SYLLABUS

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Course Description

This seminar examines the modern political, economic and social history of Cuba, placing it in comparative perspective with other Latin American countries during the 19th and 20th centuries. The course will investigate most intensively the political institutions, patterns of development, leaders, and ideologies of the post-1930 period and particularly the 1959 Revolution and Communist Cuba. This course is not meant to be a research seminar, though students will explore their choice of research questions in Cuban politics through their work on occasional short papers. The seminar is meant to inform and inspire further work on Cuba in independent research. This seminar is not eligible for comps in the political science department.

What is Expected of Students

Students will be expected to read, think, criticize, and form arguments. That will require keeping up on reading assignments and attending class regularly. Students must be fully prepared *at all times* to discuss the readings and concepts from previous lectures. The best students will be critical but balanced in their assessments, and will develop coherent arguments that they can defend in their writing and their in-class discussion. This course will involve a number of out-of-the-classroom experiences and meetings, including guest speakers and culinary instruction.

Reading Materials

All the reading materials for this course are available on Moodle. This includes clippings from periodicals such as *The New York Times*, *The Miami Herald* and *El Herald, Granma*, the *Economist*, and audio and video materials.

Grading

Students will be evaluated based on their completion of two short writing assignments, their participation in classroom debates and discussions, and their posts on Moodle. Each student will be called upon during the course of the semester to participate in numerous debates and to present on the readings in structured critiques that will initiate all seminar discussions on the literature. The grade breakdown follows:
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<td>Debates</td>
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<td>Paper #1</td>
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<td>Moodle Posts</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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The Debates

This seminar will use a series of adversarial debates (2x2 or 4x4) to address the literature Cuban politics. Students will be instructed in how to organize these debates and how to participate with an emphasis on rejoinder and argument development.

The Seminar Papers

At designated times listed on the schedule below, students will be asked to prepare short 8-10 page papers exploring a topic in Cuban politics in some depth. These papers must conform to the style requirements (typed, double-spaced, 12cpi font size, one-inch margins, paginated). Bibliographies must apply the required format described in a separate handout. All papers must be handed in by 5 p.m. on the Courses directory on the due date (see below). All files, except for data files, must be in PDF format. Handouts on each of these paper assignments will be posted on Moodle well in advance of the due dates.

Class Participation

As a seminar, the classroom discussions play a pivotal role in this course. Prior to each meeting, a selected number of students will be assigned the task of preparing talking points and discussion questions on the readings. These talking points should form the basis for both descriptive and critical points about the readings. Some students will be asked to answer these questions prior to class, all will be expected to answer them in the classroom. After each meeting, some students will be asked to post their class notes. All such work will be due on Moodle. In class, each student will present arguments to lead off general discussion in the seminar. Failure to follow through on any of these tasks will be penalized on the participation score.

Typically, I will begin each class session by offering a general overview of the issues to be discussed. I will also present you with a set of critical questions to structure discussion. After the overview portion, the seminar will proceed to student presentations and then general discussion. I will conclude each class session with a brief review of the authors and readings for the next meeting. Whenever possible, each class will have a brief break of about 5 minutes.
Moodle Posts

Classroom discussion will extend to non-class times in this seminar. As part of the regular participation requirement, students must contribute to an ongoing dissemination of ideas on Moodle forums for designated topics listed below. The professor will moderate the discussion and be responsible for the structure of the forum.

The Grading Scale

I will be using the following grading scale in this course:
98-100 A+
94-97 A
91-93 A-
88-90 B+
83-87 B
79-82 B-
76-78 C+
72-75 C
68-71 C-
67/below D/F

Academic Misconduct

Given the fact that academe relies upon the ethical conduct of scholars, students are held to the same standards in their own work. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see the useful handout on “Avoiding Academic Misconduct.”

Special Needs

Students requiring access to learning tools/special schedules approved by Student Support Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

NOTE: Readings must be completed for the dates assigned below.

PART I

CUBAN HISTORY FROM WITHIN AND FROM WITHOUT

Introduction: The Idea of Cuba (Tuesday, January 4)


The Seeds of Revolution in Cuban History (Thursday, January 6)


The Causes of the Revolution Considered Part I (Tuesday, January 11)


The Causes of the Revolution Considered Part II (Thursday, January 13)


El Comandante Fidel (Tuesday, January 18)


**Building the Post-Revolutionary State (Thursday, January 20)**


**DEBATE #1 (Tuesday, January 25)**


**NO CLASS/NO READING – WORK ON PAPERS (Thursday, January 27)**

**PAPER #1 DUE (Friday, January 28)**

**PART II**

**THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF SOCIALISM**

**Institutionalization of the Revolution (Tuesday, February 1)**


**Rectification and Crisis (Thursday, February 3)**


**The Cuban Economy (Tuesday, February 8)**

Economy at the Start of the Twenty-first Century. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.


The Cuban Exile: Transnational Ties that Bind (Thursday, February 10)


Debate #2 (Tuesday, February 15)


Reform Delayed or Deleted? (Thursday, February 17)


**Guest Speaker**: Marifeli Pérez-Stable, Florida International University and Inter-American Dialogue, will give the Wynia Memorial Lecture at 4:30 p.m. in the Athenaeum (Friday, February 18)

Cuban Civil Society (Tuesday, February 22)

Antoni Kapcia. 2008. “Setting the Stage for a Discussion of Cuban Civil Society: The Nature of
Cuban ‘Communism’ and the Revolution’s Political Culture.” In Alexander I. Gray and Antoni Kapcia, eds.


**Debate #3 (Thursday, February 24)**


**PAPER #2 DUE (Monday, February 28)**

**PART III**

**AFTER FIDEL / AFTER CUBAN COMMUNISM, WHAT?**

The Possibilities for Continued Nontransition (Tuesday, March 1)


U.S. – Cuban Relations in the post-Cold War Period (Thursday, March 3)


**Debate #4 (Tuesday, March 8)**
