

**Special Topics in Philosophy/Latin American and Caribbean Studies:**  
**Latin American Philosophy**  
Winter 2014: MWF 2:00-3:30

Instructor: Amy Reed-Sandoval  
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Office hours: TBA

**Course Description:**

This is an exciting time to be studying Latin American Philosophy in the United States. Though Latin American Philosophy was, until quite recently, a relatively under-represented philosophical subfield in the US, the past decade has featured an abundance of scholars, academic programs, and scholarly works devoted to exploring philosophical issues of importance to Latin Americans/Latin@s and their communities—*both within and outside of the territorial boundaries of Latin America*.

Despite, and perhaps because of, this historical turn of events, the question of just what (if anything) characterizes or is distinctive about Latin American Philosophy remains unresolved. A 2011 episode of *Philosophy Talk* offered the following tentative answers to this question: (1) Latin American Philosophy features “contemporary echoes of Indigenous philosophical ideas dating even from Pre-Columbian times”; (2) its social and political philosophy reflects Latin America’s long struggle against European and American (US) tyranny, and bears a strong activist component; (3) it sometimes (but, importantly, does not always) feature a controversial “universalist strand” of metaphysics and epistemology that borrows from European and Anglo-American philosophical ideas; (4) it grapples with the question of what, if anything, constitutes “Latin American identity”; and (5) it strives to develop a clear Latin American (and non-Anglo/European) philosophical perspective.

This course offers a survey of thinkers who have attempted, in very different ways, to respond to these philosophical challenges. Starting with ancient Aztec/Nahua poems and ending with contemporary Liberation Philosophy, we will explore, discuss, and critically evaluate philosophical contributions to some of the most pressing questions—political, epistemological and metaphysical—to have emerged from the Latin American context. By the end of the course, you should have much to say in response to the question of just what, if anything, characterizes Latin American Philosophy. You will have also contributed to the growing literature on this subject by producing an innovative paper on one of our central course themes.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

1. Class participation – 15%. You are required to complete daily in-class assignments, which may include “free writes” and other written reflections, as well as small group assignments. Participation will be graded in terms of the following scale:

**90% of all possible points** – student has missed two classes/failed to complete two in-class exercises

**80% of all possible points** – student has missed three classes/failed to complete three in-class exercises

**70% of all possible points** - student has missed four classes/failed to complete four in-class exercises

**60% of all possible points** - student has missed five classes/failed to complete five in-class exercises

**50% of all possible points** - student has missed six classes/failed to complete six in-class exercises

**After having missed six classes/in-class exercises, student will receive 0 points for class participation**

2. Reading quizzes – 25%. You will take two short quizzes per week; they may be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and/or Fridays. Only the top quiz grade from each week will count toward your final grade. To do well on the quizzes you should carefully complete the assigned readings prior to their corresponding lecture. Quizzes will only be administered in class and cannot be made up.
3. Event “write-ups” – 10%. You will complete two short (1-2 page) write-ups in response to two different UW events of relevance to Latin American Philosophy. You are highly encouraged to attend, and to do your two write-ups in response to, the public lectures that will be given by guest speakers Dr. James Maffie and Dr. Linda Martín Alcoff (to be held on **January 9th** and **February 20th**, respectively). However, you may also choose to attend/write on some of the other talks that will be hosted by the Department of Philosophy and/or the Department of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (or some other event(s), with instructor approval). Details about some of these talks can be accessed at: [http://www.phil.washington.edu/dept\\_colloquia.htm](http://www.phil.washington.edu/dept_colloquia.htm) and <http://jsis.washington.edu/latinam/events.shtml>. Further details about this requirement will be discussed in class.
4. Paper – 30%. You will write an 8-10 page paper on one of the major course themes that includes reference to at least one relevant article or book that we have not specifically explored in class. Further details to be discussed in class.
5. Final Exam – 20%.

