

Thomas Rogers and Jeffrey Lesser

Department of History

FIT Grant, May 2016

HIST 562: Themes and Approaches in Latin American History: From Landmarks to Revisions

Innovation:

Regional Graduate Conference in Latin American and Atlantic History: Research Development and Professionalization

This proposal aims to offer graduate students in this and future years a major professionalization opportunity and a forum to develop and refine research questions. We aim to do this by building inter-institutional connections in the greater Atlanta area around graduate teaching in Latin American and Atlantic History.

We are building a partnership that will foster student research initiatives, prepare students for professional activities, and inspire innovative and collaborative projects. In the fall semester of 2016, we are co-teaching HIST562/ANT585/ILA790 “Themes and Approaches in Latin American History: From Landmarks to Revisions.” Simultaneously, at Georgia State University, Professor Julia Gaffield will be teaching HIST8460 “Atlantic World History Seminar” and Professor J.T. Way will be teaching HIST8420 “Ideas and Issues in Modern Latin American History.” Finally, our colleagues at the University of Georgia, Professor Jennifer Palmer and Professor Reinaldo Roman, are teaching HIST8710 “Colloquium on Gender and History” and HIS8220 “Colloquium in Latin American and Caribbean History,” respectively. While each course will follow its own syllabus, we plan to coordinate readings and meetings occasionally throughout the semester in order to allow for larger discussion groups or smaller inter-institutional discussion groups.

The final project for each class will consist of a primary research-based conference presentation. The students will present their research as part of a two-day conference hosted at Georgia State. (We envision future iterations of this conference hosted by Emory and UGA.) Each of the two days will feature a guest keynote speaker who will highlight the themes of the conference. In addition, we will schedule time for the keynote speakers to meet informally with students to discuss research strategies, methodologies, and project completion.

We will discuss the individual strategic plans from each university and the particular needs of our respective graduate programs in order to orient our conference theme to the needs of each institution. For example, “Global Cities” is a central part of GSU’s strategic plan and “The Nature of Evidence” is at the heart of Emory’s Quality Enhancement Plan. We aim to coordinate our collaborative program to meet each of these needs in a cohesive and innovative way.

We hope to convene a similar conference in future years, including people from other campuses in Atlanta and beyond (we have interested colleagues at Kennesaw State, Brenau, and North Georgia, for instance, though they do not have PhD programs. We may consider alternating years of graduate and undergraduate symposia.). We will also discuss the possibility of expanding beyond History departments to make our program interdisciplinary and we will consider how we might extend the impact of our program beyond the university to include members of the public. We will also contemplate ways that students might continue their work after the semester ends and ways that we might be able to sustain the collaborations outside of the classroom. Among these partner universities, all of our graduate students have a potential peer group far larger than the community on any single campus. We want to find ways to facilitate their ongoing contact. Finally, depending on our experience with this pilot conference, we are considering submitting an application for an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute for summer 2017 or 2018.

Syllabus (draft):

Themes and Approaches in Latin American History: From Landmarks to Revisions

HIST 562R/ILA 790/ANT 585
Fall 2016, Thursday 9:00-12:00
Major Room, Bowden 323

Tom Rogers
tomrogers@emory.edu
Jeff Lesser
jlesser@emory.edu

“There is a pattern to intellectual controversies in the human sciences, and its logic is dialectical. Following an initial phase of exploration, an interpretive consensus commonly emerges, which informs ongoing research during a period of knowledge cumulation [sic]. Over time, lacunae and strains within the established paradigm become apparent, and revisionist challenges arise to unsettle the field. New insights are proclaimed, decisive refutations are alleged. Texts formerly deemed canonical are suddenly subject to dismissal, and yesterday’s authorities are censured for the errancy of their guidance. As word of the uprising spreads, paladins of the entrenched order are roused to action, and countering fire is directed against the insurgency. A grand interpretive battle is joined. The claims of partisans notwithstanding, victories here — in marked contrast to the natural sciences — are rarely total, and the new positions agreed to are seldom supersessional of the old. Continued factionalism is commonplace, but accommodations do also occur, as reigning paradigms selectively incorporate those revisionist contributions that offer greater analytical comprehension or enrich our range of empirical reference.”¹

Course Description

Can we “cover” the vast region of Latin America and the sweep of its history over the 500 years since European contact in a semester’s worth of weekly seminars? No. This graduate course, though, gives students an opportunity to build, interrogate, and rethink the narrative of that history. And we do so by reading “landmarks”—classics in the field—as well as recent historical revisions. We embrace the impossibility of our task through critical and explicit engagement with methods of research, pedagogy, and narrative.

