An Introduction to Latin American Societies (ILAS)
SOCY103601
Gustavo Morello SJ

Fall 2015
T- TH
9 – 10:15 am
Cushing Hall 209

Office hours: McGuinn 422. You must schedule an appointment before coming (morellog@bc.edu)

TA: Maheem Haider
Office Hours: T 3-4pm.
haider@bc.edu

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. 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 loss 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 courses 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 develop a perspective on Latin American societies and Latinos living in the United States.

Course requirements
- Check the schedules of assignments, for both short writings and the final paper.
- 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 a Short Writing (SW). There are 12 SW, and you are required to complete 8 activity papers. You may decide to complete all SWs, 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.**

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

**Course Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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**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 MT Exam 20%. October 6th.
4. 2nd MT Exam 20%. November 17th.
5. Final Paper 15%. December 8th. You should bring the **hard copy** of the paper to the class.

**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

**Textbooks**


**On line course reserve for SOCY 103601**


What is Sociology? http://www.sociology.org/what-is-sociology


8 Short writings

There are 12 short writings, and you are required to complete 8. They will make 40% of your grading (5% each).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 PreC/Col/Ind</td>
<td>Sep 3</td>
<td>BBF 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PosC/Pro/NCol</td>
<td>Sep 10</td>
<td>BBF 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Nat/Rev</td>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>BBF 7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 React/Soc.Chan</td>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>BBF 9 + LA 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sociology</td>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Mills + What is Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Race/Gender</td>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>LA 4-5 + Earle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Urban violence</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Strocka + Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Religion</td>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>LA 6 + Levine 1 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 Culture</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nov 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>LA 7 + Swamson / A visit to the MFA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Economy</td>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>LA 8 + Hoffman &amp; Centeno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Env/Sports</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Coackley chapter + Coackley talk + Kronik &amp; Verner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All of them should be between 2 and 3 pages:
- Paper size US Letter,
- Line spacing 1.5
- Document margins 1"
- Font size 12

In the papers you must answer:
1. What is the main idea of the author in the chapter?
2. How does the author support the idea? What are her/his reasons?
3. What do you think about what you read? Why?

Example Outline of Short Writings

1. Use the first paragraph to provide an overview of the major events, concepts, and/or themes presented in the chapters for this week. Try to end with a thesis statement that will tell the reader what your main point(s) is going to be in the essay. Are you going to focus on dissecting one idea, such as Progress as an
hegemonic concept? Are you going to analyze the author’s argument about religion as a conservative force in Latin America? And so on.

2. In the body of the paper, discuss in detail some of the key events, concepts, or opinions expressed by the author. NOTE: Though our first text book is an historical analysis, the author is subtly presenting his own opinions through how he chooses to frame events. See if you can pick up on and discuss this. We want you to dig deeper into the readings and avoid summarizing—be critical and analytical. What were some of the key insights from the chapters? How do previous concepts that we’ve discussed in class inform your new understanding of Latin American history? What can you bring to bear from other classes on your understanding of the events you read about? Try to avoid “I” statements here. Use quotations from the text to present a point that is being made or an idea, then discuss it.

3. Finally, end by giving your view on some of these events and/or ideas. Which ideas, movements, ideologies make sense to you? Which do not? How did the readings this week inform your understanding about Latin America? What questions remain? Do you agree with the author’s interpretation or presentation of events? Why or why not? Again, use previous readings and/or outside knowledge to back up your opinions.

For SW8 you can chose either doing the readings as usual, or ‘A visit to the MFA’ one. If you chose to do so:

1) You can visit the MFA for free with your BC id card.
2) You will attach to your work the ticket of the MFA.
3) Pick one piece of art from Latin America
   You can find them at Ancient American (Levels LG/32-33; Level 1/135), and 20 Century (Level 3) both on the ‘Art in the Americas’ wing. There are also Latin America art at the ‘Contemporary’ wing (Level 2 and 3).
4) As the other papers, it should be between 2 and 3 pages:
   • Add a picture of the piece you selected.

