BACKGROUND

This special topics course will meet 15 times during the semester during which we will employ an interdisciplinary case/country study approach to unpack the contemporary issues of crime, law, and violence in the Americas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Presently, rates of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean are the highest in the world. Drug, gun and gang violence extends far beyond the primary actors involved in these activities and creates numerous development issues. Initially, our course study will explore dominant development theories, examine the historical legacy of authoritarianism and establish a foundation to examine the relationship of crime, law, and governance in the context of emergent issues in contemporary Latin America. In brief, this course will explore underlying historical political, economic and social issues related to contemporary conditions and structures of crime and violence in the Americas.

REQUIRED MATERIALS


DAWN PALEY, DRUG WAR CAPITALISM (2014). [hereinafter, DRUG WAR CAPITALISM].

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1 This syllabus is not a contract; the Instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus at any time.

2 Additional required course readings are available on Oaks.
CLASSROOM POLICY AND REGULATION

Classroom Decorum: No eating, drinking or smoking is permitted in the classroom during class. Any student who breaches this standard will be directed to refrain and remove offending substances from the classroom. Abidance by these standards is a condition of satisfactory completion of the course. Failure to conform may result in a lowered grade.

Classroom Conduct: Students are also expected to adhere to all federal, state and local laws. Naturally, you are all bound by the Regulations of the College of Charleston, including, but not limited to the College of Charleston Code of Conduct, the College of Charleston Honor Code and my classroom rules. But classroom behavior is more than just obeying rules; classroom behavior is also about showing proper professionalism. Proper conduct (i.e., professionalism) in the classroom is intended to encourage everyone to participate in, to derive benefit from, and ultimately to enjoy the class.

Class Attendance: Regular and punctual attendance is mandatory. I will take roll daily either by passing around a sign up sheet or by taking a roll call. A student is tardy if not seated in the assigned seat at the time attendance is taken. Each hour of class is treated separately for attendance purposes; therefore, missing a three-hour meeting is treated as three absences.

Electronics: Cell phones and other devices are prohibited. If a student allows his/her cell phone to audibly ring in class, the offending student may be sanctioned. Laptop computers are valuable educational tools. They are great for class-related note taking and reference; however, during class it is inappropriate to use laptops for any other purpose. Know that laptop use in class is a privilege and I will suspend or rescind it, individually or collectively, if it is abused.

Sanctions: Absences, tardiness and any other unprofessional conduct will be initially dealt with on a case-by-case basis as a matter of course grading, at the discretion of the Instructor. The imposition of disciplinary measures will follow the process provided by the College.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION: ADA STATEMENT AND DISABILITY ACCESS

Disability claims and accommodation requests should be discussed with campus disabilities staff at Student Disability Services.4

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4 The College’s Student Code of Conduct specifically forbids disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings other college activities, including its public-service functions on or off campus, or other authorized non-college activities when the act occurs on college premises. See Student Handbook at p.12. Further, the College’s Honor Code specifically forbids lying, cheating, attempted cheating, stealing, attempted stealing and plagiarism. Students at the College are bound by honor and by their acceptance of admission to the College to abide by the code and to report violations. Id. Notably, faculty members have broad authority to manage the classroom environment. The college classroom isn't a public forum like a city street or park. Faculty members can define the course agenda, set and limit topics of discussion, give grades that reflect a student's knowledge or reasoning, and maintain order in the classroom. Faculty are encouraged to freely perform these important functions, provided that they refrain from unlawful discrimination, or seek to punish students solely for expressing unpopular viewpoints pertinent to the course.

4 Student Disability Services is located in the Lightsey Center, Room B31 and handles all student access inquiries. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact: Center for Disability Services, at 843.953.1431 (Voice), 843.953.8284 (TDD/TTY), 843.953.7731 (Fax) or via email at SNAP@cofc.edu.
**Grading System**
Course assignments will be graded on the following letter/numerical grading scale:

(A) = 94-100%; (A-) = 90-93%; (B+) = 87-89%; (B) = 84-86%; (B-) = 80-83%; (C+) = 77-79%;
(C) = 74-76%; (C-) = 70-73%; (D+) = 67-69%; (D) = 64-66%; (D-) = 60-63%; (F) = 0-59%.

The breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

**Class Participation (20%)**: Active and informed participation is essential to the success of the course. Each student is expected to prepare in advance of each class meeting. Importantly, in this context preparation means that each student has read and reflected on the assigned course readings; students must be ready to answer the Instructor’s questions. Students may earn two (2) points, but not more than twenty (20) points per term, each time the student attends a public event, lecture, conference, seminar, or other event rationally related to course content.\(^5\)

**Midterm Exam (30%)**: Each student must complete an in-class midterm exam. The exam will be comprised of short answer discussion questions.

**Research Project (50%)**: The breakdown of your research project grade is as follows:

*Paper Prospectus and Bibliography (20 points)*: Each student will submit to the Instructor an abstract of their proposed final research paper. The abstract should be approximately one page and contain a clearly articulated research question (topics must be pre-approved by Instructor). Along with the abstract each student must additionally submit a preliminary annotated works cited section consisting of at least 15 references.

*Student Research Presentations (20 points)*: Every student, individually, will present a report to the class. Each student will be expected to produce a presentation that contains at least 10 (ten) minutes of material related to the course themes and your research paper. During the week that the student is assigned to present, the Instructor will call on the student at the appropriate time (i.e., no assigned time slots) for their presentation. This is an informal presentation/discussion and should not last more than 10 (ten) minutes.

