

# ***SOCIAL JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA***

**ANTHROPOLOGY / SOCIOLOGY 3601**

**Course Syllabus - Fall 2010**

**Professor:** Dr. Donna Chollett  
**Office:** 205 Imholte Hall  
**Office Hours:** Mon., Wed., Fri. 10:30-11:30  
and by appointment  
**Phone:** 589-6215 (office)  
**Email:** [cholledl@morris.umn.edu](mailto:cholledl@morris.umn.edu)



## **Course Objectives:**

Latin America has undergone profound transformations in the past several decades, requiring new interpretations of Latin America's integration into the global economy and the major transformations in cultural, economic, and political life of the region. Through an integrated approach of theory and case studies, this course involves students in critical examination of new theoretical perspectives and changing realities regarding U.S.-Latin American relations, the impact of structural adjustment policies on development and underdevelopment, authoritarianism and democracy, environmental degradation and sustainability, political repression, and the struggles of urban dwellers, peasants, women, and indigenous ethnic groups for social justice and dignity. Social justice and human rights are central concerns of course readings that address a variety of contemporary issues: struggles for labor justice, challenges to impoverishment and marginalization, indigenous struggles to preserve ethnic cultures and environments, political and ethical dimensions of human rights atrocities, and challenges to the dominant system of neoliberal, capitalist development.

## **Required Texts:**

*Children of NAFTA: Labor Wars on the U.S./Mexico Border*, David Bacon, 2004, University of California Press.

*Uprising of Hope: Sharing the Zapatista Journey to Alternative Development*, Duncan Earle and Jeanne Simonelli, 2005, Altamira Press.

*Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil: State Policy, Frontier Expansion, and the Xavante Indians, 1937-1988*, Seth Garfield, 2001, Duke University Press.

*The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights*, Leigh Binford, 1996, University of Arizona Press.

*Toward a New Cuba? Cuba: Neither Heaven Nor Hell*, María López Vigil, 1999, EPICA.

## Course Requirements:

Key theoretical orientations, background information, and various country studies will be provided through lecture; however, your participation in daily class discussions is essential and an integral part of the course. **Your attendance at every class is mandatory.** 3.5% of the course grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. In addition, any student with five unexcused absences will be dropped from the course. Students are required to complete additional research projects to compensate for any class they miss. If you cannot attend all classes, please drop the course. I do not accept late papers. All assigned work must be completed to pass this course.

Students should be prepared, on the basis of assigned readings, to contribute to discussion of assigned textbooks—usually (but not always) on Fridays. To fulfill this requirement, each student will prepare a "Query Paper" each Friday—unless otherwise noted—in which you pose two thought-provoking questions or issues you would like to discuss from the assigned readings.

In addition, there will be one take-home essay on each of the five textbooks. Please refer to the guidelines below.

Course Points			Grading	Scale		
14 Query Papers	140		A A-	93 – 100% 90 – 92%	C+ C C-	77 – 79% 73 – 76% 70 – 72%
14 Film Summaries	70		B+ B B-	87 – 89% 83 – 86% 80 – 82%	D+ D D-	67 – 69% 63 – 66% 60 – 62%
5 Textbook Essays	250				F	59 and under
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>460 Points</b>					

This is a discussion class. I reserve the right to lower any student's grade who does not regularly participate in classroom discussions.

**Students taking the course S/N must complete all assignments and earn 70% of total course points. Incomplete grades will not be given for this course, except in unusual circumstances and when arrangements are made in advance. When an exception is allowed, no grade changes will be made after one semester. .**



## GUIDELINES FOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Each query paper** (12) will include a statement of two issues drawn from the week's textbook assignment, plus at least two alternative positions or arguments you might use to respond to each issue. Select your issues from different chapters. Organize your paper into outline form:
  - I. Issue #1
    - A. One point of view
    - B. An alternative point of view
  - II. Issue #2
    - A. One point of view
    - B. An alternative point of view

