

Prof. Chad Black

The University of Tennessee | Fall 2016

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 4:40-7:10

Office: 2626 Dunford Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

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History 499: The US and Latin America in Image and Action

This course examines debates over US involvement in Latin America and the cultural images by which the region was understood in the twentieth century. US imperial expansion into the region now known as Latin America began in earnest in the 1840s with the annexation of Texas and the US-Mexican War. But, the American Century inaugurated by the 1898 Spanish American War brought a new and sustained intensity to the project of establishing hemispheric hegemony. During this semester, we will highlight a series of methods to interrogate the ways US political, economic, and cultural interests, from the CIA to fruit companies to tourists to farmers and more, sought to project power in the Americas, and also forms of Latin American resistance and blowback. Students will conduct their own research on a topic of their choosing.

Course Objectives

History 499 is the capstone course for the major at the University of Tennessee. It is designed to test the full array of historical skills. You must be an active participant in this seminar, and you will do more work for your grade in this class than any History class you've taken thus far. Students must locate relevant sources for an original work of their own scholarship. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze primary sources and secondary sources critically, and to cite them correctly. They will do this in both written assignments and discussion. These skills will culminate in the student writing a 5,000 word research paper in which they advance their own historical argument.

Reading, writing, and oral assignments for this course are designed to meet these goals. In meeting them, you will also be able to place US-Latin American relations and cultural exchanges in their proper historical context of varying types of imperial expansion and resistance.

Required Readings

The following books are required for this course:

1. Binford, Leigh. *The El Mozote Massacre: Human Rights and Global Implications*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016.
2. Davis, Mike. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City*. New York: Verso Books, 2001.
3. Henderson, Timothy. *Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008.
4. Holdon, Robert. *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
5. Perez, Louis. *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
6. Smith, Peter. *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
7. Schlesinger, Stephen. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. New York: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005.

Course Requirements

- Short Literature Review (2-3pp): 10%.
- Short primary source analysis (2-3pp): 10%.
- Paper prospectus (3-5pp): 10%.
- Final Paper (5,000 words): 45%.
- Research Journal (one entry per week): 10%.
- Preparation/Seminar Discussion: 15%.

Assignments will be graded on a letter-grade scale (A=4.0; A-=3.7; B+=3.3; B=3.0; B-=2.7; and so on). This grading system corresponds with the UT undergraduate catalog. Please consult it for clarification (<http://catalog.utk.edu/>).

The largest part of the course grade comes from your final paper (45%), but historical research and writing does not appear out of thin air. It takes hard work, discipline, and—most significantly—time. As a result, a significant part of this course's grade (30%) is built into preliminary assignments that will prepare

you for the final paper. (Indeed, every thing you work on for this class should be written with the following questions in mind: “How will this activity prepare me for the final paper?” “How does this work help me construct a historical argument?”)

All papers should be written with standard margins and fonts, should be double-spaced, and follow the conventions for citation in the historical discipline (footnotes following the Chicago/Turabian style with a bibliography). For citation guidance, you may reference “A Guide to Chicago or Turabian Documentation Style” at the University of Wisconsin (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/PDF/chicago_turabian_uwmadison_writingcenter_june2013.pdf).

Short literature review

Students will write a short paper (2–3pp) that engages two or three scholarly monographs or peer-reviewed articles from leading journals in the field (such as the *American Historical Review*, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *The Americas*, *The Journal of American History*, etc.). This paper should demonstrate a working knowledge of the major contours of scholarly debate in the topic you intend to write your final paper on. What are the main questions that scholars are asking about your topic? How are they answering those questions? What are their arguments and how do they interact with those offered by other historians? I will give you a form to use to help in building your historiographic understanding of your subject.

Short primary source analysis

Students will write a short paper (2–3pp) that establishes the context and significance (key arguments, authors, intended audience, interpretive dilemmas, etc.) of one or two primary sources that will serve as the foundation for your final paper. This primary source analysis should be suggestive of the future direction of your paper. Why is this source important to understanding a core issue in the past? How does it illuminate dimensions of the major problem you will be studying?

Paper prospectus

Students will submit a prospectus (3–5pp) explicating the argument of their final paper. This prospectus should clearly delineate the significance of the larger project and should engage both primary and secondary material. It should contain citations for all claims.

Research Journal

Each week, students will write an entry in a research journal. Entries can cover almost any topic related to this course— news items related to Latin American relations and/or your research topic; brain storming ideas for your research project; outlining sections; notes on particularly provocative readings; etc. This journal will be turned in with your final paper, and we will discuss it individually during meeting weeks. We will start class each week with some individuals sharing information from their weekly journal.

Final Paper

Students will write a research paper, 5,000 words in length (bibliography does not count) on a topic of their choosing in the history of US-Latin American relations, conceived of broadly as political, economic, religious, cultural, social, legal, migration history, etc. This paper will be graded based on its mastery in the following crucial categories: clear introduction; clear framing of and engagement with historical questions; plain thesis statement (the argument); support of argument with evidence (rigorous engagement with historiography and primary source material); clarity of prose and organization of writing; and citation and bibliography formatting.

