

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Department of History

History 600
Advanced Undergraduate Seminar
THE CUBAN REVOLUTION
Semester II, 2010-11

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Office hours:
Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 (walk-in; no appt. necessary)
Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 (by sign-up appt. only)

GENERAL ORIENTATION

In this seminar, we examine the history of the Cuban Revolution in all its crucial dimensions: as a struggle for Cuban independence from the United States; as an expression of the polarities created by the Cold War; as a way to deploy culture and cultural artifacts (e.g., cinema, literature, music), as well as sports, to shore up national identity; as a platform for one of the twentieth century's most colorful leaders, Fidel Castro; and as a space within which to negotiate power relations along gender, racial, and generational lines. We will devote about half the course to the classic period of youthful revolutionary and Soviet-style socialism (up to 1991), and the second half to the period now being called "late socialism." About half of our readings will be from the standard historical and social sciences literature. The other half will be into less commonly used anthropological and literary texts, such as Sujatha Fernandes' *Cuba Represent! Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures* and Lydia Chávez, ed., *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar*. Students will write a substantial research paper (20-30 pp. in length).

This is an advanced seminar where you will develop and polish historical research skills. Whether your future holds graduate or professional school, or perhaps employment in a corporate, public-service, or private-agency setting, research and expository writing skills may well be an essential component of your life for many years to come. In this seminar you will learn how to define a research problem, devise a strategy for gathering necessary information, interpret such information in an original manner consistent with social theory, and write a relatively long paper (25-35 pages in length) in which you develop your interpretation(s) in a cogent and elegant manner--all the while developing a knowledge base on the Cuban Revolution (1959-present).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

a) A weekly "reaction paragraph" in which you critically assess, in 200 words or less, the assigned reading(s). After briefly summarizing the main argument(s), you will indicate whether the author has, in your opinion, deployed the argument

convincingly (i.e., the proof is robust) and cogently (i.e., the argument has been elegantly carried forth). These paragraphs are due by email on Tuesdays at noon (late submissions will not receive credit). You will be sending these reaction paragraphs to the seminar list, so that everyone will have had a chance to read it by the start of the seminar on Wednesday morning. (10 % of the grade).

b) A set of research-related assignments due almost every week (see the weekly schedule, below). Some of these require that you bring something with you to share with the seminar (xerox copies are mandatory), or, occasionally, to share something with colleagues by email. Others require that you submit something to me in writing that week at the beginning of the seminar. These are critical assignments leading to the production of the seminar papers. (30% of the grade).

b) During the semester, you will make occasional oral presentations to the class outlining the research steps (problem definition, research strategy, primary and secondary source search, organization of ideas, preliminary interpretation, etc.) you will have taken by then toward constructing the final paper. These presentations will be staggered across the duration of the seminar, with a certain number of students making presentations on a given seminar date at the appropriate time in the semester. These presentations will supplement materials turned in or shared with the class under (b) above (10% of the grade).

c) You will turn in a full first draft of your semester research paper on April 20. This draft will contain the great majority of text, all footnotes, and a full bibliography. It will only differ from the final draft in that the latter will be more polished and will incorporate suggestions received from the professor and other seminar members. (20% of the grade)

d) On May 4, the final draft of your paper is due. (30% of the grade).

READINGS

Assigned readings are noted under each week's topic. Most of the articles will be available online. During the first week of class I will send you each a "ticket" (a clickable link, really) that will lead you to them.

There are three books I am asking you to purchase. All are available from Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative (426 W. Gilman Street, 257-6050). They are:

Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*. 2nd. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Lydia Chavez, ed., *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Sujatha Fernandes, *Cuba Represent! Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

WEEKLY TOPICS, READINGS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. General Orientation (January 19)

No readings this week.

☒ Begin to think about a research topic and preliminarily define a research question.

II. Origins 1: Colony and Nation (Jan. 26)

Pérez-Stable, Intro. and chs. 1-2, pp. 3-60.

Aviva Chomsky, "Barbados or Canada? Race, Immigration, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80 (Aug. 2000):415-462.

☒ Share preliminary research question with the class.

III. Origins 2: A Revolutionary Tradition Unfolds (Feb. 2)

Pérez-Stable, chs. 3-4, 61-97.

Fidel Castro, *History Will Absolve Me* (digital version available on course site).

☒ Bring a one-paragraph Statement of Research Problem, and explain it to the seminar.

IV. The Revolution Radicalized (Feb. 9)

Pérez Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, ch. 5, 98-120.

Ernesto Ché Guevara, "Notes for the Study of the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution," *Ernesto Ché Guevara Internet Archive* (marxists.org), 2002 (digital version available from course site).

☒ In addition to a more polished one-paragraph Statement of Research Problem, bring a one- to two-page Preliminary Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources to share with seminar members.

V. The Revolution Bureaucratized (Feb. 16)

Pérez Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, chs. 6-7, pp. 121-173.

Susan Eckstein, "The Impact of the Cuban Revolution," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, 3 (July 1986):502-534.

☒ *Share with seminar members a one- to two-page Primary Source Example (xerox copies OK) along with a one-page explanation of how you interpret the source. The latter will need to discuss the ways in which the source was produced and the steps you have taken to analyze and interpret the source.*

VI. The Question of Charisma (Feb. 23)

Gabriel García Márquez, "The Fidel Castro that I Know," *Canadian Dimension* (digital version available from course site).

