

**Latin America During the National Period (HIST 140):  
From Columbus to Chavez**

*“Poor people inhabit rich lands”*

– E. Bradford Burns

Fall 2008, Truman State University  
MC 209, TR 3:00-4:20  
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**Description**

This course surveys the history of Latin America from Christopher Columbus to Hugo Chavez. We will examine a variety of issues including economics, democracy, racism, class structures, gender, ethnicity, human rights, globalization, and popular movements. Rather than analyzing Latin America from a North American point of view, we will examine how Latin Americans view themselves and how their culture, economics, and politics have developed in different directions than the United States and Europe.

This course fulfills the history mode of inquiry in the Liberal Studies Program. In this mode, students will study a broad topic or major geographic area over an extended period of time and will demonstrate competence in one or more of the following areas, which characterize the work of historians:

1. thinking in terms of causation, change over time, contingency, context, and chronological frameworks;
2. the content and methodologies of humanistic and social-scientific disciplines to study and interpret the past;
3. analyzing the interplay between choices individuals have made and developments societies have undergone; and
4. understanding the social and aesthetic richness of different cultures.

**Requirements**

Our goal in this class is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of history, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation are also necessary. Please drop me a note if you are unable to attend, or if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

**Readings**

Following are the required books for this class. Read the assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class. Lectures and discussions will complement the readings and assume the base level of knowledge which they

present, so it is critically important that you keep up with the readings. Do not wait until the last minute to buy these books since about half-way through the semester the bookstore will return unsold copies to the publisher.

Burns, E. Bradford and Julie A. Charlip. *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*, 8th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2007. Package ISBN-10: 0132412756 | ISBN-13: 9780132412759, bundled with the following:  
Charlip, Julie A. *Consider the Source: Documents in Latin American History*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2007.  
Wilpert, Greg. *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power: The History and Policies of the Chavez Government* . London: Verso, 2006. ISBN: 1-84467-552-1

### Assignments and grades

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. You can check your grade progress on the class Blackboard web page (there is a total of 1000 possible points in the class). More detailed information on the written assignments will be posted to the Blackboard web page. I do not accept “drop and run” papers. Grades on late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day that they are late. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Daily identification terms (5 pts ea.)	100 pts
12 newspaper article analyses (5 pts ea.)	60
3 primary source analyses (80 pts ea.)	240
Midterm exam (Oct 7)	200
Venezuela essay (Dec 2)	200
Final exam (Dec 11)	200

**Daily identification terms.** We will begin each class period with identifying and giving the significance of one identification term drawn from a list posted to the Blackboard web page for each of the weekly assigned readings. These will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5 points. One point means that you are present, 2 points indicate that something was fundamentally wrong with your response, 3 points indicate a rote response from the text, 4 points represent analytical thought, and 5 points are for responses that reveal critical thought that extends significantly beyond the text and places the term in a broad historical context.

**Newspaper reports.** Each week by noon on Thursday (except for wks 7 & 14) post an analysis of a newspaper article from the previous week on Latin America from one of the 4 daily newspapers distributed on campus (*New York Times*, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Kansas City Star*, or *USA Today*) to the discussion board on the Blackboard web page. Briefly describe the content of the article and then analyze its historical, social, and political significance. Be sure to include the title and author (if given) of the article, the name of the newspaper, and the date it was published, and the section/page numbers. Place the title of the article in the subject line of the post

so that subsequent analyses on the same article are together in one thread. The critiques will be graded on a scale similar to the daily identification terms.

**Primary source analyses.** Analyze three of the primary sources in Charlip's *Consider the Source: Documents in Latin American History*. Consider these questions:

1. Who created the document? What is the author's gender, race, and class status?
2. When was the document written?
3. To whom was the document addressed?
3. Why was the document created?

Using your own words, summarize the main points of the document, explaining what the document reveals, what it conceals, and how its contents were shaped by the experiences and perspectives of the author. Your analysis should be one-page long, and be typed, double-spaced, and include citations. The three primary source analyses are due Sept 23, Oct 28, and Nov 13.

**Venezuela Essay.** Is Hugo Chavez a new or old style leader in Latin America? Draw on the assigned readings, films, and class discussions in the writing of this essay. The essays should be three-pages long, typed, double-spaced, follow good essay form (have an intro, thesis, conclusion, etc.) and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. Be sure to proofread the essay for spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors. I will grade the essays based on content, organization, clarity of thought, and level of analysis. The best essays will be concise, synthesize the material in the readings, analyze its significance, evaluate its importance, and develop a new and original argument.

**Exams.** The midterm and comprehensive final exams will draw on the class readings, films, and discussions.

### **Class Schedule**

Week 1 (Aug 26-28) Introduction & Geography  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 1; Charlip, ch. 1

Week 2 (Sept 2-4) Colonialism  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 2; Charlip, ch. 2

Week 3 (Sept 9-11) Independence  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 3; Charlip, ch. 3

Week 4 (Sept 16-18) Slavery  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 4; Charlip, ch. 4

Week 5 (Sept 23-25) Modernization  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 5; Charlip, ch. 5  
**Assignment:** First primary source analysis due (Sept 23)

- Week 6 (Sept 30-Oct 2)      Imperialism  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 6; Charlip, ch. 6
- Week 7 (Oct 7)              **Midterm exam**
- Week 8 (Oct 14-16)        Mexican Revolution  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 7; Charlip, ch. 7
- Week 9 (Oct 21-23)        Populism  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 8; Charlip, ch. 8
- Week 10 (Oct 28-30)      Revolution  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 9; Charlip, ch. 9  
**Assignment:** Second primary source analysis due (Oct 28)
- Week 11 (Nov 4-6)        Dictatorship  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 10; Charlip, ch. 10
- Week 12 (Nov 11-13)      Neoliberalism  
**Read:** Burns/Charlip, ch. 11; Charlip, ch. 11  
**Assignment:** Third primary source analysis due (Nov 13)
- Week 13 (Nov 18-25)      Venezuela  
**Read:** Wilpert, *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power*  
**Assignment:** Venezuela essay (due Tuesday, Dec 2)
- Week 14 (Dec 2-4)        Final Reviews
- Final Exam:** Thursday, December 11, 11:30-1:20 p.m.