Compose your query paper with the intent of generating class discussion. Papers must be typed and be about one page in length. They are due the day query papers are discussed, on Fridays, unless otherwise noted. Each query paper is worth 10 points. **No late papers will be accepted; you must attend class to turn in your paper.**

- **For each film** (14) identify three significant issues and explain how each relates to the course readings or lecture material for that topic. The film summaries should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  page in length, formatted as illustrated below, and are due the next class day. Each paper is worth 5 points. **No late papers will be accepted. I do not loan videos for missed classes.**
  - I. Issue
    - A. Relevance to topic
  - II. Issue
    - A. Relevance to topic
  - III. Issue
    - A. Relevance to topic

- **Textbook essays:**

Essay questions for each textbook will be provided in advance. These essays are not book reports, but rather, your own analysis and critical insights on the textbook. You should ***synthesize*** material from the book and any lectures, demonstrating your ability to apply lecture material to the readings. Nonetheless, your responses should reflect a careful reading of the entire text. Your essay should be approximately 7 single-spaced pages in length (1" margins, 11 or 12 font, preferably Arial); please number your responses and word process your paper. Essays will be graded on how well you ***analyze*** (as opposed to describe) the issues, thoroughness, and appropriate use of examples to illustrate your thoughts. Each essay is worth 50 points; **NO late papers will be accepted.**

*Students are highly encouraged to demonstrate analytic and critical thinking in all work.*



## ***SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA***

### **COURSE SCHEDULE - ANTH/SOC 3601**

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**Week 1, Aug. 25 – 27**

#### ***Theories of Social Change and Development***

We will begin this week and continue throughout the course to explore the tensions between traditional theories and newer theoretical reformulations which challenge conventional ways of thinking about the construction of culture and power not only by states, capital, and elites, but also by peasants, women, and indigenous peoples. Lecture will take up the emergence of modern development theory, neo-classical theory, and the modernization paradigm. We will then examine the background to dependency theory, the world systems perspective, and the influences of Marxism, the ECLA, and the Latin American critique of modernization theory. Students will compare and evaluate these paradigms of development and their application to Latin America. *Children of NAFTA* offers insights into a variety of change and development issues we will explore. The text provides insights into workers struggles on both sides of the border, and critically analyzes U.S.-Mexican relations.

**No Query Paper this week**

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**Week 2, Aug. 30 – Sept. 3**

#### ***Dilemmas of National Development***

*Children of NAFTA*: Ch. 1-4

As a result of their colonial legacy, Latin American nations became dependent on export commodities, which shaped the nature of Latin American states. We will look at the issue of dependent development and import substitution industrialization as a strategic response to assert national autonomy. This history created a distinctive role for the state in much of Latin America. In response to the contradictions of development, most Latin American nations implemented agrarian reform policies, fundamentally restructuring relations between traditional elites and the rural poor. Yet, the failure of agrarian reform, development policy, the penetration of agribusiness, and the adverse effects of development on the rural poor and the environment have been brought into relief in recent decades. *Children of NAFTA* focuses on indigenous migrants from Mexico under neoliberalism and their efforts to create cross-border organizations.

**Friday: 1<sup>st</sup> Query Paper**

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**Week 3, Sept. 8 – 10    *The Contested Frontiers of Immigration Theory & Policy***

*Children of NAFTA*: Ch.5-7

We begin with a brief overview of immigration, with a focus on Mexican immigration to the U.S. Sharp disagreements persist on how to interpret the causes and impact of Immigration. Perspectives range from individualist perspectives drawn from modernization theory to Marxist interpretations grounded on structural factors. We will want to understand the historical changes in immigration policies and their relationship to the phenomenon of migration. The text provides insights into workers struggles on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border, and critically analyzes U.S.-Mexican relations.