Where does the paint (sculpture or the like) come from? Why is it here at Boston? What does it tell us about their societies? Religion, sports, food, daily life and dead, How is it linked to us?
Who is the author? Where was she/he born? What happened to him/her?
When was it painted? Does the work reflects is time? How is it related to the social situation?
Was the author involved in the social problems of her/his time? What were his/her political ideas? Are those ideas reflected in the art?
Did she/he belong to an art school?
Final Paper

It is required that each student writes a paper, due on April 29, 2015, @ Noon in my mailbox (McGuinn 426). Course Assessment: Final exam 20%

- 6 to 8 pages (US letter), no cover page, family and given name on all pages, stapled, one-inch margin in all four sides, 12 point font, doubled-spaced.
- The paper will be written through the 'Writing Fellows' program. All papers handed in must have been read and commented on by Fellows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due to</th>
<th>Deliver to</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Electronically to Writing Fellow. @ 08:00 am</td>
<td>1st draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>Electronically to Writing Fellow. @ 08:00 am</td>
<td>2nd draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Hard copy @ class.</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
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The objectives of this final paper are:
1. To discover how global issues left their footprint in our daily life;
2. To realize how private troubles became public issues;
3. To expose and discuss the common sense about Latinos;
4. Identify barriers to social change;
5. To be aware of our own positions as researchers.

To get these goals, you will look for some Latin American footprint in Boston area. It can be a monument, a cultural/architectural landmark, a shop, some person from sports, people you know, a special geographical area, anything that can be related to any of the topics we have talked in class.

Once you have identified it and reflect about your choice, you will ask sociological questions about the issue. The course reading will help you to answer those questions. How this personal problem has become a social issue?
I strongly suggest you to read again Mills, C Wright (2000) *The sociological imagination*, Ch., 1 focusing on how a personal problem (story) becomes a social issue (history).

I may have a meeting with the students upon request.

The final paper is divided in two parts. You should hand in a:

1. **First draft, on October 15th, 2015.**
   a. What: describe the fact/story/object as much as you can
   b. Abstract: describe the location, what is it, what’s the Latino connection with it?
   c. Why: Explain the importance this issue has to you, and why would you think it will tell us something about LA in MA.
d. What questions do you have? What do you want to know? What questions will help us to understand the social problem behind the singular fact?

e. How will you answer these questions?

f. Image, video, sounds that represent the research problem.

g. Think about tags, keywords.

2. Second draft, on Nov 24th, 2015.

a. 1-2 page introduction (account of what you’ve done; your original goals and the way you did your work, your methods of research: ‘I interviewed so many people, visit this place, did a survey on x population, was involved in a meeting/celebration, etc.’). Explain your position as researcher, what are your values?

b. 3-5 pages main work, answer your questions:
   - What have you discovered? (My supposition was that… So I did these and these, but I discovered this… Then I asked why… Such and such said that… but other one disagree. I think that… because a third one says that. So from this point of view, and taking that advice, I will said that…)
   - Have you got your goal? Why? Prove it! How is your thesis (your main affirmation) sustained? (So I think this… because a, b, c, and d)

c. 1 page for a closing conclusion
   - Reference the material you have used. Reference system: Surname, year, and pages. (Mills 2000:3)

3 Final paper, Dec 8th, in class.

Criteria for grading the final exam

1. Use of sociological theory. How do you use the course reading (Specially LA 12; Mills, 2000; Crandall; Gold) to make sense of your observations? Do you use ideas, concepts, themes, and analytic categories from the readings?

2. Show me that you are aware of the material we used in class. Reference the readings. But make sense of them. A quote that does not fit is worse.

3. Make a Thesis statement. What’s your main question? What do you think is the answer? What’s your affirmation? How do you support it? What’s your goal? How are you going to achieve it? Trough what steps?

4. Check the flow of your ideas
   Link one paragraph with the following. Make the connection explicit. Don’t assume that I will realize why you switched from one point to another. If you’re going to change the topic completely, start another subchapter or chapter.
5. Beware of the structure
Put heading and subheadings. The paper should have at least four parts: Introduction, Body, Conclusion and References.
In the introduction set the layout of your work: what are you going to do, what’s your main statement and how are you going to achieve it. Explain the methods you’re going to use and your position as researcher.
During the ‘body’ you will prove your statements. Use as many headings and subheadings as needed. What data support your statement? How did you answer your questions?
In the conclusion, sum up how you reach your goals. This is the place for your personal opinion. What do you think about the topic?
Reference the material (books, articles, webpages, videos, and the like) you used.

Checklist:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociological Theory</th>
<th>Position as researcher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of the readings</td>
<td>Personal statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research question / Thesis</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow of ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headings and subheadings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field work / Methods</td>
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