

HIST 4211  
Fall 2010  
LeConte Hall #230  
TR 3:30 - 4:45

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Office: LeConte Hall #304  
Office Hours: TR 11:00 – noon

### **History of Cuba: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Socialism**

This course is an upper-level survey of Cuba's social, political, and cultural history since the nineteenth century. As the subtitle indicates, the readings track the flow of three historical crosscurrents to understand how Cuban society took shape and assumed its present position. The course materials suggest that colonialism, nationalism, and socialism made for profound shifts in Cuba, but they also caution us against mistaking processes and periodization schemes for stages of development. In Cuba, as elsewhere, periods spill over their assigned limits revealing a past that refuses to stay put. Spanish colonialism began in the 1500s, persisted until the war of 1898, and lingered long after the declaration independence in 1902. Nationalist currents also proved difficult to contain. Patriotic discourses emerged early in the nineteenth century, gave rise to famously multi-racial insurgencies against Spain, and delivered a republic that turned out to be very dependent on the United States. Nationalism has propelled Cuba's long socialist revolution, too. Even as faith in socialism has eroded, patriotic aspirations have retained much of the energy that delivered Castro to power in 1959. Because colonialism, nationalism, and socialism have endured despite efforts to erase them, historian Adrián López Denis calls contemporary Cuba “a palimpsest of (post)colonial and (post)socialist realities.”

Course materials—monographs, articles, films, music, and primary documents—address colonialism, nationalism, and socialism in a deceptively tidy sequence. But the syllabus deals with colonialism briefly. (Students interested in Spanish colonialism in Latin America are advised to enroll in HIST2211; those interested in European empires in the Caribbean are invited to consider HIST3240). The first half of the semester will be devoted to Cubans' struggles against slavery and Spanish domination. The remainder deals with the socialist Revolution and the “Special Period,” the name that Cuban officials gave to the years-long crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The overall aim is to place Cuban history in a context of trans-Atlantic exchanges and transnational linkages. Cuban affairs, the course proposes, cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the Atlantic system and subsequent regimes be fully apprehended without considering Cuba. If recent scholarship is to be credited, modernity—a slippery knot, to be sure—emerged in the tangled traffic between Caribbean islands such as Cuba, Africa, and the West, just as it emerged in Europe's metropolitan centers. Even Cuba's current positioning as a socialist holdout points at dynamics that stretch far beyond the island.

The prominence of –isms in the course description may create the impression that the course favors abstractions over narratives. It may also suggest that Cubans were

caught in currents that were not of their own making, dragged into the swirl of history by impersonal forces. This is not the case. Much of the required reading consists of first-person accounts and primary documents written by or about Afro-Cubans, who are today the majority in Cuba. Although these documents speak to colonialism, nationalism, and revolution, they address these topics in pointed and specific ways; they have a lot to say about race-making and its implications for the practice of citizenship, the development of Cuba's hybrid cultures, and the contested nature of national identity.

### **Required Reading**

1. *Biography of a Runaway Slave* by Miguel Barnet
2. *Reyita* by María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno
3. *Cuba between Reform and Revolution* by Louis A. Pérez, Jr.
4. *Conversations with Cuba* by Peter C. Ripley
5. Sources posted online.

### **Required Viewing**

These films are available at the Media Desk in the Main Library:

1. *The Last Supper* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1976)
2. *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968)
3. *Suite Habana* (Fernando Pérez, 2003)

### **Assignments, tests, and grades**

1. In-class essays, 10% - To encourage close and timely reading and facilitate discussion, students will be asked to write periodic in-class essays.
2. Short papers, 15% each - Two five-page papers are required.
3. Exams, 25% each – The midterm and final exams will consist of short answer and essay questions.
4. Participation, 10% - Students are expected to lead at least one discussion, contribute relevant comments, and ask/answer pertinent questions.

### **Administrative Rules**

1. Attendance: - Regular attendance is required. Students who miss five (5) meetings without a valid excuse will be withdrawn with a “wf.” Students forfeit credit for any missed in-class essays and exercises.
2. Course Withdrawals: Permission to withdraw will be granted as a matter of course only during the first two weeks of the term.
3. Tests: Exams will be administered once; no make-up tests will be offered unless a documented emergency has occurred.
4. Deadlines: Late submissions will be penalized one full letter grade if submitted

within 24 hours of the due date. Papers will not be accepted after 24 hours.

