

## GENERAL SYLLABUS

### History, Culture and Politics of Cuba

A semester-long, 16-credit study abroad program in Cuba



The “History, Culture and Politics of Cuba” is a study abroad program offered by the Autonomous University of Social Movements (AUSM) in coordination with the Universidad Pedagógica Enrique José Varona in Havana.

#### Social justice framework

US students will encounter a reality in Cuba unlike anything they have experienced. The total absence of commercial advertisements, the existence of mass organizations structured by the State, free universal health care and education, lack of ready access to many consumer goods - all these things, and many more, will quickly turn students' worlds upside down. The social, political and historical realities of Cuba generate many questions, challenge pre-conceived notions, and quickly move students outside their comfort zones, providing the perfect conditions for a unique and rewarding educational experience.

In this context, a social justice framework provides students with a set of paradigmatic questions that are familiar enough to generate energetic questioning, while the Cuban context moves students outside of the debate parameters and political/social discourses that generally mark their experiences in the US. Among the key social justice questions students confront in Cuba are:

Decision-making processes and citizenship rights – participatory democracy vs representative democracy, democratic centralism vs representative democracy, bureaucracy vs autonomy, role of mass organizations, formal elections vs popular consultations, collective rights vs individual rights, role and meaning of community, roles of leadership with particular focus on hierarchy vs broad-based leadership formation. What does democracy mean? What constitutes genuine political participation? How do political and economic systems impact the integrity of community?

Social justice vs wealth production – rights vs responsibilities, market mechanisms vs socialization, material vs moral incentives. Is wealth creation more important than equity? What are proper incentives for labor? Is it possible to build a social consensus around labor norms that are not based solely on wage levels?

Race, class, gender and sexual orientation – legal vs cultural rights, inter-relationships among race, class, gender and sexual orientation. Does the State have the final, or even most important, say on questions of gender and racial equity? What is the impact of historical legacy on current social relations? Are race and gender inequalities automatically overcome in a classless society? Is Cuban society classless? What is Cuba's history regarding issues of sexual orientation and AIDS treatment?

These questions and contradictions are not simple abstractions. They manifest themselves in discussions at the market, at family dinners, in the mainstream media, and in government discourses. They unfold in a particular historical context impacted by an often contentious relationship with the US government and grounded in nationalism built on foundations of sovereignty, equity and Cuba's particular brand of Marxism.

#### Core program

The core program consists of four classes integrated in a modular system that utilizes an interdisciplinary pedagogy combining theoretical classes with workshops and experiential learning. Instruction focuses on a distinct theme each week. Reading materials are drawn from sociology,

political science, anthropology, economics, history, literature, and other relevant disciplines. Students meet for 15 hours of formal academic classes each week organized around discussion of assigned readings and lectures by some of Cuba's leading academics. Workshops or meetings each week (3 to 6 hours) allow students to work directly with Cuban academics, political leaders and social actors. Experiential learning encounters each week (3 to 6 hours) enable students to connect theory with practice. Experiential workshops may include visits to public schools, medical centers, cooperatives, NGOs, and popular organizations. Students participate in one or two cultural events each week, including Cuba's world-renowned cinema, dance, music, theater, sports events, etc. Once a week, students participate in a three-hour internship with the National Pedagogical Institute where public school English teachers learn their profession. Students interact in a lively bilingual exchange with second and third year English language students. The interactions often result in lasting friendships, or at the very least, opportunities for social exchanges.

Students prepare five 5-7 page research projects based on themes outlined in the weekly schedule, and a final project that connects knowledge gained during the semester with student lives in the US. The final project may be a written piece, or may be a public presentation on Cuba, a class syllabus on some aspect of Cuba, a work of art, etc. All projects are presented in a colloquium with 5 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for class discussion.

Students participate in a collective reflection each week consisting of a reflection/analysis of the week's events and/or an analysis of the week's readings, plus any questions that arose during classes or workshops that were not fully addressed.

In addition to spending 12 weeks in and around Havana, students spend a week in eastern Cuba where they will experience the life in the country side and visit schools, campesino collectives, and learn about the way folks organize, etc., and a weekend at Varadero Beach, where students can witness the impact of extensive foreign investment in the tourism sector.

### Housing

Students live with families in Marianao, an historic Black working class barrio located on the southwest side of Havana, about 20 minutes from the city center. Families are carefully screened by AUSM staff permanently based in Marianao. Home stays provide students with a unique opportunity to learn firsthand from Cuban families while also improving their Spanish. Most students think the homestays are the highlight of the trip.