**Required Texts (available at UW bookstore and on reserve at Odegaard):**

1. Gloria Anzaldúa. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Third Edition). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books

2. Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff. 1986. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Great Britain: Burns & Oates/Search Press Ltd
3. Rigoberta Menchú. 1984. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. London: Verso
4. José Vasconcelos. 1979 (first Spanish edition published 1925). *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press
5. Peter Wade. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press

### **Recommended Texts (on reserve at Odegaard):**

1. Paulo Freire. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
2. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. 2011. *Black in Latin America*. New York: New York University Press
3. Gilson et al., eds. 2013. *Latin American Positivism: New Historical and Philosophic Essays*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
4. T.J. Knab, ed. and Thelma D. Sullivan, translator. 1994. *A Scattering of Jades: Stories, Poems, and Prayers of the Aztecs*. New York: Simon and Schuster
5. John Haddox. 1970. *Los Chicanos: An Awakening People*. El Paso: University of Texas at El Paso.
6. Susana Nuccetilli et al. eds. 2013. *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

### **I. What is Latin American Philosophy?**

January 6<sup>th</sup>

- Introduction to course
- In class: listen to part of *Philosophy Talk* program on Latin American Philosophy (2011, with Dr. Joseph Orozco)

### **II. Indigenous Philosophies of Latin America**

January 8<sup>th</sup>

- Justin Smith. 2012. "Philosophy's Western Bias." In *The New York Times* (online): <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/philosophys-western-bias/?hp>
- "A Prayer to Tlaloc," "Five Poems," "The Song of Huitzilopochtli," "The Song of the Mother of the Gods," and "The Song of Xochipilli." In *A Scattering of Jades: Stories, Poems, and Prayers of the Aztecs*, edited by T.J. Knab and translated by Thelma D. Sullivan

January 10<sup>th</sup>

- James Maffie. 2003. "To Walk In Balance: An Encounter Between Western Science and Conquest-Era Nahua Philosophy." In Robert Figueroa et al., eds. *Science and Other Cultures: Issues in Philosophy of Science and Technology*. New York: Routledge.
- Guest lecture by Dr. James Maffie, Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy and Associate, Latin American Studies Program at University of Maryland, College Park

January 13<sup>th</sup>

- Rigoberta Menchú. 1984. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. London: Verso. Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-30)
- In class: watch *Santo Luzbel/Saint Lucifer* (1997, Miguel Sabido)

January 15<sup>th</sup>

- *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Chapters 5-7 (pp. 31-48)
- *Popol Vuh*, Preamble and Part I
- In class: watch clips of *Popol Vuh: The Creation Myth of the Maya* (Patricia Amlin, 1989)

January 17<sup>th</sup>

- *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Chapters 8-10 (pp. 49-64)
- *Popol Vuh*, Parts II and III
- Come to class having written at least a paragraph about a topic you might be interested in writing on for your paper. We will use this for class discussion, and it will be collected at the end of class.

January 20<sup>th</sup>

- No class – happy MLK Day!

January 22<sup>nd</sup>

- *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Chapters 10-15 (pp. 65-120)
- We will do a reading of Part IV of *Popol Vuh* together in class
- At home: finish watching *Popol Vuh: The Creation Myth of the Maya*, accessible at <http://wigowsky.com/travels/maya/chichi/video.htm>
- Please continue reading *I, Rigoberta Menchú* pp. 121-235 at your own pace over the course of the next few weeks

January 24<sup>th</sup>

- Wrap-up of themes from *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, chapters 1-15, and *Popol Vuh*
- Marisol de la Cadena. 2010. "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond 'Politics'" *Cultural Anthropology* 25 (2): 334-370
- [Presentation by the Department of Philosophy Writing Center](#)

### III. Positivism

Jan 27

- Jorge Gracia and Manuel Vargas. 2013. "Latin American Philosophy." In the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/latin-american-philosophy/> (particularly sections 1 and 2)
- [Come to class prepared to talk about your paper topic. Bring to class one article that you are considering using for your paper, and be prepared to provide an overview of that article to your classmates.](#)

Jan 29

- Steve Colagero. 2013. "Why Positivism Failed in Latin America." In *Latin American Positivism: New Historical and Philosophic Essays*, Gilson et al., eds., Plymouth: Lexington Books.
- Guillermo Hurtado. 2010. "The Anti-Positivist Movement in Mexico." In Susana Nuccetilli et al. eds., *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

### IV. Philosophizing Race, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism in Latin America

Jan 31

- José Vasconcelos. 1979 (first Spanish edition published 1925). *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Read full essay, pp. 7-40.
- Recommended for Spanish speakers: Patrick J. Carroll and Jeffery N. Lamb. 1995. "Los Mexicanos Negros, el Mestizaje y Los Fundamentos Olvidados de la 'Raza Cósmica': Una Perspectiva Regional." *Historia Mexicana* 44(3): 403-438.