**No class Monday, Labor Day**

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**Week 4, Sept. 13 – 17    *Debt, Economic Restructuring, Neoliberalism, and Peasants***

*Children of NAFTA*: Ch. 8-10 & Epilogue

The 1980s, referred to as the "Lost Decade" in Latin America, prompted a shift from state-led economies to neoliberalism throughout the region. We will explore the impact of the debt crisis, economic restructuring, and neoliberal policies, with a particular focus on agrarian systems. Of crucial concern is an ideological shift from populism and state paternalism to an emphasis on free-market enterprise, privatizations, and individualism. NAFTA became a centerpiece of Mexico's neoliberal economic agenda, yet it carries significant social and political implications for Latin American development. We will look at research that requires a reconceptualization of the Latin American peasantry and its insertion into the world capitalist economy in the context of economic restructuring and state shrinking. We shall be concerned with the ways *campesinos* have been affected by and responded to these changes. What are the various forms of accommodation and resistance to declining standards of living under the new neoliberal regime? The case of Mexican sugar cane growers and the effects of NAFTA on their livelihoods will be presented in lecture. The text highlights migration as a strategy to deal with the declining ability of agrarian agencies to meet the needs of *campesinos*.

**No Query Paper this week**

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**Week 5, Sept. 20 – 24                    *The Zapatista Rebellion of Chiapas***

*Uprising of Hope*: Ch. 1-5

The agrarian crisis in Mexico will be related to the EZLN (Zapatista) uprising. Some interesting questions are raised by this rebellion. Who is Subcomandante Marcos? Was the rebellion prompted by NAFTA? Why don't we hear about this uprising through the media? *Uprising of Hope* provides insight into the historical conditions that have marginalized peasants in Chiapas. This legacy of injustice continues to exclude the poorest sectors of Chiapas from access to government services, political power, and opportunity. How is it that such a radical grassroots peasant organization could emerge from such hopeless conditions? The EZLN rebellion is a symptom of distorted development and raises questions about the social and economic costs of economic restructuring and modernizing development. We will examine the contradictions in export production--often promoted by multinational corporations--and food production in Mexico; these contradictions are confounded by Mexico's "end of agrarian reform" and how this relates to collective social movements. In the first section of the text, *Uprising of Hope* provides insight into the debates surrounding the issue of popular movements and offers historical background for the rebellion in Chiapas.

**Monday: Essay on *Children of NAFTA* due**

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**Week 6, Sept. 27 – Oct. 1      *The Zapatista Rebellion of Chiapas, continued***

*Uprising of Hope*: Ch. 6-11

This week we will focus more intently on the development of indigenous peasant movements. *Uprising of Hope* cautions us not to essentialize *campesinos* and their political mobilizations. Were there divisions within these movements? How essential was it that they create national networks? Chiapas is often portrayed as the most impoverished region of Mexico. Do other factors contradict this notion? We will want to explore the relationship between economic development, the state, political instability, and the government's concerns with repressing the rebellion at a time when its political hegemony and its place in the international economic order are at stake. This question also leads us to the issue of human rights, epitomized by the 1997 Acteal massacre and military buildup in the state of Chiapas.

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**Week 7, Oct. 4 – 8                      *The Zapatista Rebellion of Chiapas, continued***

*Uprising of Hope*: Ch. 12-16

In the concluding unit of *Uprising of Hope* we take up the relation of the rebellion to neoliberalism and the end of agrarian reform. While popular opposition to the neoliberal regime created widespread sympathy with the Zapatista cause, it has not resulted in a broadening of the Chiapas rebellion throughout Mexico. It is also important to look beyond this rebellion to other movements and struggles -- those for ethnic identity, women's rights, urban popular movements, and so forth. Do they hold potential for coalescing into a broad-based movement for democratic reform in the country? This question is particularly important in light of the recent political elections and the end to PRI's 80-year control of the government

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**Week 8, Oct. 11 – 15      *Debt, Economic Restructuring, and the Environment***

*Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil*: Ch. Introduction, Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-65)

