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 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):


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


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

January 6th

- 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 8th


January 10th

• 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 13th

• In class: watch Santo Luzbel/Saint Lucifer (1997, Miguel Sabido)

January 15th

• 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 17th

• 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 20th

• No class – happy MLK Day!

January 22nd

• I, Rigoberta Menchú, Chapters 10-15 (pp. 65-120)
• We will do a reading of Part IV of Popol Vuh together in class
• Please continue reading I, Rigoberta Menchú pp. 121-235 at your own pace over the course of the next few weeks
January 24th

- Wrap-up of themes from *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, chapters 1-15, and *Popol Vuh*
- Presentation by the Department of Philosophy Writing Center

III. Positivism

Jan 27

- 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


IV. Philosophizing Race, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism in Latin America

Jan 31


February 3

February 5


February 7

• Guest lecture by Dr. Amos Nascimento, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Washington, Tacoma

February 10th

• Recommended: read *Black in Latin America* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

February 12th


V. Latin American Feminist Philosophies
February 14th


February 17th

- No class – happy Presidents' Day!

February 19th

- *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, chapters 27-31 (pp.236-266)

Thursday 20th

- Guest speaker, Dr. Linda Martín Alcoff, Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College and CUNY Grad Center

February 21st

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

VI. **Liberation Theology and Pedagogy**

February 24th


February 26th

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

February 28th
- **A 10 page rough draft of your paper is due on February 29th at 10pm**

**March 3rd**

- Recommended: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Chapter 1

**March 5th**

- Recommended: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* chapter 3

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

**March 7th**

- In class: watch film on the Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative (2013, Julia Reihs)

**VIII. Liberation Philosophy**

**March 10th**


**March 12th**


IX. Closing Reflections

March 14th

• Wrap-up/evaluations.
• Final papers due by 10pm on March 15th.

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 17th, 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 24th), 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 1st 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 8th 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 18th-February 21st to discuss your rough draft of your paper.

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

- By **February 15th 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 29th 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 8th**.

6. For 40% of your final paper grade:

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