This course will be a collaborative seminar, writing practicum, workshop, and “writeshop.” We will read and reflect on works that up-end genre boundaries, look at old objects from new angles, employ unusual sources and methods, or analyze under-researched yet significant topics. We will examine academic publishing practices, archives, and the problems of doing ethnographic or other research during a pandemic. We will work at advancing our own individual projects and at building the intellectual community that can make those projects more effective and meaningful.

OBJECTIVES of the course include:

(1) To provide participants a space in which to develop or advance research projects with a Latin American focus but which mainly employ documentary or other sources available in the New York City area (or online or through inter-library loans);
(2) To undertake a “methodological reading” or “reverse engineering reading” of works on colonial and nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first century Latin America with the goal of reflecting in practical ways on the use of archival materials in social anthropological research and on the potential synergies of various kinds of documentary and ethnographic methods;
(3) To examine conceptual, stylistic and methodological issues that arise as part of the effort to produce historically informed anthropological research and writing;
(4) To develop deeper understanding of the politics of journal publishing (e.g., peer review, metrics, etc.); and
(5) To use the collaborative workshop to guide and goad participants toward the publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal.
REQUIREMENTS for the course include:

(1) Active and informed participation in class discussions of assigned readings and other participants’ research projects (this means careful reading of assigned texts and other participants’ drafts);
(2) A preliminary statement (one or two brief paragraphs) about a planned research project for the course, to be submitted via email no later than February 28;
(3) An oral presentation of approximately 15 minutes that outlines the rationale, possible sources and research plan for the course paper. This will be on March 16;
(4) An oral presentation on April 27 or May 11 of approximately 40 minutes that presents the main findings of the research for the course paper (presenters may assign a rough draft of their paper or other material in advance of the meeting); and
(5) A written course paper (in Word format) due at the end of the semester (by May 18).

Class participation will be evaluated by level of preparation, engagement in class discussions, and generosity to other students. This syllabus may be modified during the semester.
REQUIRED BOOKS:

We will read the following books, all of which are available through the GC Virtual Bookstore http://gc.textbookx.com/. You may be able to find better deals using http://www.bookfinder4u.com/ or another book search engine.


RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Because clear prose helps to communicate your ideas and findings, these optional books are highly recommended (older editions are fine and less expensive). You don’t need to read all three of the books on prose writing; digging seriously into Bernoff, Lanham OR Zinsser is probably sufficient. Many people find the Belcher book good for staying on track.


A NOTE ABOUT BLACKBOARD AND E-MAIL:

This course will make limited use of Blackboard, which is a convenient way to email the entire group and to share documents. You must check your GC or other CUNY email to receive emails that Blackboard generates.
RESOURCES (obviously just an illustrative, not a comprehensive list)

Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), Red de Bibliotecas Virtuales [http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/]. Digitized versions of numerous books, research reports, data bases, journals, theses, etc., mostly on contemporary issues. Links to the collections of research institutes in most Latin American countries.

LANIC [http://lanic.utexas.edu/ A portal with extensive links to research resources and information on arts and culture, economy and finance, government, news media, academic journals, organizations, political parties and elections, education, and environment.

The national archives of different countries often have useful web sites, for example [http://www.archivonacional.go.cr/](http://www.archivonacional.go.cr/) (Costa Rica) and [https://www.archivonacional.gob.cl/sitio/](https://www.archivonacional.gob.cl/sitio/) (Chile). These institutions frequently publish journals that contain information about the organization of the archives and texts of significant documents in the collections. Often they have online finding aids.

United Nations Development Programme. National human development reports, one of the best sources of contemporary social indicators, may be accessed through this page: [http://hdr.undp.org/reports/view_reports.cfm?type=3](http://hdr.undp.org/reports/view_reports.cfm?type=3)

Revistas académicas por país (LANIC) [http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/journals/indexesp.html](http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/journals/indexesp.html)

Proquest has an extensive microform series, which may be obtained via inter-library loan. Some examples: OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports: Latin America, 1941-1961; Crises in Panama and the Dominican Republic: national security files and NSC histories, 1963-1969. [https://www.proquest.com/products-services/film/](https://www.proquest.com/products-services/film/)

Other publishers have similar collections.

In many countries historians and lawyers have published collections of key historical documents. While the selection of what to include is frequently influenced by nationalist political considerations (which can be an interesting problem to study in itself), these are often accessible sources of easily read colonial and nineteenth-century documents. For example, Colección Somoza: Documentos para la historia de Nicaragua, 17 vols. Madrid: Imprenta & Litografía Juan Bravo, 1954-57.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Tues., Feb. 2 — Course Introduction


Tues., Feb. 9 — Native sources on Native history


Tues., Feb. 16 — A scholarly detective story


Tues., Feb. 23 — Thinking about sources, alternative research practices, archives and “the archive”


Tues., March 2 — Library and archival resources

Meeting with Silvia Cho, Latin America bibliographer, Mina Rees Library, CUNY Graduate Center

Tues., March 9 — Colonial modernity?


Recommended:


[an historical novel based on a close reading of relevant documentary sources].

Tues., March 16 — Preliminary project presentations and joint brainstorming session

Tues., March 23 — Twentieth-century modernity?


Recommended:


CUNY recess March 27-April 4
Tues., April 6 — Extractivism’s Longue Durée, Race, Region and Autonomy


Tues., April 13 — The (twisted?) politics of academic journal (and book) publishing and metrics (a lot of readings here, but most are very short, read selectively and skim)


Graduate Center Library, “Citation Managers & Style Guides.” https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/citation

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**Tues., Apr. 20 — Struggles in Soylandia**


![Map of South America with red dots indicating soybean production](image)
Tues., Apr. 27 — Paper presentations

Tues., May 4 — Ethnography of a guerrilla movement and state repression


Tues., May 11 — Paper presentations

Tues., May 18 — No class, final papers due by email.