

PHIL 3312/WS 4360

**LATIN AMERICAN THOUGHT**

Fall 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-4:20

Old Main 214

**Professor:** Amy Reed-Sandoval

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**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What is the relevance of Latin American Thought today? What contemporary problems does it enable us to consider seriously, and perhaps even resolve? How can young people today engage it, build upon it, and put it to their use in creative ways?

This course is designed with these overarching questions in mind. While we will spend some time considering the important, oft-debated metaphilosophical question of what “counts” (or “ought to count”) as Latin American Philosophy or Thought, primary emphasis will be placed upon employing key works from this philosophical tradition to delve into contemporary social issues—particularly those of relevance to contemporary Latin Americans and Latina/os. We shall come to see that the philosophical ideas generated by famous Latin American thinkers are not mere historical artifacts; rather, they surround us, and are relevant to our day-to-day lives.

Given this “applied” focus, we will limit, for purely practical reasons, our explorations of this subject matter to important philosophical works that have been produced by philosophers working in Mexico. Throughout the course, we will be seeking out connections between the claims made by these philosophers, and contemporary social issues in Mexico and at the Mexico-U.S. border. Thus, in addition to working through and writing on works in Latin American Thought, students are expected to “stay on top of” news developments in Mexico and at home, at the border. For this purpose, important sources of information are the *El Paso Times*, *El Diario de Juárez*, Latino USA NPR, *La Jornada* and *El Universal*.

**SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To gain familiarity with a number of canonical works of the Mexican/Latin American philosophical canon

- To learn to engage, critically and responsibly, challenging philosophical texts
- To engage, in creative and interesting new ways, contemporary social issues by employing the tools of Latin American philosophy
- To carefully develop philosophical writing skills that are applicable outside of academic philosophy
- To learn to revise papers in response to feedback and critique
- To gain public speaking skills by delivering an in-class presentation that requires both philosophical understanding and familiarity with a contemporary social issue

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- You will take an in-class reading quiz at the beginning of each individual class. I will drop your lowest quiz grade from each week. **Quizzes are only issued at the beginning of class, in class, and they cannot be made up.**
- You are allowed to miss **two** in-class writing assignments over the course of the semester. After that, you will be dropped one full letter grade \*for your in-class writing assignments grade\* (not your full course grade) for each in-class writing assignment that you miss.
- You will complete four short—that is, two-page—writing assignments over the course of the semester. For these assignments, you will answer a specific set of questions that I will give you.
- You will give an in-class presentation on a contemporary issue in Latin America or at the Mexico-U.S. border that can be categorized under the rubric of “Latin American feminism”. You will analyze that issue philosophically, using conceptual tools you have gained in class.
- You will write a term paper on the philosophy of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. You will use an aspect of Sor Juana’s philosophy to engage a contemporary issue of relevance to women in Latin America and/or at the Mexico-U.S. border. I will give you extensive feedback on the first draft of that paper, and you will then be asked to revise your paper in response to that feedback.
- You will complete a short final exam at home.

### **GRADES**

- Daily reading quizzes – 25%
- In-class writing assignments – 10%
- Short writing assignments (4) – 20%
- In class presentation on Latin American feminism – 5%
- Draft 1 of term paper on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism 15%
- Draft 2 (revised) of term paper on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism – 15%
- Final exam (at home) – 10%

## GENERAL POLICIES

1. *Respect and open-mindedness.* This class will be a space for an open exchange of ideas; you are encouraged to voice your opinions and defend them philosophically. You should, however, do so with a spirit of respect and open-mindedness—not only towards the varied philosophical arguments you will read for class, but also toward your classmates (whose views may differ from your own). Furthermore, in choosing to take this class you agree to engage respectfully with the views we shall explore throughout the course.

2. *Academic Integrity.* Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UTEP community, students accept the expectations of the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the morally sound path. Students enrolling in UTEP assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UTEP's function as an educational institution. Students should review the university's policies at: <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?PageContentID=2084&tabid=30292>

3. *Students with Disabilities Act.* UTEP seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for persons with disabilities. If the student has a systematic physical, cognitive, or psychological disability and requires accommodations, she or he should contact the instructor by the second week of classes so arrangements can be made with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 915-747-5148 or [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu).