Barbara Walters, "An Interview with Fidel Castro," *Foreign Policy* 28 (Autumn 1977):22-51.

☒ *Submit a 2-4 page Research Précis along with a Preliminary Annotated Bibliography (one or two sentences per item). The bibliography must be divided into two parts: Primary Sources and Secondary Sources. The latter should be in turn divided into two: books and articles. Each of the two major parts should contain at least 15 sources.*

VII. The U.S. Obsession (Mar. 2)

Louis Pérez, Jr., "Incurring a Debt of Gratitude: 1898 and the Moral Sources of United States Hegemony in Cuba," *The American Historical Review* 104, 2 (April 1999):356-398.

Louis Pérez, Jr., "Fear and Loathing of Fidel Castro: Sources of U.S. Policy towards Cuba," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34 (2002):227-254.

☒ *Share with seminar members a one-page Statement of a Historical Challenge, in which you explain what portion of the work you've been doing is giving you the hardest time, and why. The discussion should center around the interpretation of a primary source or sources.*

VIII. The Special Period: The Economic Crisis Unfolds (Mar. 9)

Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, ch. 8 and Conclusion.

Hans-Jürgen Burchardt, "Contours of the Future: The New Social Dynamics in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives* 29, 3 (2002):57-74.

☒ *Submit a two-page introductory section of your paper, with footnotes but no bibliography. In it, highlight the **thesis statement**. In addition, attach a general outline of the missing portions of the paper.*

IX. Coping Without the State (Mar. 23)

Lydia Chávez, *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar*, parts I and III, pp. 17-64 and 131-176.

☒ *Submit the final annotated bibliography of your paper, organized as in # VI, above.*

X. The New Revolutionary Society (Mar. 30)

Lydia Chávez, *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar*, parts II and IV.

☒ *Submit a preliminary version of your Conclusion (three pages maximum).*

CLASS WILL NOT MEET APRIL 6 AND 13

XI. The Special Period: Forging New Identities (April 20)

Sujatha Fernandes, *Cuba Represent!*, chs. 1-2, pp. 1-84.

☒ *Take a break for writing and revising. You deserve it!*

XII Race, Gender, and Creative Expression (Apr. 27)

Fernandes, *Cuba Represent!*, rest of the book.

☒ *Submit and share with class via email a first draft of your paper, along with all footnotes and a bibliography (not annotated this time).*

XIII. Paper Presentations (May 4).

☒ *Turn in the final version of your research paper. Congratulations!!!*

HOW TO BEGIN YOUR RESEARCH ON THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

Although a small country, Cuba and its intensely charismatic leader, Fidel Castro, have captured the imagination of world scholars for decades. Its unlikely socialist-nationalist revolution occurred in a country deeply enmeshed with the superpower of the capitalist world, the United States. Its Revolution has lasted longer than any other in the western hemisphere, and has stood up to the winds of change even as the Socialist world collapsed under the weight of the failed Soviet Union in 1989-1991.

As a result of these compelling features of Cuba's recent past, scholarly sources (books, articles, web resources, etc.) documenting and analyzing the past fifty years of the nation's history are voluminous--indeed, almost overwhelming. Beginning students are likely to be put off, not by a dearth of material (the usual scenario), but by its apparent overabundance. If one is to work on any part of the Revolution's history, one needs strategies for the efficient use of research time and energy. At the very least, one must be able to access finding guides, bibliographies, online portals, etc., with ease, and once located, one must know how to use them properly.

The following pages outline just a few of the many such resources available to the researcher on the Cuban Revolution. As you develop your investigation, you will doubtless locate many more (please be ready to share them with other seminar members!)

Where to begin

Check out the following guide. It is the best available research guide on the Revolution. While somewhat outdated, it will help you navigate the mountain of primary and secondary sources available:

Ronald Chilcote and Sheryl Lutjens, eds. and comps., *Cuba, 1953-1978 : A Bibliographic Guide to the Literature*, 2 vols. (White Plains, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1986).

Other useful resources are:

Avi Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, eds., *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Historiography in the Revolution: A Bibliography of Cuban Scholarship, 1959-1979*, Garland Reference Library of Social Science (New York: Garland Pub., 1982).

-----, *Essays on Cuban History: Historiography and Research* (Gainesville: University of Press of Florida, 1995).

Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs, eds. *AfroCuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics and Culture* (Melbourne; London: Ocean Press; Latin American Bureau, 1993).

Marifeli Pérez-Stable, "The Field of Cuban Studies." *Latin American Research Review* 26, no. 1 (1991): 239–50.

Jaime Suchliki, *Historical Dictionary of Cuba* (Metuchen, N.J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1988).

For electronic resources, at minimum consult the following web pages:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/ca/cuba/>

http://www.dmoz.org/Science/Social_Sciences/Area_Studies/Latin_American_Studies/

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/hlas/>

<http://hapi.gseis.ucla.edu/web/index.php?token=70d8703cd325de4ba9a4cdecc7932d18>

<http://www.cubaweb.cu/>

<http://scholar.google.com> <type a search string, like "Cuba foreign relations" or "Cuba revolution women">