

Urban Latin America (ALCS 349)
Spring 2019
Professor Gabriel Hetland

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 4:15-5:35 PM
Location: HU 032
Office Hours: Wednesday 4-6 PM and by appointment
Office: Social Science 248A
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Course Description: The world is urbanizing at a rapid rate, with over half the earth's population now living in cities. Latin America is one of the most urbanized regions in the world, with 80% of its population living in cities. This course looks at several key issues relating to "the urban problem" in Latin America, specifically: inequality, violence, state security and state repression, the informal sector, clientelism and urban politics, and social movements. The course will be organized around the problem of urban inequality and a series of different "solutions" for this problem, in particular: public and private use of violence, markets, clientelistic politics, and social movements.

Required Materials for Course:

Books: We will be reading three books during the semester, which you should purchase online (used copies from amazon.com are fine; I would recommend searching for books in 'good', 'very good' or 'like new' condition) or from the UA bookstore on campus. I will check with the campus library to see if copies of these books are available online. However, if you are able to do so I *highly recommend you purchase the books and bring them to class with you*, since we will be going over specific passages of books each class.

Caldeira, Teresa. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Required purchase, not online]

Auyero, Javier. 2000. *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita*. Durham: Duke University Press. [Recommend purchase may be avail. online]

Sujatha Fernandes. 2010. *Who Can Stop the Drums? Urban Social Movements in Chávez's Venezuela*. Duke University Press. [Recommend purchase may be avail. online]

A few additional readings will be posted to the Course Blackboard site.

Note on Reading:* It is **absolutely essential for you to **do the reading for this course** (approximately 60 pages per week) on a regular basis. We will spend time discussing **how to** do academic reading in the beginning of the course. The key is to break the text down to understand and be able to answer these questions: What is the main question or questions that the author is trying to answer? What is the author's main argument or arguments? What evidence does the author use to try to prove or establish her or his argument? How persuasive is this evidence? What are the broader implications of the

argument put forward in the reading? To answer these questions you should be pay attention to the **title** of the reading, **headers** used to mark new sections and especially to the **beginning and end of the reading** and/or section, since that's often where authors signal *what they will tell you* or review *what they have just told you* in the reading.

Course Requirements, Grade Distribution

Attendance (10%): I will take attendance for each class. Students are allowed only *one excused absence*, for a personal emergency or sickness during the entire semester; this will require that you provide a doctor's note or an email explanation. For *any* absences after this your attendance grade will drop by 1% per absence.

Participation in Class (10%): This is a small course and class discussion is critical. You are expected to come to class having done the readings and you should be prepared to ask questions and provide answers to questions asked by your professor and your classmates.

Assignments (20%): You will have two mini essays due over the course of the semester, focused on the readings. Each essay will be **1 page double-spaced** (12 point font, Times New Roman, normal margins: 1.25 inch R/L and 1 in top/bottom). Essays are due in class on specified dates (see syllabus). Each essay counts for 10% of your overall course grade.

Grading Rubric for Writing Assignments

A: Answers question in an effective and persuasive manner; demonstrates full understanding of the issues and concepts discussed; written in a clear and easy-to-read manner with no spelling or grammar mistakes.

B+: Answers questions in a relatively effective and somewhat but not fully persuasive manner; demonstrates adequate but not outstanding understanding of issues and concepts discussed; written in a clear and easy-to-read manner with few spelling and/or grammar mistakes.

B: Answers questions but in a less effective and less persuasive manner; demonstrates modest understanding of issues and concepts discussed; written in a less clear and less readable manner with significant spelling and/or grammar mistakes.

C: Fails to answer question, or answers question in a highly ineffective and unpersuasive manner; shows very little understanding of issues and concepts discussed; poorly written with numerous grammar and spelling errors.

F: Does not attempt to answer question and/or is totally unpersuasive; shows no understanding of issues and concepts discussed; essay very difficult to read with a very high number of grammar and spelling mistakes.

Mini-Essay 1 (10%) – Due Tuesday February 12, in class

Mini-Essay 2 (10%) – Due in class, Thursday April 4

In-Class Midterm (25%, March 14): This will consist of a mix of short answer (multiple choice or true/false) questions and short essay questions. It will cover material that we've gone over during the first half of the semester.