4. *University Writing Center.* If you would like help writing papers for this course (from brainstorming ideas to revising for grammar and content), please contact by email [uwc@utep.edu](mailto:uwc@utep.edu) or by phone 915/747-5112, or visit the University Writing Center located in Library 227.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Bartolomé de las Casas. 1992. (Original Edition 1542). *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Penguin Classics.
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Miguel Leon-Portilla. 1963. *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Leopoldo Zea. 1991. *The Role of the Americas in History*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press.
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics.

## READING AND TEACHING SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

Monday, August 24

- Introduction to Course.

Wednesday, August 26

- The Nature of Latin American Thought?
- Guillermo Hurtado. 2006. "Two Models of Latin American Philosophy." In *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.
- In class: listen to part of *Philosophy Talk* program on Latin American Philosophy (2011, with Dr. Joseph Orozco)

Monday, August 31

- Introduction to Aztec/Nahuatl Philosophy
- Miguel Leon-Portilla. 1963. *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.
- Justin E. H. Smith. 2012. "Philosophy's Western Bias." In *The New York Times*. Access at [http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/philosophys-western-bias/?\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/philosophys-western-bias/?_r=0)

Wednesday, September 2

- Please read: Miguel Leon-Portilla. 1963. *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. Chapters 3 and 4

Monday, September 7

- No class – UTEP closed for Labor Day
- Miguel Leon-Portilla. 1963. *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. Please read chapters 5 and Conclusion

Wednesday, September 9

- No class – Dr. Reed-Sandoval away at conference

Monday, September 14

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<sup>1</sup> This schedule may be revised at Dr. Reed-Sandoval's discretion.

- Aztec/Nahuatl Philosophy, Continued
- In-class watch: *El Santo Luzbel*. Miguel Sabido, 1997.
- **Writing Assignment 1 is due on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>**. Please answer the following questions: (1) what elements of Aztec/Nahuatl philosophy are depicted in *Santo Luzbel*? (2) What is the connection between Aztec/Nahuatl philosophy, as depicted in the film, and the sociopolitical issues/debates that are depicted in the film? (3) In your opinion, what is the appropriate solution to these problems?

Wednesday, September 16

- Introduction to Bartolomé de las Casas: Philosopher of Human Rights
- Short Writing Assignment 1 due at the beginning of class.
- Bartolomé de las Casas. 1992. (Original Edition 1542.) *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Penguin Classics pp. 1-57

Monday, September 21

- Bartolomé de las Casas: Philosopher of Human Rights, Continued
- Bartolomé de las Casas. 1992. (Original Edition 1542.) *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Penguin Classics pp. 57-102
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. 2007. Access at: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

Wednesday, September 23

- Bartolomé de las Casas: Philosopher of Human Rights, Continued
- Bartolomé de las Casas. 1992. (Original Edition 1542.) *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Penguin Classics pp 102-130.

Monday, September 28

- Bartolomé de las Casas: Philosopher of Human Rights, Continued
- William Talbott. 2005. *Which Rights Should Be Universal?* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 3.
- Bernardo J. Castañens. "The Rights of the American Indians." In Nuccetelli and Schutte (eds.). *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*.
- **Short writing Assignment 2 will be due on Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>**. Please answer the following questions. (1) How does Las Casas understand human rights? (2) Do you agree or disagree with Talbott's depiction of Las Casas's understanding of human rights? Why or why not? (2) What particular human rights violations is Las Casas most concerned about? (4) What is the relationship between Las Casas's

conception of human rights, and that of the UN Declaration on Indigenous People's Rights?

Wednesday, September 30

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, Introduction
- Short Writing Assignment 2 Due Today
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics. "Response to the Most Illustrious Poetess Sor Filotea de la Cruz."
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Prologue*.
- In-class presentations on contemporary Latin American and Latina feminist issues

Monday, October 5

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics. "Romances" (full section).
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part I*
- In-class presentations on contemporary Latin American and Latina feminist issues

Wednesday, October 7

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics. "Redondillas" (full section) and "Epigrams" (full section).
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part II*
- In-class presentations on contemporary Latin American and Latina feminist issues

Monday, October 12

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics. "Epigrams" and "Décimas" (full sections).
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part III*

Wednesday, October 14

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued

- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics, “Sonnets” and “Villancico” (full sections).
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part IV*
- In-class presentations on contemporary Latin American and Latina feminist issues

