

Human Rights in Latin America

LEH 301.AO7W, Spring 2013

Instructor: Risa Cromer

risa.cromer@lehman.cuny.edu

“Office” Hours: Email me to schedule appt. by phone



A. Course Description

This course provides an interdisciplinary overview of human rights (e.g., political, social, cultural and economic rights) and their abuses in Latin America. Child soldiers, urban gangs, street children, indigenous rights movements, coca grower movements, drug trafficking, human trafficking, government corruption, illegal land grabs, free trade zones, health, and rural to urban migration are among the issues affecting, challenging and shaping human rights in Latin America today. What happens when rights collide? Who decides which rights are valid? These questions and issues will be considered in the course as we examine human rights from Mexico to Central America and the Caribbean, through the Andes and down to the Southern Cone.

Throughout the course, we will aim to meet the following objectives:

- ✓ Develop familiarity with the history and practice of human rights in Latin America;
- ✓ Develop knowledge of human rights standards and their applications;
- ✓ Improve reading and writing skills;
- ✓ Improve critical thinking skills;
- ✓ Improve the organization of ideas and the logic of arguments;
- ✓ Improve the written expression of ideas.

Course materials will draw from a variety of academic disciplines (anthropology, history, public health) and kinds of materials (testimonies, journalism, ethnography, film). Our primary learning tools will include regular online discussion, online media, films, critical reading and writing.

NOTE: All students are encouraged to contact me if some personal problem is affecting your performance in class. **If you have a disability for which I can make an accommodation, please contact me**

B. Required Readings

Books: We will be reading all or most of the following **required** books. They are available for purchase at the Lehman Campus Bookstore. Additionally, all three books are available as eBooks through the Lehman Library (<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/library/>).

1. Kaiser, Susana. 2005. *Post-Memories of Terror: A New Generation Copes with the Legacy of the Dirty War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press.
2. Farmer, Paul. 2005. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press ISBN 978-0-520-24326-2

3. Sanford, Victoria. 2003. *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Articles: Other non-book readings are listed in the Course Schedule below. You will access the required articles by downloading them from the Blackboard course website in the “Assignments” tab; they are organized numerically by Topic. **Note:** all readings on Blackboard are in .pdf format. Visit www.adobe.com to download the free software for opening .pdf files in you do not have this software already.

C. Course Expectations

Expectations of Students:

- To have reliable access to the Internet and one’s Lehman email account
- To access the Blackboard site daily.
- To complete all assigned coursework on time. While there are no exams for this course, the key to success is being aware of the assignment schedule and planning accordingly.
- To take reasonable precautions by keeping back-up copies of submitted work. Breakdowns in computer, internet, email, and other malfunctions are not the instructor’s responsibility. In the event of disasters – big and little – your instructor will usually accept reasonable explanations. But the course will continue, and your responsibility is to maintain access and participation.

Expectations for Instructor:

- ❖ Will respond to emails within 24-48 hours
- ❖ Will review course activity each weekday
- ❖ Will grade weekly Discussion Board forums the Tuesday after Reading Responses and Comments are due
- ❖ Will return graded Major Essays within a week of submission

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by failing grades, suspension, or expulsion. Academic Dishonesty includes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or copying information without citing the source, and “cutting & pasting” from various sources without proper attribution. *Student’s found plagiarizing will receive a failing grade.* **NOTE: All students must complete the Topic 00: Honor Code assignment.**

Attendance

In this online course, “attendance” means “participation.” It is not a separate grade but incorporated into the grading requirements for Reading Responses, Comments and Major Essays.

Blackboard

Blackboard is an essential feature of this course. You are responsible for activating your Lehman email account and checking it multiple times a week. For any technical assistance, contact Lehman’s IT Center (Phone: 718-960-8421; Email: itr@lehman.cuny.edu; Website: <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/itr/index.php>). *How do I get to our class Blackboard page?* Go to www.cuny.edu and sign in (In order to do this, you need to have an active Lehman email account and a CUNY Portal Account. If you need help with this, contact IT help Desk in Carman Hall a.s.a.p.). Click on “Blackboard Direct 9.0.” This will take you to the courses in which you are enrolled this semester. Click on our LEH course.

Class Announcements

Please check the Announcements page on Blackboard *daily* because this is the main way the instructor will communicate with you and give you feedback. Any changes and updates will be posted in this section of the course website.

