or:

Earle, Rebecca. "Rape and the Anxious Republic: Revolutionary Colombia 1810–1830." In: Dore, Elizabeth, and Maxine Molyneux. *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2000.

Unit 3: The Nineteenth Century: How does gender builds into processes of state formation?

During this week we are going to discuss how independence transformed gender roles in Latin America, and how the new national states created a new gender order based on other important categories such as race, class, and sexuality.

Monday—Gender, the State, and Motherhood

Assigned readings:

Dore, Elizabeth. “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century.” In Dore, Elizabeth, and Maxine Molyneux. *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2000.

And:

Arlene J. Diaz, “Vicenta Ochoa, Dead Many Times: Gender, Politics, and a Death Sentence in Early Republican Caracas, Venezuela.” In W. E. French and K. E. Bliss *Gender, Sexuality and Power in Latin American Since Independence*, 2007.

Wednesday—Enslaved women in the Americas

For this class we are all going to read the introduction of *As If She Were Free*, and you are going to sign up for one of the chapters of the book (don’t worry they are short). In class you are going to talk about the biography of the woman you read about.

Assigned readings:

Ball, Erica, Tatiana Seijas, and Terri L. Snyder. *As If She Were Free: A Collective Biography of Women and Emancipation in the Americas*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. (Introduction and one chapter)

Unit 4—Turn of the Twentieth Century: Modernization and Industrialization

During this week we are going to discuss how processes of modernization and industrialization transformed the histories of women, gender, and sexuality in different Latin American countries. Particularly, we will explore a new concept this week: masculinity. How did men construct their gender? How is this important for the histories of the new nation states?

Monday—Mid-Term

Soldiers and Masculinity in Brazil, and Men and the Cuban Independence

Assigned readings:

Beattie, Peter M. *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864–1945*. Duke University Press, 2001. (Chapter 7 “Brazilian Soldiers and Enlisted Service in the Age of Impressment, 1870-1916” or Chapter 8 “Days of Caschaca, Sodomy, and the Lash: Army Crime and Punishment in the Age of Impressment, 1870-1916”)

Or:

Ferrer, Ada. “Rustic Men, Civilized Nation: Race, Culture, and Contention on the Eve of Cuban Independence.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, no. 4 (1998): 663.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2518423>.

Optional: Putnam, Lara. “Work, Sex, and Power in a Central American Export Economy at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.” In W. E. French and K. E. Bliss *Gender, Sexuality and Power in Latin American Since Independence*, 2007.

Unit 5 — The First Half of the Twentieth Century

During this week we are going to discuss one of the watershed events of twentieth century Latin American history: the Mexican Revolution. How did the revolutionary change transform the gender order? Are revolutions always good for women? We will also explore a puzzling and exciting new topic: the relationship between science and gender.

Monday— The State in the Twentieth Century and Gender in the Mexican Revolution

Assigned readings: Molyneux, Maxine. “Twentieth-Century State Formations in Latin America.” In: Dore, Elizabeth, and Maxine Molyneux. *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2000.

And one of the following three:

Vaughan, Mary Kay. "Pancho Villa, the Daughters of Mary, and the Modern Woman: Gender in the Long Mexican Revolution." In: Vaughan, Mary Kay, Gabriela Cano, and Jocelyn H. Olcott. *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Or:

Cano, Gabriela. "Unconceivable Realities of Desire: Amelio Robles's (Transgender) Masculinity in the Mexican Revolution." In: Vaughan, Mary Kay, Gabriela Cano, and Jocelyn H. Olcott. *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Or:

Smith, Stephanie. "Educating the Mothers of the Nation: The Project of Revolutionary Education in Yucatán." In: Mitchell, Stephanie Evaline, and Patience Alexandra Schell. *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Wednesday—Science, Gender and Reproduction

Assigned readings:

Chapter 4 "Matrimonial Eugenics: Gender and the Construction of Negative Eugenics" Stepan, Nancy Leys. "The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America. Cornell University Press, 2015.

Or one of the following two:

"Debating Reproduction: Birth Control, Eugenics, and Overpopulation in Puerto Rico, 1920–1940" In: Briggs, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. University of California Press, 2003.

Or "Demon Mothers in the Social Laboratory: Development, Overpopulation, and "the Pill," 1940–1960" In: Briggs, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. University of California Press, 2003.

Unit 6: The Second Half of the Twentieth Century

This week will end the course with some of the most contemporary events in Latin American history. We will start by discussing the suffrage campaigns in the region—particularly in

Argentina and we will talk about Latin America's bloody dictatorships, by discussing the case of Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo. In the last class we are going to talk about current feminist movements in the region, and talk about Fernanda Melchor's book Hurricane Season (Temporada de Huracanes). We are going to watch Netflix's documentary The Three Deaths of Marisela Escobedo

Monday—Political Institutions and Suffrage in Latin America. Also: Reproduction and the Pill in Mexico

One of the following two

Craske, Nikki. Chapter 4 "Formal Political Representation: Governments, Parties, and Bureaucracies." In: *Women and Politics in Latin America*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

Or:

Perón, Eva. *In My Own Words*. New Press, 1996. [Excerpt]

Wednesday—La Marea Verde, Femicidios, and Current Feminist Movements in Latin America

Suggested readings: Temporada de Huracanes/Hurricane Season by Fernanda Melchor

FINAL PAPER: DATE TBD