

Historical Studies 471:01
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The University of Calgary
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The Military in Latin America
(Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45; SS 113)

The problem of chronic militarism has long cast its shadow over Latin America. In modern times this tenacious predicament reached its terrible apex during the *guerras sucias* (dirty wars) that began in the 1960s, and continued for the next two decades. Even today, with the erstwhile restoration of civilian governments throughout the region, many of these “protected democracies” are still subject to the implicit threat of military intervention in civil politics.

The origins of this condition are many and varied. The earliest of these developed on the battlefields of medieval Spain, where a tightly held sense of “moral clarity”—although some today might call it zealous fanaticism—evolved among the Christian nobility and soldiers who waged a bitter eight-hundred-year crusade against the Islamic Caliphate first established there in AD 711. This process, which featured the development of laws to justify waging war against non-Christians, culminated in 1492 with the final collapse of Muslim Spain. In October of that same year, Christopher Columbus “discovered” the Americas on behalf of the Catholic Kings of newly unified Spain, and soon the religious crusade to conquer non-Christian lands on behalf of Christendom was carried westward across the Atlantic.

While Columbus is best known in North America as a courageous explorer, less well known is his status as a conquistador, the first of many to arrive in the New World after 1492. Indeed, his efforts spearheaded a horrific genocide that resulted in the depopulation of the Caribbean by the mid-1500s, necessitating the importation of slaves from Africa to work the mines and plantations of the new colonies. This course will examine the activities carried out by Columbus and other important conquistadors as they brought the region now known as Latin America under Spanish and Portuguese dominion. The fierce indigenous resistance to this process (as well as the collaboration of indigenous allies with the Spaniards) will also be examined.

The course will then move forward and explore the creation of imperial Spain’s defence systems to contain piracy, repel European adversaries, subdue indigenous revolts, and crush African slave rebellions. It will also examine the elevation of the military caste during the final years of the colonial period. Finally it will spotlight the rise of modern caudillos and dictatorships during and after the nineteenth century wars of independence.

In the national period, armed forces of various types have played decisive and often tragic roles in determining the fate of most modern Latin American republics. It could even be argued that the rise and fall of politically adventurous generals ranging from Simón Bolívar to Hugo Chávez has defined much of Latin America’s modern history. This course will trace the history of Latin American militarism, and of its

accompanying vices—the habitual violation of human dignity and the subversion of the rule of law for “higher causes.” At the same time, students will learn that the historic missions carried out by Latin American military establishments are diverse, and defy easy judgement or blanket condemnation.

Course Text Books and Required Readings

Mario Vargas Llosa. *The Feast of the Goat (La fiesta del chivo)*. Translated by Edith Grossman. New York: Picador Books, 2000.

Marguerite Feitlowitz. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Lesley Gill. *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.

Additional readings may be posted from time to time on the course Blackboard site.

Course Assignments and Grading

Midterm Exam	30 percent
Term Paper (including paper proposal)	40 percent
Take-home Final Exam	30 percent
Total	100 percent

Please note: Assignments turned in late without a special arrangement with the instructor *made well in advance* of the due date will be reduced by *one letter grade* for each day they are late (i.e.: from A- to B+). All assignments not submitted in class must be submitted in person to the instructor or via the “red box” located in the hallway outside the history department office (SS 656). All assignments must be attempted (and submitted) to pass this course. (Be sure to save a backup copy of your assignments; lost or missing assignments cannot be assigned a grade.)

Midterm Exam: October 18

This will be an in-class exam encompassing all material covered in the text readings and lectures up to this point.

Term Paper Proposal and Working Bibliography: Due October 25

Students must submit a one-page plan outlining their proposed term paper topic and thesis statement. Potential topics can address any aspect of Latin American military history, provided you have adequate sources. If you have a problem coming up with a topic, consult with the instructor well in advance of the due date. A bibliography of no fewer than ten (10) supporting sources must accompany the proposal. At least eight (8) of

these must be actual books or articles from the library (this includes electronic versions of scholarly articles available on-line). Any proposed web-based sources must include web addresses and are subject to the instructor's approval. (No grade is assigned for this bibliography, but one letter grade will be deducted from the term paper for every day that this assignment is late. Note also that no paper will be graded unless the topic is approved.)

Term Paper: Due November 29

Each student will select a topic concerning some aspect of Latin American history pertaining to the theme of this course. With the instructor's approval of topic, you will craft a term paper dealing with the approved topic. A handout giving a full and itemized disclosure of the instructor's grading criteria is included with this course syllabus. The paper will be ten to twelve pages in length (2,500 to 3,000 words), not including bibliography, notes, and cover page.

Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

Please note: The instructor *will not* provide notes or lecture outlines to students who miss lectures. It is *your responsibility* to attend lectures regularly and get notes of missed lectures from a classmate. Consult the instructor during office hours (or via email) if you feel uncertain about anything covered in this class, or if you need help with any assignment.