*Final Research Paper (60 points)*: Each student will select a topic and complete a research paper on a topic of choice; however, it must relate to course themes. The Instructor must approve all research topics in advance. Your research paper will be graded based on the quality of your analysis, the depth and breadth of your research, and the style and organization of your paper. The paper must be at least 10 pages in length, but not more than 15 pages. All lengths are exclusive of title/caption page, table of contents, bibliography, endnotes, etc. Your research paper must be on 8-1/2” x 11” white paper. It must be plainly typed in black ink using a 12-point font on one side with 1” margins, not greater than double spaced and not less than one and one-half spaces between lines with the exception of quoted material, and properly paginated at the bottom of each page. Include a caption/title page with necessary identifying designations and a centered title. Your research should include relevant and substantively rich sources, preferably primary sources. You should use the appropriate sources and citation format for your discipline.

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\(^5\) Each student must consult with the Instructor, in advance of attending an event to ensure it qualifies for course credit. To receive credit, the Student must submit a copy of the Student’s notes from the event, no later than one week after the event. Information about qualifying events on campus will be announced either via email or in class; yet, Students are strongly encouraged to independently seek our qualifying events.
CLASS SCHEDULE: DRUGS, GUNS, AND GANGS

I. INTRODUCTION TO DRUGS, GUNS AND GANGS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. (February 29th)  Overview: crime and violence in the Americas
   
   Topics: Course Introduction: crime, law, & governance
   
   Reading: See Oaks
   

2. (March 2nd)  Gangs and the Rule of Law
   
   Reading: MARAS, “Introduction” (p.1-19); DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Forward (p.1-10); and OUTLAWED, Ch. 1 & 2” (p.1-76).

II. CRIME AND VIOLENCE: TRANSGNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND U.S. POLICY

3. (March 14th)  Drugs & Gangs: borders, migration and deportation
   
   Reading: MARAS, Ch. 1 (p.23-42) & Ch. 6 (p.123-136); DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Ch. 1 & 2 (p.11-52).

   http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052702303982504576428042000300796-lMyVqJlAxMTAxMDEwOTEwNDkyWj.html

   http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/opinion/migrants-dying-on-the-us-mexico-border.html?emc=eta1

4. (March 16th)  Political Economy of Violence
   
   Reading: DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Ch. 3 (p.53-82); and OUTLAWED, Ch. 3 & 4 (p.77-166).

III. LAW AND ORDER: VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

5. (March 21st)  Prison and Street Gangs: from youth gangs to organized crime
   
   Reading: MARAS, Ch. 2, 3, 4 & 5 (p.43-120).

   Assignment: Paper Topic Approval Deadline
6. (March 23rd)  

**Vulnerable Populations: insecurity and inequality**

*Reading:* MARAS, Ch. 8; and OUTLAWED, Ch. 5 & 6 (p.121-238).

*Assignment:* Abstract and Bibliography

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IV. **Drug Trafficking: The Cartel and the Fractured State**

7. (March 28th)  

**Political Economy of the Drug Trade: sources & scope of power**

*Reading:* DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Ch. 4, 5 & 6 (p.83-168).


8. (March 30th)  

**War on Organized Crime: suppression & the law**

*Reading:* DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Ch. 7 (p.169-192).


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V. **Mano Dura: Violence and Reactions**

9. (April 4th)  

**Urban Violence: contemporary criminal insurgencies**

*Reading:* MARAS, Ch. 9 & 10 (p.181-210); OUTLAWED, Ch. 3, 4, & 5 (review reading from Class 4).

*Assignment:* Schedule and meet with Writing Lab Consultant and Optional Draft Submission of Final Paper

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6 Prior to the assignment submission deadline each student, either must schedule and meet with Steven K. Profit, Research & Instruction Librarian, Addlestone Library (profits@cofc.edu). A Research & Instruction Librarian can: provide focused library research instruction for coursework and your research assignments; a library classroom for the library research instruction sessions; can create a customized online library research guide tailored to your course research assignments; can provide individual or small group research consultations to your students per their request; and can provide technology support for learning tools such as Google Docs, blogs, wikis, etc.
10. (April 6th)  
**And Justice for All:** rule of law and judicial reform

*Topics:* legal traditions, racism, sexism, state violence, policing strategies, structure of organized crime, prevention & intervention.

*Reading:* OUTLAWED, Ch. 7 (p.239-256); and Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Bringing the State to the Slum: Confronting Organized Crime and Urban Violence in Latin America* (December 2011) p. 1-54.

11. (April 11th)  
**Combating Crime and Violence in New Democracies**

*Topics:* violence within neighborhoods, vigilantism, schools, denial, prevention, employment, prison rehabilitation programs, human rights, police practices, state violence, and social capital.

*Reading:* DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Ch. 8 (p.193-218).

12. (April 13th)  
**Crime, Law, and Governance**

*Topics:* violence, prevention, employment, prison rehabilitation programs, human rights, police practices, state violence, and social capital.

*Reading:* MARAS, Conclusion (p.211-217); DRUG WAR CAPITALISM, Conclusion (p.219-224).

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**VI. STUDENT RESEARCH FINDINGS**

13. (April 18th)  
*Student Presentations: No. 1-15*

14. (April 20th)  
*Student Presentations: No. 16-30*

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**Final Paper Due:**  
April 22nd at 11:00 a.m.  
(Int’l Studies Office - 9 Glebe Street)

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Prior to the option draft submission deadline, each student seeking submission must certify that they have scheduled and met with Writing Lab Consultant. See [http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/index.php](http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/index.php).