February 3

- Gloria Anzaldúa. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (third edition). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books. Chapters 1-4 (pp. 23-73) and Chapter 7 (pp. 99-113)

February 5

- Juliet Hooker. 2005. "Beloved Enemies': Race and Official Mestizo Nationalism in Nicaragua." *Latin American Research Review* 40(5): 4-39
- Peter Wade. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press. Chapter 1

February 7

- Amos Nascimento. 2012. "Syncretism as a Form of Multicultural Politics: The Inter-location of African-Latin-American Identities in Brazil." In *Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (Special Issue): *Multiculturalism and Beyond: The New Dynamics of Identity Politics in the Americas* 7(2): 115-136.
- Peter Wade. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, Chapter 2
- Guest lecture by Dr. Amos Nascimento, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Washington, Tacoma

February 10<sup>th</sup>

- Peter Wade. 1997. *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press, Chapters 3-5
- In class: watch *Mexico and Peru: The Black Grandma in the Closet* (from 2008 PBS series *Black in Latin America*, written and presented by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., directed by Ricardo Pollack and Diene Petterle). Available for instant streaming at: <http://video.pbs.org/video/1915580662/>
- Recommended: read *Black in Latin America* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

February 12<sup>th</sup>

- Linda Martín Alcoff. 2000. "Is Latina/o Identity a Racial Identity?" In *Hispanics/Latinos in the United States: Ethnicity, Race and Rights*, Jorge J.E. Garcia et al. eds., New York: Routledge
- Cristina Beltrán. 2010. "Conclusion: Latino Is a Verb: Democracy, *Latinidad*, and the Creation of the Political." In *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc.

## V. Latin American Feminist Philosophies

February 14<sup>th</sup>

- María Lugones. 2007. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System." In *Hypatia* 22(1): 186-209
- María Lugones. 2010. "Toward a Decolonial Feminism." In *Hypatia* 25(4): 742-759
- Recommended reading for Spanish speakers: Gustavo Ortiz Millán. 2011. "El derecho al matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo." In *Debate Feminista* año 22, vol. 44 pp. 153-173. Available to download at [http://www.academia.edu/2507681/El derecho al matrimonio entre personas de l mismo sexo](http://www.academia.edu/2507681/El_derecho_al_matrimonio_entre_personas_de_l_mismo_sexo)

February 17<sup>th</sup>

- No class – happy Presidents' Day!

February 19<sup>th</sup>

- Ofelia Schutte. 2011. "Engaging Latin American Feminisms Today: Methods, Theory, Practice." In *Hypatia* 26(4): 783-803
- *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, chapters 27-31 (pp.236-266)

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

- Linda Martín Alcoff. 2010. "Sotomayor's Reasoning." In *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 48(1): 122-138
- Guest speaker, Dr. Linda Martín Alcoff, Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College and CUNY Grad Center

February 21<sup>th</sup>

- No class – see you at Dr. Alcoff's lecture at 3:30!

## **VI. Liberation Theology and Pedagogy**

February 24<sup>th</sup>

- Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff. 1986. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Great Britain: Burns & Oates/Search Press Ltd.