### Courses

Grading rubric (0 to 10 point system):

Class Participation – 25%

Weekly reflections – 25%

Bi-weekly 5 to 7 page investigations – 30%

Final Project – 20%

Grading criteria for class participation:

Students are allowed no more than one unexcused absence. An unexcused absence, other than for illness, must be approved in advance by the class professor or program coordinator. Unexcused absences receive a zero for the day. Students who use internet or sleep during class receive a zero for the day. Class participation includes punctuality, completing assignments on time, coming to class prepared and on time, participating in all class activities with enthusiasm, and active collaboration with the instructor and other students. Students are expected to read all assigned readings and come to class with pertinent questions for discussion. Professors grade each student for each class period on a 0-10 scale. Grades for class participation are based on:

- Active participation in class discussions
- Questions pertinent to materials under study
- Quality of presentation of summaries of reading material
- Attendance

Grading criteria for weekly reflections

Students participate in a reflection each week consisting of a reflection/analysis of the week's events and an analysis of the week's readings, plus any questions that arose during classes or workshops that were not fully addressed. Grades for reflections are based on:

- Active participation in the week reflection
- Depth of questions and pertinence to class discussions
- Quality of presentation of summaries of reading material
- Attendance

Grading criteria for investigations:

Students are allowed to submit one late investigation, subject to pre-approval of the due date in advance by the class professor or program coordinator. Otherwise, late investigations will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero, with very rare exceptions, for example, the death of a family member requiring a short return to the US. Exceptions will never be made for computer failures or lack of electricity. Investigations are submitted on a USB port provided by the professor. It is the student's responsibility to insure the files are not corrupted by virus and are accessible and readable in Word document format. If a student prefers a subject different subject than those outlined in the class schedule, it is the responsibility of the student to open a negotiation with the professor or program coordinator with sufficient advance time to complete the investigation. Grades for investigations are based on:

- Depth of investigation
- Coherence of arguments
- Quality of composition
- Creativity

Grading criteria for final project:

The intent of the final project is to connect knowledge gained during the semester with student lives in the US. The final project may be a written piece, or may be a public presentation on Cuba, a class syllabus on some aspect of Cuba, a work of art, etc. Works of art or other projects that are not written must include a written theoretical justification for the project. Final projects may be individual or collective. With collective projects, all participants receive the same grade. All final projects are presented in a colloquium with 10 minutes for presentation and 15-20 min-

utes for class discussion. Late final projects will receive a grade of zero – there are no exceptions. Final grades are calculated 50% on presentation and 50% on written work. Final project grades are based on:

- Coherence of arguments
- Quality of written and verbal presentation
- Consistency between verbal and written presentations
- Creativity
- Depth of project

373-573 (Pol Sci) Cuban Politics, 60 hours, 4 credits: Analysis of the Cuban State, how it is organized, how it functions, and the role of the Cuban Communist Party, including a critical discussion of the role of Cuban society in politics and decision-making. The course covers a theoretical and practical introduction to Marxism and how Marxism plays out in Cuban reality. The course also covers current US-Cuba relations. Workshops with social actors and academics compliment formal classes.

Course goals:

- Understand the ebbs and flows of US-Cuba relations, particularly as they relate to worldwide and regional political trends.
- Understand US policy initiatives toward Cuba and their impact on bilateral relations, including the embargo, the Torricelli Act, the Helms-Burton Law, TV and Radio Marti, and changes in travel restrictions, as well as the role of the Cuban-American community.
- Understand the context and impact of the October Crisis (aka, the Cuban Missile Crisis).
- Understand Cuba's international relations, with special focus on Latin America and Africa.
- Understand the structure and decision-making processes of the Cuban state, with special emphasis on the Cuban Communist Party and the various mass organizations (Federation of Cuban Women, Federation of Cuban Labor, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, etc)
- Understand the basic Marxist analytical categories, including class, exploitation, value and crisis.
- Understand the dialectic method and historical materialism.
- Understand and evaluate the real life application of Marxism in Cuba.