Email Communication

During the term, the instructor checks email (risa.cromer@lehman.cuny.edu and risacromer@gmail.com) at least once a day and does her best to respond to emails within 24-48hrs. Please include your name and the course title (e.g. LEH 301 Human Rights in Latin America) in the subject line of the email to help make responding more efficient.

Lectures & Media

In “Assignments,” each Topic is accompanied by background lectures, links to online media, and/or film viewing information. Review these materials in preparation for Discussion Board activity, which must be completed by midnight on the day listed in the Course Schedule.

Standard Paper Format

The Major Essay assignments should be typed using standard format: 1x1in margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced. All writing submitted for this course should be edited for grammar and spelling mistakes.

Time Zone

Online coursework can be completed from anywhere in the world, but all deadlines for this course are for the Eastern Standard Time zone.

D. Course Requirements

Reading Responses – 240pts

A central part of this course will be participation on the Discussion Board and will occur in corresponding Topic Forums most weeks this semester. These discussions are designed to help you synthesize the reading material into an intelligent and substantive response, to learn from your peers’ insights, and to foster critical thinking. *See the Reading Tips section below for questions that will help you draft your responses.* NOTE: Reading Responses are due by Fridays at 11:59pm.

- Reading Responses (20pts possible for each Topic): Due Fridays by 11:59pm. Each Topic Forum has 2-3 questions listed and students will post a Reading Response for *each* of them. Your answer to each question should be around 300-500 words. There are thirteen required Topics (00-12); Topic 00 will not be graded, but is required.

Comments – 120pts

Participation is defined as thoughtfully engaging two of your classmates’ Reading Responses. It is up to you to select the posts that you wish to comment on, but you are expected to read all the posts.

- Comments (10pts possible for each Topic): Due Mondays following Reading Response due dates by 11:59pm. Students will submit two thoughtful comments to other students Reading Responses within each Topic Forum. Comments should respond substantively to the points made in the original post. This includes being respectful of each other’s opinions, and having read the material before making comments. Comments are required for the twelve graded Topics (01-12).

Major Essays – 300pts

As detailed on the Course Schedule, students will submit three Major Essays over the course on February 22nd, April 12th and May 17th. Please follow the directions for each essay assignment located in the “Major Essays” tab on Blackboard. For more details about submitting essays on Blackboard, visit the “Submitting Essays on Blackboard” document in Course Information.

E. Grading Distribution

Thus, your final grade will be determined by the following points:

Reading Responses	240pts (36%)
Comments	120pts (19%)
Major Essay #1	100pts (15%)
Major Essay #2	100pts (15%)
Major Essay #3	100pts (15%)
TOTAL	660pts

F. Reading/Writing Tips

Keep the following questions in mind as you read and take notes to help you formulate your thoughts for each reading:

- What is the main message or argument the author is trying to convey? Does her/his evidence support it?
- How do the texts relate to each other and to themes we've encountered in class?
- What concepts seem significant, and why?
- What questions are you left with after reading the piece?
- Were there parts of the reading that you found intriguing, troubling, insightful, or informative? Why?
- Do you disagree with any points the author made and why?
- Have you had similar experiences to those discussed in the text?

G. Online Course “Keywords”

Announcements: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage where all important course announcements will be posted. Announcements made during the semester will also be emailed to your Lehman email account.

Course Information: Tab on the left-hand side of the main course homepage with all informational documents about the course, including the Course Syllabus and Grading Rubric. Consider this tab a key reference point for any questions about how the course works.

Assignments: Tab on the left-hand side of the main course homepage that houses folders for each Topic within the course. Note: each Topic corresponds with a title and due date that is echoed on the Course Syllabus. Within each folder, you will find downloadable versions of the required reading (except for the Fadiman book, which needs to be purchased or borrowed), any required lectures for viewing, links to any required films, links to optional websites and enrichment information, and a link to the corresponding Discussion Board Forum.

Discussion Board: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage and place where all Reading Responses and Comments are posted. Discussions are organized by Topics (e.g. Topic 01, Topic 02, etc), or “forums.” All Readings Responses and Comments will be posted as a “Reply” to the leading discussion question. Please paste your writing into the message box and post rather than attach a document.

Major Essays: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage with assignment directions for the three major essays due this term. You will also submit your Major Essays within this tab.

