

**HS323/SC323: SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MESOAMERICA**  
Spring 2007

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*This is an experimental course aimed at uniting academics with experiential learning and service work and follow-up. In one way or another students will do service/learning work with Central American and Mexican immigrant communities in Boston. Most will also take service/immersion/experiential learning trips in Central America and Mexico.*

*Boston is full of people from the very areas of Central America and Mexico to which BC students regularly travel on service and immersion trips. We can meet "foreigners" at home and abroad and develop sustainable projects with them on both sides of the border. We can also make connections between social justice issues on both sides of the border.*

**Requirements:**

1. All students will do service work with members of Spanish-speaking immigrant communities in the Boston area for at least five weeks. Many of the students in the class are going on, or have recently participated in, service/immersion trips to Central America or Mexico.
2. **Mid-term.** This will be a 15-20 page book report on 3 country/regional monographs and or literary works that have some theme(s) in common. As well, these papers must probe the course readings to see what they say about power and justice.
3. **Final:** A paper on service work in the Immigrant Community in Boston and, if you have gone on a service trip, the service trip. Reflections on theory and practice.
4. **Quizzes:** There will be weekly quizzes on the readings to ensure that everyone keeps up with them.

**Required Texts:** (all are available in the BC Bookstore)

Charles D. Brockett. *Land, Power and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America*

Nick Cullathers. *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala 1952-1954*

Epica. *Ten Plagues of Globalization*

Juan Gonzalez. *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*

Various documents as assigned.

**THE CLASSROOM IS A NO-CELL-PHONE ZONE. PLEASE TURN OFF ALL THINGS THAT RING, BEEP, OR OTHERWISE MIGHT INTRUDE.**

## **Calendar:**

### **PART ONE:**

**Week 1 - January 22:** INTRODUCTION: Definitions and by whom: Places and Peoples; Social Justice; Social Injustice.

### **Week 2 -January 29 - Central American Movements in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Read: *Land, Power and Poverty*, Chapters 1-2

Handouts: Miguel Marmol's excerpts from his life story, and letters by Augusto Sandino  
Liberal party dictatorships/ Communists/ Nationalists Assignment: complete readings and a one page write up on service

### **Week 3 –February 5 - Post World War 2 Movements for Social Reforms**

Read: *Land, Power and Poverty*: 99-104

*Secret History* (all)

Speeches by Jose Jose Arevalo

Guatemalan Land Reform Program and Labor Laws

### **Week 4 February 12 - Mass movements for Revolution: 1960s-1990s**

Read: *Land, Power and Poverty*, Chapter 3, 5, 6-8;

Handouts: “ The Historic Program of the Frente Sandinista Liberacion Nacional, 1969

“Corn and Beans” Oral histories from Chalatenango

Comite de Unidad Campesino (Guatemala)

Last Sermon, Archbishop Oscar Romero

### **Week 5 February 19 - Contemporary Problems/solutions 1.**

Read: *Land, Power and Poverty*, Chapter 9; Hand outs on service work

Epica: *Ten Plagues of Globalization* (all)

Xavijer Gorostiaga SJ “Nicaragua: Struggling to Survive and the Global Market place”

Miriam Palacions, “Globalization and Its Impact on Women in El Salvador”

### **Week 6 February 26 - Contemporary Problems/Solutions 2.**

Read: Pablo Richard “Liberation Theology in the New International Context”

Maria Lopez, “The Church of the Poor in Nicaragua: A New Appraisal”

Oscar Romero Pastoral Center “ El Salvador: Death and Resurrection of a Crucified People”

Jesuits of Latin America: “For Life and Against Neo-Liberalism.”

Fernando Bermudez, “This Ground is Holy: Guatemalan Highlands”;

Ricardo Falla, SJ “ The Dark Night of Resistance: Pastoral Work in the Ixcán.”

**Week 7 Spring Break** Various Service trip to Nicaragua, Chiapas, Guatemala and El Salvador: Journals must be kept on people, places, social conditions, our work, reflection.

**PART TWO:**

**Week 8 March 12 - Workshop 1.**

First Reflections. Bring a one-page proposal about follow-up.

**Week 9 March 19 - Workshop 2. Continued.**

**Mid-term papers are due on March 19.**

**PART THREE:**

**Week 10 March 26 - Latin Americans in Boston.**

Read: *Harvest of Empire* (all)

NOTE: We will meet on the regularly scheduled class day during April. Additional readings may be assigned.

**Week 11 April 2 - Service work in Boston**

**Week 12 April 9 - Easter Monday - No class, but service work in Boston continues**

**Week 13 April 16 - Service work in Boston**

**Week 14 April 23 - Service work in Boston**

**Week 15 April 30 – Last day of class**

**May 7 - Final paper due**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is your obligation to be fully aware of the Boston College policies on academic honesty. ANY violation may subject the offender to severe penalty, including course failure. If you are not familiar with the Boston College policy on academic honesty, see the 2006-07 *Boston College Bulletin*, pp. 34-36, or on the web at:

[www.bc.edu/integrity](http://www.bc.edu/integrity)