Final Exam (35%, Wednesday May 16, 8:00-10:00 am, HU 032): This will consist of a mix of short answer (multiple choice or true false) questions and short essay questions. It will cover material that we've gone over during the entire semester, although there may be greater coverage of material covered in the second half of the semester.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious issue and will not be tolerated in this or any other UAlbany course. Students should familiarize themselves with the University's policy on this issue, and resources available to prevent this from occurring, by visiting: http://www.albany.edu/eltl/academic_integrity.php

“Every student has the responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Faculty members must specify in their syllabi information about academic integrity, and may refer students to this policy for more information. Nonetheless, student claims of ignorance, unintentional error, or personal or academic pressures cannot be excuses for violation of academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the standards and behaving accordingly, and UAlbany faculty are responsible for teaching, modeling and upholding them. Anything less undermines the worth and value of our intellectual work, and the reputation and credibility of the University at Albany degree.” (University's Standards of Academic Integrity Policy, Fall 2013)

Accommodating Disabilities: Reasonable accommodation will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (BA-120, 442-5490). That office will provide your instructor verification of your disability, and recommend appropriate accommodation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan 24 – Introduction to Course

Week 2 – Mike Davis and the Globalization of Urban Slums

Jan 29 – Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums” pp. 5-17 (Blackboard)

Jan 31 – Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums” pp. 17-34 (Blackboard)

Weeks 3-6. Caldeira, Teresa. City of Walls.

Feb 5 – Caldeira, pp. 1-5 (Intro), 19-52 (Talking of Crime and Ordering the World).

Reading Questions: What does Caldeira mean by the ‘talk of crime’? How does the talk of crime help to ‘order the world’? What is the specific historical context of the 1980s and 1990s in Brazil? (Think about the transition to democracy, the economic crisis of the 1980s and the imposition of neoliberal policies after this.) Why is it important to think about socioeconomic context for understanding violence in this moment?

Feb 7 – Caldeira pp. 53-77 (Crisis and Criminals I); View film *City of God*, first half.

Reading Questions: How does the talk of crime express people’s views and anxieties about issues that do not specifically or necessarily relate to crime such as the socioeconomic crisis? How are stereotypes used in people’s talk of crime? (Think about the differences between how this occurs amongst the upper classes vs. the poor and working class.)

Feb 12 – Caldeira pp. 77-101 (Crisis and Criminals II); finish viewing *City of God*.

Reading Qs: What role does the figure of the *Nordestino* (literally, Northeasterner) play in the narratives presented here? How do the concepts of good and evil function? How might Caldeira interpret or ‘read’ the film *City of God*?

**** Mini-essay 1 due in class.** Essay prompt: How does ‘the talk of crime’ help to ‘order the world’? How does this work differently for lower vs. upper classes? Be specific in your answer, and be sure to address the idea that talk and narrative is ‘productive.’ **

Feb 14 – Skim chapters 3-5, read the following pages carefully (i.e. read, don’t skim): p. 105, 137, 138-140, 175-178 (end of page), 182-190, 199 (final paragraph), 207-210.

Reading Qs: Has crime increased in Brazil during the time period analyzed? What types of crime? Are these statistics fully reliable? Why or why not? What explains the increase in crime according to Caldeira? What is the history of the police in Brazil? Why have the police often been so violent? Why does the population and the media support police violence (‘tough policing’)? How do citizens from different classes view the police?

Feb 19 – Caldeira pp. 213-255 (São Paulo: Three Patterns of Spatial Segregation)

Reading Qs: What are the three patterns of spatial segregation? How do they differ? How are they similar? How do the earlier chapters on crime and violence relate to this chapter on segregation? (In other words what is the connection between crime/violence, the talk of crime and the new pattern of segregation in São Paulo?)

Feb 21 – Caldeira, pp. 256-296 (Fortified Enclaves)

Reading Qs: Why are walls built? What is the ‘total way of life’ for the rich? How is order kept inside the walls? What type of order is maintained? How are enclaves being resisted? By whom and to what end?

Feb 26 – Caldeira, pp. 297-335 (The Implosion of Modern Public Life)

Reading Qs: How is modern public life imploding? Why? How is the public experienced now? How do aggression and incivility fit into the picture?

Feb 28 – Caldeira, pp. 339-376 (Violence, the Unbounded Body, and the Disregard for Rights in Brazilian Democracy)

Reading questions: What is the unbounded body? How are rights disregarded in Brazilian democracy?

Weeks 7-10 Clientelistic Politics: Javier Auyero, *Poor People’s Politics*: Clientelism is seen by Auyero as a particular form of ‘problem solving’ for the (urban) poor. For these weeks we want to think about why clientelism became a more important form of problem solving in the 80s and 90s, how it works, and what benefits and drawbacks it has. We will also think about issues of perspective: how do different actors within the problem solving networks that Auyero describes view their participation in these practices?

March 6 – Auyero, Preface pp. xiii-xiv (Who’s who in the Peronist Network), Intro:1-28

Reading Qs: What is political clientelism? How is Auyero’s view different from that of other scholars? Why does he find existing approaches to the topic to be faulty?