Please shut cell phones off while you are in class. If you must take a call, leave the room immediately to do so. Those who arrive late to class or leave early are similarly encouraged to do so as quietly as possible.

Please note: It is *the student's responsibility* to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

“SAFEWALK” Program

Campus security will escort individuals day or night—call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone, or yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Plagiarism

All written work must conform to *THE HISTORY STUDENT'S HANDBOOK: a Short Guide to Writing History Essays*, which is available via the history department website at this address: <http://hist.ucalgary.ca/essay/Handbook.htm>

Carefully consider what this guide says about plagiarism:

“Plagiarism occurs when an author, either deliberately or without the exercise of reasonable judgment, passes off the writing of another as his or her own. A plagiarized paper will automatically be failed and can also result in failure of the course and other penalties, as outlined in the *University Calendar*. Plagiarism can include, but is not limited to, using a few important words, merely rewording a sentence or paragraph, or using another author’s ideas, without providing a citation to the original source. To avoid plagiarizing another’s work, accurately reference all direct quotations (which should be enclosed in quotation marks) and paraphrases, ideas or information derived from another source, and all concepts that are not commonly known. Lack of references usually suggests plagiarized work, so when in doubt include a footnote. Plagiarism also occurs when an author submits work that is borrowed from another person, purchased, ghostwritten, submitted for credit in another course, or that has been extensively edited by a third party to the degree that it barely resembles the original.”

Note as well that over reliance on one or two sources to the exclusion of all others can also constitute plagiarism. Any plagiarized paper can and will automatically be failed. Plagiarism—or attempting to cheat during an exam—may also result in a failing grade for the entire course and other penalties as noted in the *University of Calgary Calendar*.

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Term Paper Grading Criteria

Section One: Structure (worth 25 percent of grade)

Full 25 points awarded for a well-organized paper.

- Does the introduction state the purpose, problem or question to be considered?
- Does the body present collected data (and/or narrative) along with logical analysis?
- Is contradictory evidence dealt with adequately, or is it simply ignored?
- Is the presented evidence actually relevant to the question to be considered?
- Are the conclusions actually related to the questions asked in the introduction?

Points are deducted (at my discretion) for any lack of organization or logical development.

Section Two: Research and Documentation (worth 25 percent of grade)

Full 25 points awarded to paper that is well researched and thoroughly documented.

Academic history favours the documentary/footnote (humanities) style of documentation rather than the author-date (social science/science) system. If you are unclear about the humanities style, consult the department of history website under tutorials for "The History Student's Handbook." See also *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition.

- Is the paper well researched, drawing from the best available resources?
- Does the bibliography list adequate sources, but are only a few actually used?
- Is the research adequate, but does a failure to footnote make it impossible to tell?
- Is the paper (or portions thereof) plagiarized? (If so, the paper will be failed.)

Points are deducted at my discretion for any problems with research and documentation.

Section Three: Writing and Style (worth 25 percent of grade)

Full 25 points awarded for a relatively stylish paper free of careless spelling and grammatical errors.

Communicating effectively through proper and skilful writing is an essential component of good scholarly history. Take your draft to the Writing Skills Centre (or the professor) if you are having problems.

- Is the paper riddled with careless errors? Are run-on sentences needlessly complex and hard to follow? Do paragraphs continue for one, two, or even more pages? Is the paper a poorly developed first draft of a rushed product? Can it actually be comprehended without repeated readings? Or is it a competently crafted and carefully edited?

Points are deducted (at my discretion) for any problems in this regard.

Section Four: Overall Quality (worth 25 percent of the grade)

Full 25 points awarded for success in this relatively subjective category.

Does the paper offer a convincing and cogent argument supported by properly documented and legitimate sources, all presented in a consistently polished and pleurably readable style? Or is it the half-baked result of minimum efforts expended half-heartedly the night before the paper is due?

A solid performance in all other categories will be reflected in a good score here; the opposite also holds true. Points are awarded and deducted at my discretion.

Paper Grading System

This system has been adapted from the official University of Calgary undergraduate grading system.

A+	(96-100 points)	Excellent— <i>superior performance</i> , showing a comprehensive and exceptionally well-written understanding of subject matter that is <i>far above average</i> .
A	(91-95 points)	
A-	(86-90 points)	
B+	(81-85 points)	
B	(76-80 points)	Good—an <i>above average</i> performance demonstrating a generally complete and well-written knowledge of the subject matter. Nothing to be ashamed of!
B-	(71-75 points)	
C+	(66-70 points)	
C	(61-65 points)	An average product; neither bad or good.
C-	(56-60 points)	
D	(50-55 points)	A minimal pass—a marginal performance reflected by a poor paper.
F	(1-49 points)	A truly bad paper devoid of <i>any</i> redeeming qualities. Horrifying!