

**History 3506G**  
**Turbulent History of Modern Latin America**  
**Winter 2026**



Instructor: **Thomas Stroyan**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall [Room #TBD]**

Office Hours: **Fridays, 10:15am- 11:15am or by appointment**

**Course Description**

History 3506G will explore Latin American's turbulent history from 1900 to the present. This is an essay course that will approach Latin American history by examining and zooming in on its various geographic and cultural sub-regions. Through this analysis, students will behind any previous assumptions of Latin America as a hegemonic region and come to appreciate the regions' awestraking diversity. This course will explore the history of Latin America through politics, economics, and geography but will also at times put traditional political history aside and unpack the regions through other aspects of history such as immigration, 'race' relations, language, gender, and identity. Be ready for an interesting ride and be ready to learn something new about a region that is often understudied and misunderstood in North America!

History 3506G will also introduce students to some practical historical methods such as data interpretation, the use of primary source material, developing reading and writing skills, and even the use of Artificial Intelligence in history. Lectures and class discussions will draw emphasis to the methodology and philosophy of history and provide students with a variety of viewpoints in order to increase their experience in interpreting and evaluating history.

This is a draft outline. 2025-26 version. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

## Course Syllabus

Students will write one proposal/annotated bibliography assignment, one primary source analysis, and one major research essay. Students will also discuss ideas about lecture and class readings in class during, ‘afternoon contemplations.’

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify Latin America’s cultural and geographic sub-regions and think laterally across these regions and time periods to articulate what these regions have in common historically and what makes them stand apart
2. Understand how Latin America’s history is both distinct and part of the larger history of the Americas and how Latin American history is relevant to current events and issues
3. Generate a unique research question on a Latin American country of their choosing and follow-up on this research question into a research project
4. Analyze and contextualize Latin American primary sources and situate their relationship to other primary sources
5. Gather and assess a variety of secondary sources and engage with their historiographical contexts while questioning authors’ evidence, thesis and argument
6. Synthesize primary and secondary research into a persuasive, longer-length written assignment
7. Articulate ideas and participate in class discussions

## Methods of Evaluation

### Attendance/In-Class Discussion – Ongoing – 15%

Lecture each week will feature an “afternoon contemplation” in which the class will discuss a topic or theme for that week. The goal is to encourage students to attend class in order to prepare for writing assignments and have the opportunity to digest and articulate their ideas about the readings and lecture content verbally.

### Proposal/Annotated Bibliography (25%) Due on OWL Brightspace, January 30<sup>th</sup>

Students will select a Latin American country and create a research topic related to that country. They will then craft an essay proposal which will be 500 words in length and will include a research question, tentative thesis and supporting arguments, as well as justification for the feasibility of their chosen topic. Alongside this proposal, students will submit an annotated bibliography of a minimum of 8 secondary sources. The goal of this assignment is to prepare students for the final research essay, encourage/guide students to start research on the essay early, and ensure that students choose a topic that is doable for a 3000-level undergraduate essay.

### Primary Source Analysis (20%) – Due on OWL Brightspace, February 27<sup>th</sup>

This is a draft outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Students will select four primary sources related to their chosen research essay topic. For each source they will write a 250-word reflection in which they will indicate: what the source is, when it was created, by whom it was created and for what purpose, where they obtained the source, and how it is relevant to their final essay and thesis. The goal of this assignment is to encourage students to think critically about primary sources, especially primary sources from a region (and language) most students will be unfamiliar with. This assignment will also continue to encourage students to prepare for the research essay in advance of the due date. John Charles Chasteen's Primary Source Reader, *Born in Blood and Fire : Latin American Voices* is on one day loan at Weldon Library.

### **Research Essay (40%) – Due on OWL Brightspace, March 27<sup>th</sup>**

Students will write a 3000-word research essay on a topic on a Latin-American country of their choosing. For this essay students will follow the Chicago Manual of Style citation method and include a formal bibliography at the end of their essay. This assignment will provide a counterweight to the broader, regional approach of lecture content and readings by allowing students to zero in on one specific Latin American country. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity for students to practice synthesizing primary and secondary research into an original thesis that is argued over a longer-length written assignment.

### **Absences and Late Assignments**

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Students who miss class won't be able to participate in afternoon contemplations and will thus receive zero participation marks for that week. Should extenuating circumstances prevent you from being able to come to class that week and/or participate in class discussion, please notify the instructor and/or fill out an academic consideration form. Information on academic considerations can be found here: [Absence & Academic Consideration, Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#).