Students will engage with conventional geographic and chronological frameworks for understanding and teaching Latin American history. At the same time, we will challenge orthodox paradigms by evaluating new scholarship and questioning dominant conceptions of periodization, methodology, and discipline. Articles on historiography and theory will supplement regional, national, and local case studies and canonical texts.

¹ Joseph M. Bryant, “The West and the Rest Revisited: Debating Capitalist Origins, European Colonialism, and the Advent of Modernity,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 31, no 4 (2006), 404.

Over the course of the semester, students will familiarize themselves with what are considered to be the major chronological moments and formative events in the region, while fleshing out interdisciplinary approaches, perspectives, methods, and linkages. Analytical concerns revolve around the relationship between methodology and empirical conclusions, and how scholars' shifting intellectual and political agendas have led them to integrate different disciplinary approaches into the study of history.

Assignments

The semester is bookended by an exercise that asks you to think synthetically about history around the full region of Latin America. In between, we will have weekly response papers for everyone, and opportunities for each person to offer a historiographical presentation and a teaching presentation once each. The largest single assignment is a historiographical and research-based paper that you will present at a regional conference at Georgia State University and submit in written form three weeks later, incorporating the feedback you receive.

Week 1: Themes in Latin American History

Produce a list and short explanation of the core themes around which you would orient an introductory Latin American history survey (i.e., from conquest to present). You might think about themes like "land struggles," which stretch from territorial conquest in the 16th century to the creation of land markets in the 19th century and land reform movements in the 20th. Think about how your themes relate to periodization and include notes on this in your short explanations. Please bring 10 copies of your themes to class for distribution and discussion.

You can find a number of textbooks on reserve and I encourage you to read several of them before the first class meeting. They will help you as you mull your themes and establish your own vision of the region's history. (See Stein and Stein, *Colonial Heritage of Latin America*; Mark Burkholder and Lyman Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*; John Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*; Alexander Dawson, *Latin America Since Independence*.)

Weeks 2-11: Title, Response Paper, Questions

As you will note, the syllabus does not list weekly themes. Each week (except for the first), after reading the assigned materials you should **propose a theme or title for the week** and then **write a 250-word paper** inspired by that title. Use these papers as an exercise to critique and synthesize the text(s) under review for teaching and your individual research interests. For example, if teaching an undergraduate class on the colonial identities, think through how you would use Townsend's *Malintzin's Choices*. What would be the main narrative, documentary, methodological and/or theoretical points to emphasize?

In addition to the response paper proper, please **pose two questions** to catalyze class discussion, based on the readings and your paper.

Papers and question should be posted to Blackboard by Tuesday at noon. This will give all participants in the class the opportunity to read and consider new ideas. Students should be prepared to read (with passion and conviction!) their papers to the class.

Week 2 to Week 11: Mini-Lecture

Each week, **one student will begin class with a ten-minute mini-lecture** aimed at an undergraduate audience and focused on the week's topic. The mini-lecture focuses on the historical content you would (as an instructor) synthesize to present to an undergraduate class rather than treating debates among scholars about that content. You can imagine the ten-minute presentation as the introduction to a longer lecture or as a condensed version of a class-length lecture. You will **provide a one-page outline of the lecture** for our class, which can include key concepts, figures, and/or a timeline. By the end of the course, each student will have compiled a small archive of lecture outlines for an undergraduate survey in Latin American history. These introductory "crash courses" in historical content will also ensure each student's familiarity with the topics under review, providing a sound framework for the integration of historiographical debates. **Students will be relieved of the responsibility for writing the weekly response paper when they present the mini-lecture.**

Week 2 to Week 11: "Review of the Literature" Presentations

Each week, **one student will independently research the influences (both of and upon) the work(s) that we are considering.** You will **present your results in a five-minute presentation** at the beginning of class after the mini-lecture, and will share with your fellow students a **short (1 single-spaced page) bibliographical essay.** Your presentation and essay should answer the following three questions:

- What kind of scholarship on this topic preceded this work?
- What was new about this work from a disciplinary angle?
- Did it challenge or reorder dominant paradigms?

