Cuba: From Spanish Colony to Socialist Republic (HILA 122)

Spring 2008, Tu/Th 2-3:30
WLH 2111
Office: HSS 4063

Professor Daniel Widener
Email: dwidener@ucsd.edu
Office Hrs: Tu/Th 3:30-4:30

Our course explores the “modern” history of Cuba, using the analytic categories of race, culture, and politics as windows into the contested process of Cuban nationhood. Our principle focus will remain on two central contradictions of cubanidad, the struggle for self-determination in the shadow of the United States, and the contested search to forge, define, or comprehend a single peoplehood from the fires of migration, slavery, colonialism, revolution, socialism, austerity, and war.

Assignments:
Midterm Examinations (2) 60%
Film Reviews (2) 20%
Reading Quizzes (2) 20%

Film reviews are due Tuesday of the week following the screening. Reviews should be on the order of 500-700 words, and should assess the films within the context provided by the lecture and the readings. Films will sometimes be shown out of class. On these occasions, you may either attend the screening or see the films on reserve.

Required Readings:

A number of articles will be placed on electronic reserve at the library. They, like the assigned reading from the books, should always be completed prior to the course in which they are referenced. You are to buy all of the books. At Groundwork, ideally. The course texts are:

1. Miguel Barnet/Esteban Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave
2. Louis Pérez, Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy
Course Outline

Week I: Categories of the colony:
April 1  Course Introduction and Themes
April 3  Prelude to revolt: colonial Cuba in comparative perspective
Read: 1. Barnet and Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave, pp. 1-158

Week II: Cuba Libre!
Film: La Ultima Cena
April 8  3 for Martí: Cuba’s struggle for independence [Elpidio Valdes]
April 10 Tanto Negro, Tanto Chino: revolutionary dialectics of race and power
Read: 1. Pérez, Cuba and the U.S., chapter 4-7
      2. Barnet and Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave, pp. 159-end

Week III & IV: the sober reality of domination
April 15 “Our Islands & Their People;” from Cuba Libre to Yanquilandia
April 17 “En Cardenas, Funerario;” from “race war” to racist peace
April 22 Wizards and Scientists: the theory and practice of Afro-Cuban culture
April 24 Entre Rumba y Danzón: competing views of national culture
Read: 1. Pérez-Stable, The Cuban Revolution, chapter 1 and 2
      2. Pérez, Cuba and the U.S., chapter 4-7

Week V: an end and a beginning
April 29 Cuban Counterpoint: the revolution of 1933 & the Second Republic
May 1st midterm examination #1
Read: 1. Pérez, Cuba and the U.S., 7
      2. Pérez-Stable, The Cuban Revolution, chapter 3
### Week VI & VII: cuándo lo extraordinario se vuelve cotidiano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Last Call: the fall of Batista</td>
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<td>May 8</td>
<td>The Youngest Revolution</td>
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**Film:** *Death of a Bureaucrat*

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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Con Azúcar No Hay País: The Political Economy of Tropical Socialism</td>
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<td>May 15</td>
<td>Notes on the Imperfect Cinema of the New Budgetary Man</td>
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Read: 1. Pérez, *Cuba and the U.S.*, chapter 8 and 9  
2. Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, chapter 4-6

### Week VIII: from the island to the world

**Film:** *Fresa y Chocolate*

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<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>Memories of Cuito Carnavale: Cuba’s African Dream</td>
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<td>May 22</td>
<td>Visions of Calle Ocho: Cuba’s Florida, Florida’s Cuba</td>
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### Week IX: el “período especial”

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<tr>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>The Political Economy of Collapse</td>
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<td>May 29</td>
<td>Race and Culture during the Special Period</td>
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Read: 1. Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, chapter 7 and 8  

### Week X Return to the Source

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<tr>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>the repeating island: “patria o muerte” in the incredibly long run</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>midterm examination #2</td>
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