All written assignments have a built-in, blanket extension: they can be submitted up to 5 days after the due date, without penalty. Beyond that, there will be a 3% deduction per day, including weekends. Students are to submit assignments through the course OWL Brightspace site. No assignments can be submitted after April, 9<sup>th</sup> as per Western's Senate policy, "the last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course."

The Faculty of Social Science's policy statement on plagiarism and the use of plagiarism detection software is outlined in the history department's undergraduate policies and statements page, available here: [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#)

The UWO Academic Handbook requires that an essay course such as Hist3506G "must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course." As such, Hist3506G students must receive a passing grade on the total value of the written assignments to pass the course. All assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course.

The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini is permitted only for activities such as brainstorming and refining ideas or checking grammar and style. Beyond that, you are not to make use of such tools in the writing of course assignments. All writing submitted in this course must be your own. (If in doubt, please ask for clarification.)

## Course Materials

This course does not have a textbook. Instead, course materials are available on the course OWL Brightspace site and/or through the Western Libraries system. Weldon Library has research resources for History students. For primary source research, a copy of John Charles Chasteen's Primary Source Reader, *Born in Blood and Fire : Latin American Voices* is available for one day loan in Weldon library.

## Course Schedule and Readings

Each week will be divided into two segments, each segment covering a different theme and/or subject. Course lectures have been designed to trace the history of Latin America both regionally and chronologically. Readings should be done each week to supplement lecture as well as to be able to fully participate in afternoon contemplations. An overview of the course lecture schedule and reading schedule is as follows:

### Week 1 – January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026

#### Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “What is Latin America?” - Course Introduction

Second Section: “America’s Backyard? Banana Republics, the Monroe Doctrine, American Interventionism, and the Mexican Revolution” – Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1900-1914

### Week 2 – January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026

#### Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “More Than Just Bananas! The Colombian-Panamanian Schism and American-European Competition” - The Andean Community, 1900-1914

Second Section: “Latin America’s Europe? Proud Beginnings, The Old (First) Republic, Milk-Coffee Politics, and the Coroneis” - The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1900-1914

### Week 3 – January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

#### Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “The World Was at War... But Where Was Latin America?” - Latin America and the First World War, 1914-1918

Second Section: “Good Neighbours to the North? The PRI Rises and so do the ‘Strongmen’” - Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, 1918-1939

**Week 4 – January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: *“Coups, Oligarchs, Populism...and Striking Oil!”* - The Andean community, 1918-1939

Second Section: *“How the Mighty Fall... and Get Back Up Again? Collapse and Reestablishment of Democracy and the Economy, Out with the Old Republic and in with Getulio Vargas”* – The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1918-1939

**Week 5 – February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: *“The Good Neighbour and the Third Reich Play Chess and Latin America Chooses Sides”* - Latin America and the Second World War, 1939-1945

Second Section: *“The Mexican Miracle and the Beginning of The Cold War”* – Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1945-1960

**Week 6 – February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: *“Natural Resources and Their Implications”* - The Andean Community – 1945-1960

Second Section: *“The Populists Come to Play... But the Elites Still Have Some Muscle, Regional Divergence and Changing Power Structures”* – The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1945-1960

**READING WEEK – February 14<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026****Week 7 – February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: *“The Miracle is Ending, Civil Strife, Civil War, and Communist Revolution, - Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1960-1980*

Second Section: *“Guerrilla Insurgents of all Stripes and a Geopolitical Game Changer”* - The Andean Community, 1960-1980

**Week 8 – March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: *“Urban Guerrilla Warfare and a New Breed of Military Dictatorships”* - The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1960-1980

Second Section: *“The Long Road to Democracy”* – Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1980-1993

**Week 9 – March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “*The War on Drugs*” – The Andean Community, 1980-1993

Second Section: “*Nunca Más! Nunca Mais! Democratization and the Human Rights Revolution*” – The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1980-1993

**Week 10 – March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “*Reconciliation and High Hopes*” – Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1993-2008

Second Section: “*The War on Drugs Ends (Or Does it?), What Comes Next?*” – The Andean Community, 1993-2008

**Week 11 – March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026**Readings:

- TBD

First Section: “*New Economic Powerhouses? High Hopes and Frustrated Aspirations*” – The Southern Cone and Brazil, 1993-2008

Second Section: “*Donde Estamos Ahora?*” – Latin America, 2008-the Present

**Additional Statements*****Communication policies***

The best place to reach me is via email: [tstroyan@uwo.ca](mailto:tstroyan@uwo.ca). I reply as quickly as possible but just in case, bank on at least 24-48 hours before I respond to you, especially on weekends. (I would recommend not leaving communications with me to the last minute, emails on the night before a due date for example, are ill-advised.)

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.