An Introduction to Latin American Societies (ILAS)
Core Course
Fall 2013
SC 036

Gustavo Morello

T–Thu
10:30-11:45

Course description
The aim of this course is to introduce students to sociology while exploring Latin American societies.
The course will start with a general presentation of both sociology and Latin America. We will discuss what sociology is, and the different ways of studying societies. We will also focus on Latin American societies and their particularities. For that, we will take some time to study pre colonial and colonial times, independence wars, and the birth of modern Latin American nations. Once in the XX century, we will learn about the main revolutionary movements and the reactions against them.
Relying on this historical background, we will explore Latin American societies through sociological concepts such as race, gender, social violence, religion, sports, and culture. We will also address Latin America economic inequalities and democratic institutions. While doing that, students will be introduced to different social methods, qualitative and quantitative. Finally, we will pay attention to US-LA relations and the fact of Latino people living in the United States.

ILAS as a Core Course
Core courses at Boston College will:
(a) Help students to ask and answer the "perennial questions." These are problems and questions that have been disputed through the ages and yet remain the basis for understanding the human condition and for deciding how one’s life should be lived. This course will interrogate some of the on-going debates within sociology as well as the scholarship on Latin American societies and culture. ILAS addresses perennial questions of social justice and fairness, which can be summed up in “Why Latin America is such an inegalitarian region?”

(b) Present culturally diverse material. Including topics that have not customarily been incorporated into the traditional debate, topics that gain in importance when the Western tradition is viewed from the perspectives of non-European people and of minorities within European and American societies. In this course we will work on Latin America and its people, and its relation with North America and Europe.
(c) Present an historical view of the subject. Many students have little sense of the past and its relationship to the present. Core courses made a historical perspective on the discipline so students would gradually piece together a coherent historical framework for their thinking. In order to fulfill this requirement, we will study Latin America history. We will get an historical perspective of the problem, and a sociological one: “Why are Latin American societies structured in such way? Who wins and who lose in this state of things?”

(d) Demonstrate the methodology of the discipline. The course will develop an understanding of the methodologies of the disciplines appropriate to the level at which the disciplines are being studied. This course places many questions, in order to think about them, students must compare and contrast readings from different approaches, comparative, historical, economical and case studies. They will read qualitative material and also some quantitative data. Students will learn about methodology so they have a scholarly basis from which to evaluate concepts, and they will record their critical thinking in papers and short exercises.

(e) Include a significant writing component. Students are asked to write several papers during the semester. Writing is an active effort to organize and express ideas; it requires students to make connections, to focus issues and to take stands. These writing works will be graduated accordingly with these goals: focus on an issue, connecting ideas, and taking stands.

(f) And challenge students to create a personal philosophy of life. Core courses should challenge students to become aware of their own values and to use the material of the course to develop a reflective view of life. The students will be challenged to create a personal philosophy of life: How should a society be structured?” They will develop a perspective on Latin American societies and Latinos living in the United States.

Course requirements
- A schedule of assignment dates is attached below.
- This is a reading and participation intensive course. Readings are due on the week they are listed. Come to class ready to discuss them.
- You are required to attend classes, to bring pieces of news about any topic related to Latin America to each class, and to participate in class discussions and organized presentations.
- For most of the topics we will complete an activity. In nine classes you will receive a handout with instructions. We will also use some class time on the activity. Then, to receive a credit for the activity, you will write a two pages reflection paper, which is due the first day of the next topic. There are 12 activities, and you are required to complete 8 activity papers. You may decide to write about every activity, in which case I will drop your lowest four scores, or you may skip up to four short writings. But if you were planning to
complete an activity that was your 8th and you couldn’t do that, you won’t be able to do an extra one. So plan carefully!

- There will be two examinations during the course and a final paper. This last exam will be a written work. The paper will be written through the ‘Writing Fellows’ program. The BC Writing Fellows Program is a writing initiative on campus. As part of this final paper assignment, you will be working with Writing Fellows from the English department (the Fellows will not take part in the grading process). This is an exciting opportunity as students rarely have the chance to really work on their writing as part of their coursework. Since writing is so critical to anything that you might pursue, this class will place a great deal of emphasis on it. Thus, the paper is broken down into two sets of tasks, each of which will be reviewed by a Writing Fellow. **Meetings with the Writing Fellows are required.**

### Course Grading

- **A** 93-100%
- **A-** 90-92%
- **B+** 87-89%
- **B** 83-86%
- **B-** 80-82%
- **C+** 77-79%
- **C** 73-76%
- **C-** 70-72%
- **D+** 67-69%
- **D** 63-66%
- **D-** 60-62%
- **F** below 60%

### Percentage of grade

1. Class attendance and participation (doing the readings, bringing pieces of news, contribution to debates and the like) 5%.
2. 8 short writings (5% each) 40%. Submitting papers: Bring a hard copy of your paper to class on the date it is due. No late work will be accepted for credit.
3. 1st Exam 20%. Thu, October 10th.
4. 2nd Exam 15%. Thu, November 7th.
5. Final Paper 20%. Thu, December 12th. You should submit the **hard copy** of the paper the day and hour scheduled for the exam, in my mailbox (McGuinn 426)

### Academic Honesty

Your work must be *your* words and ideas. When writing papers, use quotation marks around someone else’s exact words and identify whose words they are.
Academic Integrity is of utmost importance to this and all BC courses and research. The university’s academic integrity procedures will be enforced. Failure to comply will result in a report to the Dean and the Committee on Academic Integrity.

For further information, please review the College’s policies on academic integrity here: http://www.bc.edu/integrity

**Blackboard**
https://cms.bc.edu/webct/urw/tp0.lc5116011/cobaltMainFrame.dowebct

**Textbooks**


**Course reserves on line**

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<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 (Sep 10) Colonial times and Independence</td>
<td>BBF: 2-3.</td>
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<td>3 (Sep 17) Post Colonial Progress and Neocolonial</td>
<td>BBF: 4-6</td>
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<td>4 (Sep 24) Nationalism and Revolutions</td>
<td>BBF: 7-8</td>
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<td>5 (Oct 1 - 8) Social Change and Reactions</td>
<td>BBF: 9 + LA 11</td>
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<td>Race and Gender</td>
<td>the nature of everyday life’ in Garrard-Burnett, V (Ed) <em>On Earth as it is in Heaven. Religion in Modern Latin America</em>. Jaguar Books, Delaware, pp. 71-106.</td>
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<td>Urban Violence</td>
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<td>11 (Nov 21)</td>
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Chapters 1, 4 and 6.  
| Social Change: Environment | |