Professors:

- Dr. Alfredo Prieto, specialist in US-Cuba relations and editor of the journal *Temas*
- Ma Michael Fernandez Alvarez, Master's in Political International Relations and Lawyer.
- Dra. Amanda Altavaz Avila, professor at the University of Pedagogical Sciences
- Dr. Thomas Hansen, Autonomous University of Social Movements (AUSM)

Bibliography:

- Smith, Wayne S, *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of US-Cuba Relations since 1957*
- Harris, Richard L, "Cuban internationalism, Che Guevara, and the survival of Cuba's socialist regime"

- Olson, Gary, “Cuban internationalism as engaged empathy”
- Angotti, Tom, “Fifty years of rectification”
- LeoGrande, William, “The Cuban Communist Party and electoral politics: Adaption, succession and transition”
- Evenson, Debra, “Opening paths to renewed popular participation”
- Hernandez, Dilla, Dugan Abbassi, Diaz, “Political culture and popular participation in Cuba”
- Perez-Stable, Marifeli, *The United States and Cuba: Intimate Enemies*
- Tulchin, et al: Bobes, Velia Cecilia, “Citizenship and Rights in Cuba: Evolution and Current Situation”
- Heinrich, Michael, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx’s Capital*
- Callinicos, Alex, *The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx*
- Heilbrunner, Robert, *Marxism: For and Against*
- Ollman, Bertell, *Dance of the Dialectic*
- Ollman, Bertell, “Teaching Marxism”
- Ollman, Bertell, “What is Marxism”
- Lenin, V., “What is to be Done”
- Coben, Diana, *Radical Heroes: Gramsci, Freire and the Politics of Adult Education*
- Azicri, Max, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow: Reinventing Socialism*
- Gray, Alexander I, “Cuban-European NGO collaboration: international cooperation with the island during the Special Period”
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, “AIDS, public health and human rights in Cuba”
- Human Rights Watch, “Universal Periodic Review: HRW Submission on Cuba”

#### Supplementary readings:

- LeoGrande, William, “The Communist Party of Cuba faces the future,” in *A Contemporary Cuban Reader*
- Harvey, David, *Limits to Capital*
- Benjamin, Jules R, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution*
- Reese, Erlich, *Dateline Havana: The real story of US policy and the future of Cuba*
- Krook, Daniel, “Cuban internationalism in Angola, 1975-1991”
- Wolff and Resnick, *Economics: Marxian vs Neoclassical*
- Mesa-Lago, Carmelo and Jorge F Perez-Lopez, *Cuba’s Aborted Reform: Socioeconomic Effects, International Comparisons and Transition Politics*
- Ritter, Archibald RM, “Economic Illegalities and the Underground Economy in Cuba”
- Berman, Marshall, “Todo lo solido en el aire”
- Chomsky: Medea Benjamin, Joseph Collins and Michael Scott, “How the poor got more”
- Chomsky: Margaret Randall, “Women in the swamps”
- Chomsky: Juan Antonio Blanco and Medea Benjamin, “From utopianism to institutionalization”
- Torres, Rebecca Maria, Velvet Nelson, Janet Henshall Momsen, Debbie Niemeier, “Experiment or transition? Revisiting food distribution in Cuban agromercados from the special period”
- Packenham, Robert A, “Capitalist dependency and socialist dependency: the case of Cuba”
- Kapur, Teddy and Alistair Smith, “Housing policy in Castro’s Cuba”
- Roberg, Jeffrey L. and Alyson Kuttruff, “Cuba: Ideological Success or Ideological Failure?”

371-571 (Hist) History of Cuba, 60 hours, 4 credits: Overview of Cuban history, including colonization, independence struggles, the 1959 revolution, the social impacts of the revolution, and the special period, with particular emphasis on US-Cuba relations as they developed through the centuries. Students will be able to situate an analysis of contemporary Cuba within an historical context. Workshops, meetings and museum visits compliment formal academic classes.

Course objectives:

- Understand the impact of colonization and slavery.
- Understand the historic cultural/political influence of the US.
- Understand the development and meaning of nationalism.
- Understand the dynamics and impact of the 1959 revolution.
- Understand the stages of development of the revolution, with special focus on the economic, social and cultural changes.
- Understand the development and impact of the “special period.”
- Understand and evaluate the economic and social changes announced during the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party.

Professor:

- Dr. Damiam Perez Guillerme, history professor at the University of Pedagogical Sciences
- Dr. Elio Fidel Lopez Velez, economic and history professor at the Institute of International Relations
- Dr. Alfredo Prieto, specialist in US-Cuba relations and editor of the journal *Temas*

Bibliography:

- Gott, Richard, *Cuba: A New History*
- Perez, Jr., Louis A, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture*
- *Fidel Castro Reader*, ed. David Deutschmann and Deborah Shnookal
- Chomsky, Aviva, Barry Carter and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff (eds), *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*
- Tulchin, et al, “Changes in Cuban Society since the Nineties: Espina Prieto, “Structural changes since the 90s and new research topics on Cuban society”
- Fernandes, Sujatha, *Cuba Presente: Cuban Arts, State Power and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures*
- Guevara, Che, “Socialism and man in Cuba”
- O’Connor, James, “On Cuban political economy”
- Aponte-Garcia, Maribel, “Foreign Investment and Trade in Cuban Development: A 50-Year Reassessment with Emphasis on the Post-1990 Period”
- Canler, Ed, “The miracle of the Cuban economy in the 1990’s”
- Dominguez, Jorge I, et al, *The Cuban Economy at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
- Tulchin: Juan Valdez Paz, “Cuba in the special period: from equality to equity:

- Alzugaray Treto, Carlos, “Continuity and change in Cuba at 50: The revolution at a crossroads”
- Castro, Raul, “Central Report to the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba”
- Perez Villanueva, Omar Everleny, “The Cuban economy: A current evaluation and proposals for necessary policy changes”
- Tsokhas, Kosmas, “The political economy of Cuban dependence on the Soviet Union”

Supplementary readings:

- Thomas, Hugh, *Cuba: A History*
- Sweig, Julia E, *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*
- Cluster, Dick and Rafael Hernandez, *The History of Havana*
- Morales Dominguez, Esteban, *United States-Cuba Relations: A Critical History*

372-572 (Soc) Cuba Today, 60 hours, 4 credits: Investigation of Cuban society today, including race and gender dynamics, youth, the arts, non-governmental organizations, and state-organized federations. Students develop a complex analysis of the various institutions, identities and relationships that form Cuban society, situating their analysis in a rich web of government institutions, state-organized mass organizations, cultures, beliefs and practices. Special attention is given to the intersection of race, gender and class in contemporary Cuban society.

Course goals:

- Understand the historic development of race and gender relations in Cuba, including a critical evaluation of the impact of State-sponsored measures to alter race and gender dynamics after the revolution.
- Understand the historic development of Cuban nationalism.
- Understand the impact of the Cuban revolution on second and third generation post-revolutionary Cubans.
- Understand the role, scope of action and impacts of non-governmental organizations.
- Critical evaluation of Gramsci’s “cultural revolution” as it manifests itself in Cuba today.

Professors:

Dr. Tomas Fernandez Robaina, specialist in race and ethnic studies, Director of the Biblioteca Nacional

Dra. Miriam Rodríguez Ojeda, Professor at the University of Pedagogical Sciences.

María Concepción González Basanta, Professors at the University of Pedagogical Sciences. Works with the Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba

Bibliography:

- Tulchin: Acanda Gonzalez, Jorge Luis, “Changes in Cuban society and their reflections in Cuban thought from the nineties to the present”
- Tulchin: Alonso, Aurelio, “Relations between the Catholic church and the Cuban government as of 2003”
- Huish, Robert and John M Kirk, “Cuban medical internationalism and the development of the Latin American School of Medicine”
- Nayeri and Lopez-Pardo, “Economic crisis and access to care: Cuba’s health care system since the collapse of the Soviet Union”

- Gasperini, Lavinia, “The Cuban education system: Lessons and dilemmas”
- De la Fuente, Alejandro, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba*
- Luciak, Ilja, “Gender and democracy in Cuba”
- Muphy, Schutte, Slagter, Lopez, “Feminism in Cuba: Report from the 3<sup>rd</sup> conference of North American and Cuban philosophers”
- Grunig, Larissa A., “The Cuban Women’s Federation: Organization of a feminist revolution”
- Chomsky: Randall, “The family code”
- Fernandes, Sujatha, *Cuba Presente: Cuban Arts, State Power and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures*
- Friedman, Douglas, “Centro Memorial Martin Luther King Jr.: Cuban Civil society and Popular Education”
- Cluster, Dick, “Northamericans looking at Cubans, *Cubanos mirando a los yumas*”
- Royce, Frederick, Agricultural Production Cooperatives: The “Future of Cuban Agriculture?”
- Font, Mauricio (ed), Cuba today: Continuity and change since the ‘periodo especial’
- Tulchin, et al: Crahan, Margaret E, “Civil society and religion in Cuba: Past, present and future”
- Tulchin, et al: Garcia Franco, Raimundo, “Notes on the Role of Religious Organizations in Community Work and Service Provision in Cuba After 1990”
- Kirk, Emily, “Setting the agenda for Cuban sexuality: the role of Cuba's GENESEX”
- Kapcia, Antoni, “Educational revolution and revolutionary morality in Cuba: the ‘New Man’, youth and the new ‘Battleof Ideas’”
- Crahan, Margaret E, “Does civil society exist in Cuba?”