Films: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage that links you to iTunes University where most of the films for this course are found. Within iTunes University, you can stream or download the required film. Other films are viewable online through YouTube, Google Video, etc. These links will be found both in the Films tab as well as in the corresponding Topic within the Assignments tab.

Extra Credit: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage with a document explaining the Extra Credit assignment as well as the link for submitting the assignment.

Staff Information: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage with some information about your instructor.

Communication: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage under “Tools” with links to useful tools for communicating with the instructor and other students in the course. Note: all emails sent through Blackboard go to your Lehman email account.

Course Tools: Tab on the left-hand side of the course homepage under “Tools” with links to other course tools. The most relevant one for this course is “My Grade” where you can track your progress in the course.

H. Course Schedule

Note: This is a tentative schedule. It is intended to provide the student with the specific topics covered. The instructor has the discretion to adjust this calendar to fit instructional needs and concerns.

TOPIC	DATE DUE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	Readings and Assignments DUE
00	Jan 28	Honor Code & Introduction	Review course site and Complete Topic 00 assignments
01	Feb 1	Human Beings, Human Rights	Kaiser pg. 1-82 (CH 1-3) Universal Declaration of Human Rights
02	Feb 8	The Official Story	Kaiser pg. 83-130 (CH 4-6) <i>Film: The Official Story</i>
03	Feb 15	Memories of Violence *ME1 Due Feb 22*	Kaiser pg. 131-200 (CH 7-10 + Afterward) <i>Film: Obstinate Memory</i>
04	Mar 1	Inter-American System & Health	Farmer pg. 1-90 American Convention on Human Rights <i>Film: Motorcycle Diaries</i>
05	Mar 8	Health as a Human Right	Farmer pg. 213-246 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
06	Mar 15	Sexual & Reproductive Justice	Petchesky, "Human Rights, Reproductive Health & Economic Justice" Silliman et al., "Latinas Organizing for Reproductive Justice" <i>Film: It's Still Going On</i>
07	Mar 22	Indigenous Rights & Resistance	Farmer pg. 91-114, 139-159 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People <i>Film: A Place Called Chiapas</i>
--	Mar 25 – Apr 2	<i>Spring Break</i>	
08	Apr 5	Environment, Resources & Rights *ME2 Due Apr 12*	Vidal, "We are fighting for our lives and our dignity" Romero and Krauss, "In Ecuador, Resentment of an Oil Company Oozes" <i>Film: Crude</i>
09	Apr 19	Human Rights & Social Movements	Sanford pg. 1-75
10	Apr 26	Truth Commissions in Latin America	Sanford pg. 76-146 <i>Film: When the Mountains Tremble</i>
11	May 3	Buried Secrets	Sanford pg. 147-210 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
12	May 10	Morality & Survival *ME3 Due May 17th*	Sanford pg. 211-271

#	DATE DUE	BY 11:59pm ON	TOPIC	READING	WRITING	FILMS
0	Jan 28	Mon	Honor Code & Introductions			
1	Feb 1	Fri	Human Beings, Human Rights	Kaiser, UDHR	RR01	
2	Feb 8	Fri	The Official Story	Kaiser	RR02	The Official Story
3	Feb 15	Fri	Memories of Violence	Kaiser	RR03	Obstinate Memory
--	Feb 22	Fri			ME#1	
4	Mar 1	Fri	Inter-American System & Health	Farmer, ACHR	RR04	Motorcycle Diaries
5	Mar 8	Fri	Health as a Human Right	Farmer, ICESCR	RR05	
6	Mar 15	Fri	Sexual & Reproductive Justice	Petchesky; Silliman Farmer, ITPC,	RR06	It's Still Going On
7	Mar 22	Fri	Indigenous Rights & Resistance	UNDRIP	RR07	A Place Called Chiapas
8	Apr 5	Fri	Environment, Resources & Rights	Vidal, Romero, Kraus	RR08	Crude
--	Apr 12	Fri			ME#2	
9	Apr 19	Fri	Human Rights & Social Movements	Sanford	RR09	
10	Apr 26	Fri	Truth Commissions in Latin America	Sanford	RR10	When Mountains Tremble
11	May 3	Fri	Buried Secrets	Sanford, CPPCG	RR11	
12	May 10	Fri	Morality & Survival	Sanford	RR12	
--	May 17	Fri			ME#3	