February 26<sup>th</sup>

- In class: watch *Romero* (1989, John Duigan)

February 28<sup>th</sup>

- Gustavo Gutiérrez. 1999. "The Task and Content of Liberation Theology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, Christopher Rowland ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- **A 10 page rough draft of your paper is due on February 29<sup>th</sup> at 10pm**

March 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Paulo Freire. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. Chapter 2 (pp. 71-86).
- Recommended: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Chapter 1

March 5<sup>th</sup>

- Iván Márquez. 2013. "Liberation in Theology, Philosophy and Pedagogy." In *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*, Susan Nuccetelli et al. eds., West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Recommended: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* chapter 3

## **VII. Philosophy for Children in Latin America**

March 7<sup>th</sup>

- Amy Reed-Sandoval. Forthcoming (2014). "Cross-Cultural Exploration: Reflections on Doing Philosophy with Triqui Children in Oaxaca." In *Teaching Ethics*.
- Carlos Fraenkel. 2012. "Citizen Philosophers: Teaching Justice in Brazil." In *Boston Review*: <http://www.bostonreview.net/carlos-fraenkel-brazil-teaching-philosophy>
- In class: watch film on the Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative (2013, Julia Reihls)

## **VIII. Liberation Philosophy**

March 10<sup>th</sup>

- Enrique Dussel. 2003. "Eurocentricism and Modernity." In *Philosophy of Liberation*. Wipf & Stock Pub, pp. 1-15.
- Manuel Vargas. 2005. "Eurocentricism and the Philosophy of Liberation." In *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues* 4(2): 8-17.

March 12<sup>th</sup>



- Ofelia Schutte. 1991. "Origins and Tendencies of the Philosophy of Liberation in Latin American Thought: A Critique of Dussel's Ethics." In *The Philosophical Forum* 22(3): 270-95.
- Recommended: Anibal Quijano. 2008. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism, and Social Classification." In *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Moraña et al., eds. Duke University Press: pp. 181-224

## IX. Closing Reflections

March 14<sup>th</sup>

- José Martí. "Our America." In *José Martí: Selected Writings*, London: Penguin Books, pp. 288-295.
- Gloria Anzaldúa. "To live in the Borderlands means to." In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, p. 216.
- Subcomandante Marcos. 2002. *Our Word is Our Weapon* (selections). New York: Seven Stories Press
- Wrap-up/evaluations.
- **Final papers due by 10pm on March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### Requirements for Final Paper

1. For 10% of your grade for the final paper:

- During Weeks 1 and 2, you should spend time surveying the syllabus and skimming some upcoming readings to determine what topic you might be interested in writing on for your paper.
- On **January 17<sup>th</sup>**, you should come to class with a written paragraph on a topic you might be interested in writing on for your paper.
- By **Week 3 (January 24<sup>th</sup>)**, you must have met with the instructor during office hours to discuss your paper topic.

2. For 20% of your grade for the final paper:

- By **February 1<sup>st</sup> at 10PM**, you must send your instructor a 2-3 page prospectus/overview of your research project. Therein, you should address the following questions: (1) What topic have you selected for your paper, and why do you find it interesting? (2) What reading have you done (or will you do) for this project? (3) In addition to your course readings, what additional article(s) have you found that deals with this topic? What is the main claim of that article? What is your

opinion of that article? (4) What do you anticipate that your thesis statement will be with regard to your paper topic?

3. For 10% of your grade for the final paper:

- By **February 8<sup>th</sup> at 10PM**, you must send your instructor a detailed outline for your research paper (about 4-5 pages in length). That outline should include: (1) your thesis statement; and (2) details about how you will support that thesis statement.
- Make an appointment with the Department of Philosophy Writing Center around February 18<sup>th</sup>-February 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss your rough draft of your paper.

4. For 10% of your grade for the final paper:

- By **February 15<sup>th</sup> at 10PM**, you must write a 6-8 page rough draft of your paper, which will be emailed to your instructor and the Department of Philosophy writing center.
- You must meet with the writing center during the following week to get feedback on your work.

5. For 10% of your grade for the final paper:

- A 9-10 page rough draft of your paper must be emailed to your instructor by **February 29<sup>th</sup> at 10PM**. *It should incorporate the feedback you received from the Department of Philosophy Writing Center.*
- You will receive detailed feedback on your draft from your instructor by **March 8<sup>th</sup>**.

6. For 40% of your final paper grade:

- Your final 10 page paper is due on **March 15<sup>th</sup> by 5PM**.