The current crisis in Latin America and its impact on the poor requires an in-depth understanding of national debt, economic restructuring, and changes in the development policies of Latin American states. Latin America's debt crisis set into motion a series of transformative changes in policy and practice, shaped by IMF, World Bank, and the Brazilian government. Debt restructuring mandated a series of policy changes that relate to issues of development, such as mining, road building, and colonization projects. We will link these macroeconomic transformations to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and examine how they deprive indigenous peoples of their land and livelihoods. We will be concerned with the cultural, social and economic impact of deforestation on indigenous peoples in the area. *Indigenous Struggles at the Heart of Brazil* provides an understanding of state formation and frontier expansion from colonial times to the present, with an emphasis on the dynamic interplay between the Estado Novo's conceptualization of the "Indian other" and the latter's forms of accommodation and resistance to Brazilian expansionism.

**Monday: Essay on *Uprising of Hope* due**

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**Week 9, Oct. 20 – 23    *Ethnicity and Indigenous Struggles for Cultural Survival***

*Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil*: Ch. 3-5 (pp. 66-136)

We will examine the contradictions between government policy and the rights of indigenous peoples and between global policy and local realities. Indigenous peoples of the Americas are today redefining their identities and creating new strategies to assert their rights and their place in the world order. We will analyze these issues as they relate to indigenous peoples, and the struggles of indigenous groups as they mobilize against the forces of modernization. *Indigenous Struggles at the Heart of Brazil* offers an ethnographic analysis of the Xavante's kin-ordered mode of production and the threat to this way of life posed by policies of pacification and assimilation. These processes are also represented in the continuing struggle of the Kayapo against mining and dam construction that threaten their traditional lands and way of life.

**No class Monday, Fall Break**

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**Week 10, Oct. 25 – 29    *The Question of Land, Indian Reservations, and Seringueiros***

*Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil*: Ch. 6-8, Conclusion (pp. 137-219)

The textbook addresses the role of FUNAI, the Brazilian Indian Agency and settlement of the Xavante on reservations within a context of military government sponsorship of megaproject initiatives. The seringueiros (rubber tappers) provide yet another unique case study over struggles for land and extractive reserves in Brazil. We will address the rubber tappers' organizational strategies, the role of Chico Mendes, and their relative success against the cattle ranchers as they contested their rights to the rainforest. As the textbook argues, whether indigenous tribal peoples or rubber tappers, relationships between subaltern groups and the state are constantly negotiated, renegotiated, and subaltern groups also appropriate power to shape the course of history.

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**Week 11, Nov. 1 – 5                      *Civil War in Central America***

*The El Mozote Massacre*: Ch. 1-4 (pp. 1-67)

Background will be given for the development of military dictatorships in Central America, the U.S. role in supporting these regimes, and the fate of people who suffered under them. Lecture will focus on the cold war context of U.S. intervention in Central America. *The El Mozote Massacre* addresses the repression of peasants under the military dictatorship in El Salvador and the U.S. cover-up of the massacres. In considering this process, it is necessary to understand the role of the oligarchy and the political and economic history that led up to the civil war. We will also examine the military repression in Guatemala during the 1980s, and the contra war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

**Monday: Essay on *Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil* due**

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**Week 12, Nov. 8 – 12**

***Political Repression and Human Rights***

*The El Mozote Massacre*: Ch. 5-7 (pp. 68-139)

We continue discussion of political repression by looking at its victims, misrepresentations of their social reality, and efforts to cover up the repression. Binford warns against essentializing the residents of El Mozote and offers a more personalized view of people's aspirations, efforts, and sense of community before the massacre. In doing so, the contradictions to the government's perception of rural Salvadorans become clear. Religion is also an important aspect of life in Latin America. What role did traditional Catholicism, versus liberation theology play in the political persuasions of its inhabitants? Does this accord with government actions? We should also raise the question whether justice was served by the investigation of the massacre.