We will distribute a schedule of presentations and a sample bibliographic essay at the beginning of the semester. **Students will be relieved of the responsibility for writing the weekly response paper when they present.**

Week 12: Graduate Student Conference

This week, we will convene a two-day conference at Georgia State University, along with two graduate seminars from GSU and two from the University of Georgia. You will have chosen a presentation theme at the beginning of the semester and this is your opportunity to share your work with a large audience of peers and other faculty members. Based on the feedback you receive, you will refine and revise your work and submit a 15-page paper one week after the end of classes.

Week 14: Historical themes redux

Revise the themes you outlined for the first class. Prepare one or two presentation images/ texts and, in 10 minutes, explain your themes and describe how they help us understand the overall history of Latin America.

Week 15: Final Assignment

You will complete a **~10-page literature review** in which you explore in greater depth one of the themes that you identified as crucial to Latin American history. (If one or more of your themes change from the first to the last week of class, that's not a problem.) For those of you studying History, you might explore how scholars have written historiographical analyses for journals. Those of you in other disciplines should feel free to follow the examples of literature reviews from your own fields. The papers should draw from a respectable list of sources that you have gathered, beyond our shared class readings. I encourage you to start talking to me about possible topics and readings around the middle of the semester.

Course Schedule

Please note, all readings are on reserve in the Music and Media Library, in Woodruff, and many can be purchased used online.

Week 1: Introduction

Bring your themes, using the recommended textbooks for reference and to provide yourself with a mental scaffold to accommodate the bushel of books we will read over the rest of the semester. We will post the themes to Blackboard after class.

Week 2

Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). ISBN: 9780521497572

Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). ISBN: 9780195176117

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 3

Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006). ISBN: 9780826334053

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 4

Laura E. Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). ISBN: 9781469621975

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 5

Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis, eds. *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). ISBN: 9780822356608

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 6

Arnold J. Bauer, *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). ISBN: 9780521777025

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 7

James Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). ISBN: 9780822357803

Rafe Blaufard, "The Western Question: The Geopolitics of Latin American Independence," *American Historical Review* 112, no 3 (June 2007): 742-763.

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 8

Greg Grandin, "The Liberal Traditions in the Americas: Rights, Sovereignty, and the Origins of Liberal Multilateralism," *American Historical Review* 177, no 1 (Feb 2012): 68-91.

Michel Gobat, "The Invention of Latin America: A Transnational History of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Race," *American Historical Review* 118, no 5 (Dec 2013): 1345-1375.

Aims McGuinness, "Searching for 'Latin America': Race and Sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s," in Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 9

Gregory T. Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: A Global Ecological History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). ISBN: 9781107655966

Edward D. Melillo, "The First Green Revolution: Debt Peonage and the Making of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Trade, 1840-1930," *American Historical Review* 117, no 4 (Oct 2012): 1028-1060.

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 10

Camillia Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom: Women of Color, Gender, and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). ISBN: 9781469610887

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 11

Mark A. Healey, *The Ruins of the New Argentina: Peronism and the Remaking of San Juan after the 1944 Earthquake* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). ISBN: 9780822349051

Mini-Lecture:

Historiographic Presentation:

Week 12

CONFERENCE AT GEORGIA STATE

Week 13

Leon Fink, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). ISBN: 9780807854471

John Howard White, "Prodigal Sons and Beardless Machos: Labor, Migration, and Masculinity at Itaipú Binacional, Alto Paraná, Paraguay, 1974-1980," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 94, no 4 (Nov 2014): 649-679.

Thanksgiving

Week 14

Revise the themes you produced for the first class. Project onto the screen in class and then narrate the history of Latin America based on the themes in 10 minutes.

Budget:

We are seeking FIT funding to pay for one keynote speaker and to cover lunch for all conference participants. Our partners at Georgia State and UGA are seeking internal funding for an initial planning meeting of all six participating faculty members, travel support and honorarium for one keynote speaker, and additional food costs.

Honorarium for speaker:	\$500
Travel for speaker:	\$350
Hotel for speaker:	\$140
Lunch (~50 participants):	\$500
Total requested:	<u>\$1,490</u>

Schedule:

If we receive the funding support from our three institutions, we will proceed with plans for the conference in the **fall 2016 semester**. Each of the respective seminars is on the books and will be taught. We all have drafts of our syllabi. We do have additional tasks before August:

- Refine the conference theme
- Identify guest speakers
- Decide on core shared readings
- Set a concrete date for the conference
- Plan additional meetings for the fall

Whatever the result of those decisions, the principles of the conference and our proposal will remain constant: we will support our students' professionalization and will offer them exposure to a significantly expanded peer group in the region. This collaboration will help them refine their own research approaches and will give them valuable feedback from sources other than their own professors.