Monday, October 19

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 1997. (Original Edition 1691). *Poems, Protest and a Dream*. New York: Penguin Classics, “Theater: Sacred and Profane” (full sections).
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part V*
- In-class presentations on contemporary Latin American and Latina feminist issues

Wednesday, October 21

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- Octavio Paz. 1990. *Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*. Belltrap Press, *Part VI*
- Instructions for paper on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism distributed in class

Monday, October 26

- Sor Juana and Latin American Feminism, continued
- In-class peer review of papers on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism

Wednesday, October 28

- The Role of the Americas in History, Introduction
- Draft 1 of paper on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism due before class
- Leopoldo Zea. 1991. *The Role of the Americas in History*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Monday, November 2

- The Role of the Americas in History, Continued
- Leopoldo Zea. 1991. *The Role of the Americas in History*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. Chapters 3 and 4.

Wednesday, November 4

- The Role of the Americas in History, Continued
- Leopoldo Zea. 1991. *The Role of the Americas in History*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. Chapters 5 and 7.

Monday, November 9

- The Role of the Americas in History, Continued
- Draft 2 of paper on Sor Juana and Latin American feminism due **before class**.
- In-class guest lecture on Latina/o and Chicana/o cultural preservation at the Mexico-US border (TBA)
- Short Writing Assignment 3: How can Zea's argument in *The Role of the Americas in History* be employed to argue for Latina/o and Chicana/o "cultural preservation" in El Paso?

Wednesday, November 11

- Introducing The Philosophy of Liberation
- Iván Márquez. "Liberation in Theology, Philosophy and Pedagogy." In Nuccetelli and Schutte (eds.) 2013. *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Don T. Deere. 2014. Review of *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. In the APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy 13(2). Access at <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/60044C96-F3E0-4049-BC5A-271C673FA1E5/HispanicV13n2.pdf>
- Mark Lewis Taylor. 2014. "The Cry of Victims *Radical Philosophy Review* and Philosophy: Liberation beyond Habermas and Levinas." In 17 (1) pp. 307-312. Access at: <http://marklewistaylor.net/blog/the-cry-of-victims-and-dussels-philosophy-liberation-beyond-habermas-and-levinas/>

Monday, November 16

- The Philosophy of Liberation, Continued
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* Durham: Duke University Press. "Introduction: World History of Ethical Systems" (pp. 1-40).
- Manuel Vargas. 2005. "Eurocentrism and the Philosophy of Liberation." In the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 4(2) pp. 8-14.

Wednesday, November 18

- The Philosophy of Liberation, Continued
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* Durham: Duke University Press. "The Materialist Moment of Ethics: Practical Truth" (pp. 55-107).



- Sergio A. Gallegos Ordorica. 2015. "Prospects of a Dusselian Ethics among US Minorities: The Case of Affirmative Action in Higher Education." *The Inter-American Journal of Philosophy* 6(1) pp. 1-15.
- *Note: Sections 2 and 3 of Dussel's text are optional reading*

Monday, November 23

- The Philosophy of Liberation, Continued
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* Durham: Duke University Press. "The Ethical Criticism of the Prevailing System" (pp. 215-290)
- Mahvish Ahmad. 2013. "An Interview with Enrique Dussel" in *Naked Punch*. Access at <http://nakedpunch.com/articles/186>

Wednesday, November 25

- The Philosophy of Liberation, Continued
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* Durham: Duke University Press. "The Antihegemonic Validity of the Community of Victims" (pp. 291-354).
- Guest Lecture, "Dusselian Ethics and the Morality of Social Movements." Luis Ruben Díaz, Doctoral Student, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (TBC)
- **Short writing assignment 4 due on Wednesday, December 2nd.** Answer the following questions: you have seen how Dussel's liberation ethics has been applied to issues like the ethics of social movements and affirmative action in the U.S. To what additional issues do you consider Dusselian discourse ethics to be applicable? Select one of those issues, and show how the application of Dusselian discourse ethics enables us to understand the issue better and/or move towards resolving it.

Monday, November 30

- The Philosophy of Liberation, Continued
- Enrique Dussel. 2013. *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* Durham: Duke University Press. "The Liberation Principle" (pp. 355-432).

Wednesday, December 2

- **Short writing assignment 4 due before class.**
- Review of Zea and Dussel
- Preparation for final exam
- Wrap-up of course