5. Changes to the schedule: Please, keep in mind that it may be necessary to make changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced in advance.
6. Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for knowing the University's policies on academic honesty. All academic work submitted in this course must be your own unless you have received permission to collaborate and have properly acknowledged receiving assistance. It is my responsibility to uphold the University's academic honesty policy and report any appearance of dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. Please, consult "A Culture of Honesty" at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

## **Class Schedule**

### Introduction

Tuesday, 8/17                      Syllabus distribution

Thursday, 8/19                      Cuba on the map  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 1; and online Sources #1.

### Cuba in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Tuesday, 8/24                      The colonial order  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 3; and watch *The Last Supper*.

Thursday, 8/26                      The rise of the plantation system  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 4

### Epics of resistance

Tuesday, 8/31                      Transculturation and ethnogenesis  
Read: Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, first half

Thursday, 9/2                      Quotidian violence and every-day resistance  
Read: Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, first half

### Building a multi-racial insurgency

Tuesday, 9/7                      Fighting Spain (and Haiti's ghosts)  
Read: Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, end

Thursday, 9/9                      Emancipation and racelessness  
**Paper due**

Read: Online Sources #2; and Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 5

### From independence to neocolonialism

Tuesday, 9/14                      US intervention and the occupation of Cuba  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 7

Thursday, 9/16 Americanization, modernization, and sovereignty  
Read: Online [Sources #3](#); and “Report of the Superintendent of Schools – January 1 to September 14, 1900,” in *Report of the Military Governor of Cuba on Civil Affairs* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), pp. 215-219 (on Google Books).

### Midterm

Tuesday, 9/21 Catch-up and review

Thursday, 9/23 **Midterm Exam**

### Making progress

Tuesday, 9/28 From racial democracy to “race war”

Read: Aline Helg, “Race and Black Mobilization in Colonial and Early Independent Cuba: A Comparative Perspective.” *Ethnohistory* 44:1 (1997), pp.53-74; and Chomsky, *The Cuba Reader*, pp. 163-170. Recommended: Alejandro de la Fuente, “Myths of Racial Democracy, 1900-1912,” *Latin American Research Review* 34(3) (1999), pp. 39-73.

Thursday, 9/30 The dance of millions and the lean years

Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 8; and online [Sources #4](#)

### Making revolution again

Tuesday, 10/5 Africanisms to afrocubanismo

Read: Online [Sources #5](#)

Tuesday, 10/7 Machado and the revolution of 1933

Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 9

### Pax Batistiana

Tuesday, 10/12 Making peace under Batista

Read: Castillo Bueno, *Reyita*. Recommended: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 10

Thursday, 10/14 Making war under Batista

Read: Castillo Bueno, *Reyita*

### Revolution

Tuesday, 10/19 Discussion w/ clips of *Lucía*

#### **Paper due**

Read: Castillo Bueno, *Reyita*

Thursday, 10/21 The July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement Comes to Power

Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap 11; and online [Sources #6](#)

### Building socialism

Tuesday, 10/26 “New man” and social rights

Read: Online [Sources #7](#); and watch *Memories of Underdevelopment*

Thursday, 10/28      Revolutionary balance sheet  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 12

Cuba in the Special Period

Tuesday, 11/2      Economy and Civil Society  
Read: Pérez, *Cuba*, chap. 13

Thursday, 11/4      Tourism  
Read: Ripley, *Conversations with Cuba*

Survival Strategies

Tuesday, 11/9      Soundtracks of the Special Period  
Read: Ripley, *Conversations with Cuba*; and Sujatha Fernandes, "Fear of a Black nation," *Anthropological Quarterly* 76:4 (2003), pp. 139-162 (Reserves)

Thursday, 11/11      Self-employment, remittances, and inequality  
Reading: Ripley, *Conversations with Cuba*

Traveling faiths

Tuesday, 11/16      *Suite Habana*  
Reading: Ripley, *Conversations with Cuba*

Thursday, 11/18      The return of Catholicism?  
Read: Online Sources #8; and Thomas A. Tweed, "Diasporic Nationalism and Urban Landscape" in *The Gods of the City*, edited by Robert A. Orsi (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999), 151-174 (Reserves)

Routes to doble-moral

Tuesday, 11/30      Faith and doble-moral  
Read: Kristina Wirtz, "Santeria in Cuban National Consciousness" *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 9:2 (2004), pp. 409-438 (Reserves)

Thursday, 12/2      Closing remarks

Tuesday, 12/7      UGA on Friday schedule

Thursday, 12/9      Final exam - 3:30 - 6:30 pm