Attendance, Preparation, and Classroom Decorum

This is a seminar, not a traditional lecture course. As a result, the success of each class meeting is highly dependent upon student participation and preparation. You cannot passively sit through this class. Attendance for this class is required and no absences will be excused. This course requires a substantial amount of work. Students are expected to come to class every time it meets prepared for the day's activities. (You must bring all assigned materials with you to each meeting.) The first part of the course involves a substantial amount of reading and discussion of background information in the field; the second part involves substantial discussion of your work and that of your colleagues. Your classmates will depend on you to deliver insightful criticism and feedback; active engagement is a necessity each meeting.

Class attendance requires a degree of civility and courtesy toward your fellow students as well as to the professor. As such, the following behaviors are prohibited: talking, surfing the internet, cell phone usage and texting, reading, studying for other classes, chronic tardiness (as defined by the professor), or any other action deemed disruptive or inappropriate by the instructor. Please silence cell phones before entering class.

Class attendance is also required. Because this class meets only once per week, you are allowed only one absence for any reason. Any absences beyond one will

result in a letter grade reduction in your final grade for each additional absence.

Class policies

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner with appropriate documentation.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when someone knowingly or unknowingly presents another person's words or ideas as his or her own. Any work turned in for this class must meet University standards for academic honesty. Any students unsure about how to apply these rules are urged to consult with me prior to turning in any written work.

Deadlines: Assignments are due no later than the day and time indicated. If you anticipate problems, please contact me before the assignment is due, not after!

Office Hours: Students are strongly encouraged to speak with me outside of class. I am available during office hours on a first-come, first-served basis. If you cannot come during office hours, please contact me via email or phone to schedule an appointment.

Changes: I reserve the right to change this syllabus as the semester progresses. This is not a contract, but rather a document to guide expectations and clearly communicate weekly assignments. Please bring the syllabus with you to our class meetings.

Course Schedule

Week 1: August 17th – A Library Scavenge

Introduction to the course, and a library scavenge for Latin American resources in the stacks and online.

Week 2: August 24th – CS.I: US-Mexico At War

Read, Caleb McDaniel, "How to Read History" (<http://wcm1.web.rice.edu/howtoread.html>)
Do this first. Please note the recommended further reading resources at the end of his post.

Read, "Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer The Pleasures of Note-Taking" (<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/notetaking.htm>)

Read *The Eagle's Talon*, Introduction and Chapter 1. Take notes on the main argument that the author makes on what determines the nature of the relationship between the US and Latin America.

Read *A Glorious Defeat*, Chapters 1-3.

Week 3: August 31st – CS.I: US-Mexico At War

Finish *A Glorious Defeat*.

Read, documents No. 8, 9, and 12 in *Latin America and the United States*.

Find one historical journal article on the Mexican-American War, bring it to class and be prepared to explain its argument, structure, and evidence to the class.

Week 4: September 7th – No class meeting.

Required meetings with Dr. Black (sign up in week 3).

Read, “Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer How to Frame a Researchable Question” (<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/questions.htm>)
Read, “From Topics to Questions,” Chapter 3 in Booth, et. al. *The Craft of Research*.

Week 5: September 14th – CS.II: The Cuban News

Read, *The Eagle’s Talon*, Chapters 2-4.

Read, *Cuba in the American Imagination* through Chapter 3.

Week 6: September 21st – CS.II: The Cuban News

Finish *Cuba in the American Imagination*.

Read, documents 20-30 in *Latin America and the United States*.

Find one journal article on US-Cuban or Cuban history, between 1898 and 1940. Bring it to class prepared to connect it to the case study.

Week 7: September 28th – CS.III: Most Bitter Fruit

Read, *Bitter Fruit* through Chapter 7.

Week 8: October 5th – CS.III: Most Bitter Fruit

Finish *Bitter Fruit*.

Week 9: October 12th – CS.IV: Latino City Meeting

Students who chose Latino City will meet to discuss that book. Students who chose El Mozote have a research week.

Week 10: October 19th – CS.IV: El Mozote Meeting

Students who chose El Mozote will meet to discuss that book. Students who read Latino City have a research week.

Week 11: October 26th – Film Viewing and discussion: *El Norte*; Discussion of historiographic problems and primary sources.

Read, “Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer Positioning Your Argument in a Wider Literature” (<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/positioning.htm>)
Read, “Engaging Sources”, chapter 6 in Booth, et.al. *The Craft of Research*.

Come prepared to explain in one sentence to your colleagues what the central historiographical problem is in your project.

Prospectus and Preliminary Bibliography Due.

Week 12: November 2nd – Primary sources discussion.

Bring your “best” primary source to class (with copies for the entire class), and explain its context and significance. Can’t be from Holden and Zolov. *Short Literature Review due.*

Week 13: November 9th – Thesis paragraph workshop.

Read, “Writing a Research Paper”, chapter 5 in Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*.

Bring your thesis paragraph to class (with copies for the entire class). *Short primary source analysis due.*

Week 14: November 16th – Draft workshop.

All meeting together with writing groups to discuss the current state of your paper draft.

Week 15: November 23rd – No class. Research and writing week.

Week 16: November 30th – Study Day no class.

Meetings with Dr. Black as needed.

Other Dates:

Last day to turn in draft for feedback: **November 28th.**

Final draft due: **December 5th for graduating seniors** or **December 7th at 9:15pm** for everyone else.