

History 272 — Introduction to Modern Latin American History (1810–Present)

Spring 2026

Course Description

This course introduces students to major historical developments in Latin America from the period of Independence (beginning in 1810) to the present. Through readings, lectures, and discussions, we will explore major social, political, economic, and cultural processes in the region's three largest countries—**Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina**—which together comprise two-thirds of Latin America's population.

Topics include:

- Independence movements
- State and nation formation
- The Mexican Revolution
- Brazilian culture, including race, poverty, and soccer
- Peronism and political populism in Argentina
- Pre-Columbian, African, and European influences on national identity
- Key leaders, cultural figures, and social movements

Students will develop skills in historical reflection, critical thinking, and engagement with both primary and secondary sources.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the complexity of Latin American social, political, and cultural realities during the post-independence period.
2. Compare historical processes across multiple national contexts.
3. Identify different forms of historical interpretation and understand the role of critical thinking in historical research.

4. Analyze primary and secondary sources through writing, discussion, and examination.

Course activities include lectures, discussions, quizzes, essay-based exams, and written assignments.

Required Books

- **Skidmore, Smith, and Green.** *Modern Latin America*. Oxford University Press.
 - **Samuel Brunk.** *Emiliano Zapata! Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico*. University of New Mexico Press.
 - **Alma Guillermoprieto.** *Samba*. Vintage.
 - **N. Fraser and M. Navarro.** *Evita: The Real Lives of Eva Perón*. W.W. Norton.
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Course Outline and Weekly Schedule

Week 1

- Course Introduction
- Geography of Latin America
- The Colonial Legacy
- Independence Movements and Periodization

Reading: *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 2 — “The Colonial Foundations”

Weeks 2–4: Mexico (1810–Present)

Week 2

Reading: Chapter 3 — “Mexico: The Taming of a Revolution”

Topics: Independence through the end of the Porfiriato (1810–1911)

Week 3

The Mexican Revolution (1910–1940)

Week 4

Mexico under the PRI and democratic transitions (1940–2010s)

Week 5

Special Reading: Brunk, *Emiliano Zapata!*
Quiz and Discussion

Week 6

Review and First Exam (Mexico)

Weeks 7–9: Brazil (1822–Present)

Week 7

Reading: Chapter 11 — “Brazil: The Awakening Giant”
Topics: Empire and Republic (1822–1930)

Week 8

Varguismo, Military Rule, and Democracy (1930–2010s)

Week 9

Urban poverty, Afro-Brazilian heritage, and popular culture
Special Reading: Guillermprieto, *Samba*
Quiz and Discussion

March 16–21: Spring Break

Week 11

Weeks 12–15: Argentina (1810–Present)

Week 12

Reading: Chapter 9 — “Progress and Stalemate”

Topics:

- Independence (1810) to 1880
- Modernization, agro-export economy, immigration (1880–1930)

Week 13

- “Infamous Decade”
- Working class and Peronism (1930–1955)
- Military rule and democracy (1955–2010s)

Week 14

Special Reading: Fraser and Navarro, *Evita*

Quiz and Discussion

Week 15

Argentina in literature: Jorge Luis Borges
(Reading assignments available on Brightspace)

Quiz and Discussion

Week 16

Review

May 4–9

Third Exam (Argentina)

Grading Breakdown

Component	Percentage
Exams (3 total, 25% each)	75%
Quizzes (4 total, 5% each)	20%
Attendance	5%

All quizzes and exams must be completed to pass the course.

Quiz and Exam Policies

- Quizzes last 20 minutes and are based on weekly readings.
 - All quizzes and exams occur during class time.
 - Students must sign the attendance sheet on quiz/exam days; failure to sign results in an automatic zero.
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Grading Scale

Percentage	Grade
90–100	A
80–89	B
70–79	C
60–69	D
0–59	F

Attendance Policy

- Students may miss **three classes** (excused or unexcused) without penalty.
- **Fourth absence:** –1% of final grade.
- **Fifth and sixth absences:** –2% each.
- **Seven absences total:** automatic failing grade.

- Attendance sheet remains open for three minutes after class begins. Late arrivals count as absences.
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Freedom of Expression

Students are encouraged to express ideas freely and respectfully. Grades are based on academic performance, not viewpoint.

Disruptive behavior, threats, or harassment are prohibited and will be reported.

Refer to Purdue's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" on Brightspace.

Conduct and Academic Ethics

- Students must follow the university's code of honor and academic regulations.
- Academic misconduct results in:
 - A failing grade on the assignment (minimum), or
 - A failing grade for the course (at instructor's discretion), and
 - Referral to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR).

Report concerns about academic integrity to: integrity@purdue.edu or **765-494-8778**.

Emergency Policy

In the event of a campus emergency, deadlines, assignments, and grading policies may change. Updates will be posted to Brightspace and emailed to students.

Students must check their Purdue email regularly.

Classroom Climate

Purdue welcomes individuals of all backgrounds and identities.

Threatening, harassing, or discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

Absences, Emergencies, and Support

For urgent situations when advance notice is not possible, students should contact the instructor as soon as they can.

If unable to reach the instructor due to serious circumstances, students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students: **765-494-1747**.

Grief and attendance policies are available on Brightspace.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- **WellTrack:** Free wellness tools, available anytime.
 - **Dean of Students:** 765-494-1747 (M–F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.)
 - **Wellness Coaching:** Free one-on-one sessions through RecWell (sign up on BoilerConnect).
 - **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):**
 - Phone: 765-494-6995 (24/7 availability)
 - Location: PUSH, 2nd floor
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Accommodations

Students with disabilities, health concerns, or special needs should speak privately with the instructor as early as possible to arrange accommodations.