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**Week 13, Nov. 15 – 19**

***Political Repression and Cultural Survival***

*The El Mozote Massacre*: Ch. 8-10, Epilogue (pp. 140-210)

In the last unit of *The El Mozote Massacre*, Binford reveals the relationship between human rights performance and low-intensity conflict. Military strategies in Latin America often respond to the need to create an international image, yet we will see the contradictions in this notion. We conclude this text by coming to an anthropological understanding of the experiences of Mayan peasants with death squads and the ways in which survivors coped with the years of repression and reconstituted their understandings of community. In doing so, an alternative anthropology--the approach advocated in this text--will be a subject for discussion.

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**Week 14, Nov. 22 – 26**

***Understanding Cuba***

*Cuba: Neither Heaven Nor Hell*: Prologue, Introduction, Ch. 1-2 (Pp. vii-61)

In her book, María López Vigil claims, "Cuba is portrayed as a two-dimensional photograph of Fidel Castro in power for 40 years, a one-party State, and a socialist economy on the brink of collapse." Today, we are given little accurate news on Cuba and the image that most comes to Americans' minds is that of Elian González. How can we explain this distorted view of a Latin American country so close to the United States? This week we will explore the underlying nature of U.S.-Cuban relations in historical perspective and what this has meant to the Cuban people. We will analyze Cuba's "Special Period" and the emigration crisis. Does the U.S. blockade of Cuba make sense in today's world? At issue are the ideological differences between socialism and capitalism. The textbook offers a unique perspective that serves as a corrective to many of the distorted notions that characterize U.S. perceptions of Cuba.

**Monday: Essay on *The El Mozote Massacre* due**

**No Query Paper this week, this Query Paper will be due Monday, Week 15**

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**Week 15, Nov. 29 – Dec. 3      *Socialism vs. Neoliberalism in the Cuban Context***

*Cuba: Neither Heaven Nor Hell*: Ch. 3-4 (Pp. 65-143)

A very challenging question for those of us raised in a capitalist system is to understand the contingent relationships between social equality, economic hegemony, and political systems of socialism and capitalism. Can egalitarian socialism survive in a globalized world that promotes “free” markets and internationalization of economies? We will look at Cuba’s efforts to retain its sovereignty and how well this effort has succeeded. As *Cuba: Neither Heaven Nor Hell* demonstrates, the real challenge is to understand Cuba through multiple lenses, critically evaluating both the positive and negative aspects of its development. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, what structural changes has Cuba undertaken, and have these been beneficial or not? We must also ask how Cuba’s “Green Agenda” compares with environmental issues confronted by the United States—are there lessons to be learned here?

**Monday: Query Paper on Week 14 readings; Friday Query Paper on Week 15 readings**

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**Week 16, Dec. 6 – 10      *Gender, Religion, and Politics***

*Cuba: Neither Heaven Nor Hell*: Ch. 5-6 (Pp. 147-249)

Cuba has been a pioneer in asserting women’s equality, from women’s participation in the Cuban revolution to sponsoring some of the first international feminist congresses. What is the current reality in regard to gender equality in Cuba? Does gender equality mirror the equality inherent in the socialist political system? Castro defined the promotion of women in Cuban society as a “Revolution within the revolution”—how does this speak to gender equality in the United States, compared to Cuba? We will also explore the relationship of religious practice to this socialist system—are religion and political structures compatible in Cuba, or do they create intrinsic tensions in Cuban society? We will examine the role of the Catholic church’s hierarchy as well as the development of alternative religious practices, such as liberation theology and Santería.

**Wednesday: Query Paper on Week 16 readings**

**Essay on *Toward a New Cuba?* due at my office Friday, Dec. 10, by 1:00 pm**

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The Anthropology web site is located at <http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/anthropology>. The site contains information on the **major in anthropology**, anthropology course listings, faculty information, and hotlinks to anthropology resources on the web. Many sites of interest to anthropology students are available. For this course, click Donna Chollett's pages to find relevant web sites, video guides, historical background information and other topics related to the course.

The LAAS (Latin American Area Studies) web site is located at <http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/laas/>. It has a variety of useful information for students interested in Latin America.

If you are interested in an **LAAS major**, please see me (the coordinator for LAAS).