March 8 – Auyero, Ch. 1: pp. 29-44 (They Were Mostly Poor People)

Reading Qs: What happened economically in Argentina, and Buenos Aires, during the 1980s and 1990s in terms of poverty and inequality? Why does this matter in terms of clientelism?

March 12 – Review of Course so far. Prep for midterm.

March 14 – In-class Midterm

Spring Break – No Class March 19 & 21

March 26 – Auyero, Ch. 2: pp. 45-79 (Most of Them Were Coming From Villa Paraiso)

Reading Qs: How has Villa Paraiso changed over time? What is it like to live there? What is the similarity and/or difference between the (actual) wall of the 50s and the virtual wall of the present?

March 28 – Auyero, Ch. 3: pp. 80-118 (They Knew Matilde)

Reading Qs: What is a problem-solving network? What problems get resolved and how? Is Auyero critical of this in any way? If so, how?

April 2 – Auyero, Ch. 4: pp. 119-151 (We Will Fight Forever, We are Peronists)

Reading Qs: How do gender and performance matter in clientelism? What does the figure of Evita represent?

April 4 – Auyero, Ch. 5: pp. 152-181 (The ‘Clientelist’ Viewpoint)

Reading Qs: What are the different interpretations of the same rally? Why does this matter? Are brokers good or bad? Is politics helpful or dirty? Where do the different views discussed in the chapter come from?

**** Mini-essay 2, due in class.** Prompt: Explain how clientelism, which Auyero refers to as *problem solving through personalized political mediation*, works. Be particularly attentive to, and make sure to discuss, the following elements: (a) the central function that clientelism has for both brokers and clients; (b) the performative dimension of clientelism, that is the way it “looks” or is perceived, including by actors engaged in it; (c) how politics works, in rhetoric and reality; and, (d) how domination relates to clientelism. **

Weeks 11-14: Urban Social Movements. Sujatha Fernandes. *Who Can Stop the Drums? Urban Social Movements in Chávez’s Venezuela*. Duke U. Press. 2010. For the final weeks of the semester we will learn about urban social movements, which provide another ‘response’ to the host of problems we’ve discussed this semester: urban poverty, segregation, violence, state bureaucracy, and clientelistic politics. We will read about urban social movements in a specific context: Venezuela under populist president Hugo Chávez.

April 9 – Fernandes, Intro, pp. 1-36.

Reading Questions: Who is Hugo Chávez, and why is he significant? What are urban social movements? (Or, more generally, what is a social movement?) What is the ‘hybrid post-neoliberal state’? What is an ‘everyday war of position’? How did Fernandes’ identity shape her research?

April 11 – Fernandes Ch. 1: Urban Political Histories, pp. 39-63

Reading questions: How has Caracas changed over the past 4-5 decades? What forces have shaped the city? What different social movements have mattered, and how? Be particularly attentive to how the city has changed in each different period covered.

April 16 – Fernandes Ch. 2: Poverty, Violence, and the Neoliberal Turn, pp. 64-86

Reading questions: What is neoliberalism? What is ‘the neoliberal state’? How did it shape Caracas in the late 1980s and 1990s? How did the state’s role change? What role does violence – of criminals, and of the state – play in all this? How did the role of the state change under Chávez?

April 18 – Fernandes Ch. 3: Personal Lives, pp. 87-110

Reading questions: Who is Yajaira? What is her story? What broader lessons do we learn by examining her story?

April 23 – Fernandes Ch. 4: Culture, Identity and Urban Movements pp. 113-159 (note: more reading than usual)

Reading questions: Why is ‘culture’ a terrain of struggle for urban movements? How does culture shape the lives of the urban poor? How does race and racism factor into all this? What is the relationship between urban movements and the Venezuelan state (i.e. the post-neoliberal hybrid state)?

April 25 – Fernandes Ch. 5: Barrio-based Media and Communications, pp. 160-185

April 30 – Fernandes Ch. 5, pp. 185-211

Reading questions (for both weeks): What is barrio-based or community media? What different forms has it taken? How does community media differ from private and state media? What explains the variation amongst different community radio/media producers? How have different community media groups related to the post-neoliberal hybrid state?

May 2 – David Harvey, ‘The Right to the City’ (Blackboard)

Reading questions: What is the ‘right to the city’? How does capitalism shape the right to the city? How have urban struggles changed over time? Are urban struggles different in different parts of the world? How do these urban struggles differ from other forms of popular struggle?

May 8 – Final Class/Review

Final Exam: Wednesday May 16, 8:00-10:00 am (HU 032)