Supplementary readings:

- Henthorne, George, Williams, “The evolving service culture of Cuban tourism: A case study”
- Tulchin: Menendez, Lazara, “In order to wake up tomorrow, you have to sleep tonight”
- Casal, Lourdes, “Revolution and Race: Blacks in Contemporary Cuba”

Spanish language courses

Three levels of Spanish language courses are offered – beginning, intermediate and advanced. All students take a written and oral placement exam upon arrival in Havana. Class placement will depend on the results of the exam. Students who are quick learners or who are not challenged in one class may move up a class, depending on the approval of the Spanish professor and the program coordinator. Changes in classes are evaluated and negotiated on Fridays. The placement exam serves as a way for Spanish instructors to determine students’ strengths and weaknesses. Instructors: 1) tailor some of the class sessions to address problem areas; 2) recommend special tutoring for students who are behind others in the class; and 3) may divide the group into smaller classes or sub-groups when there are more than eight students registered for the same course and where there are wide differences in identified weaknesses.

Grading rubric:

25%: Active class participation.



25%: Homework assignments

25%: Mid-term exam.

25%: Final Exam

**Grading Criteria for Class Participation:**

Students are allowed no more than one unexcused absence for reasons other than illness. An unexcused absence must be approved in advance by the class professor or program coordinator. Class participation includes punctuality, speaking only Spanish in class, completing assignments on time, coming to class prepared and on time, participating in all class activities with enthusiasm and interest, collaboration with the instructor and other students (as applicable), and demonstrated effort at improving Spanish abilities.

**Grading Criteria for Compositions:**

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Punctuation

280 Beginning Spanish, 60 hours, 4 credits: This course is intended for students with limited capacity to understand Spanish. Students develop the four basic skills: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing of elementary Spanish. The instructors use popular education methodologies and emphasize oral competency. Throughout the course students will learn about various aspects of life and culture in Cuba. In addition to formal classes, the experience of living with local host families provides hours of language practice, and topics related to the home stay will be addressed in class.

Prerequisites: None

**Primary Text and Required Materials:**

Cuban texts and reading materials drawn from daily interaction with the Cuban culture.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Build upon any previous Spanish knowledge through speaking and listening.
- Develop basic vocabulary.
- Effectively communicate basic concepts in Spanish.
- Read elementary Spanish texts.
- Effective expression in written Spanish.

Master the following basic Spanish vocabulary and grammatical structures:

Greetings

Numbers

Spanish alphabet  
Time and dates  
Use of tú and Usted  
Subject pronouns  
Negation  
Gender  
Plural Forms  
Adjective-noun agreement  
Possessive adjectives  
Adjectives of nationality  
Question formation  
Telling time  
Expressing existence: hay  
Sequencing: ordinal adjectives  
Describing the weather  
Making suggestions: Let's  
Referring to actions in progress: present progressive  
Ordering events: infinitives after prepositions  
Talking about habitual actions: present tense of regular -ar, -er, and -ir verbs  
Verbs llamarse and traer  
Verbs ser and estar  
Expressing possession: verbs tener and ser de  
Expressing age: verb tener  
Expressing likes and dislikes: gustar + infinitive  
Expressing future plans: ir + a + infinitive  
Stating preferences and desires: preferir and querer + infinitive  
Talking about location: estar + en, ir + al / a la  
Using irregular verbs: hacer, salir, jugar  
Describing origin and location: ser de and estar en  
Verbs with stem-vowel changes (ie, ue) in the present tense  
Irregular verbs  
Reflexive verbs  
Describing states: estar + adjective  
Describing states: tener + noun

380 Intermediate Spanish, 60 hours, 4 credits: This course is intended for students who have completed a year of college-level Spanish and already demonstrate a basic competency with the Spanish language. The purpose of this course is to help students review and master the basic structures of Spanish and build conversational skills through discussion of selected texts that stimulate intellectual growth and promote cultural understanding. Instructors use popular education methodologies and emphasize oral communication. Students will be expected to review the grammar at home and use it in class. Throughout the course, students will learn about various aspects of life and culture in Cuba. In addition to the formal classes, the experience of living with local host families provides hours of language practice. Topics related to the home stay will be addressed in class.

Prerequisite: one year college Spanish or equivalent, or adequate score on placement exam

#### Primary Texts and Required Materials

Cuban texts and reading materials drawn from daily interaction with the Cuban culture.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Build upon previous Spanish knowledge through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Strengthen conversational ability.
- Improve understanding of written Spanish.
- Effective expression in written Spanish.

Master the following basic Spanish grammar structures:

- Direct object pronouns
- Indirect object pronouns
- Prepositional object pronouns
- Two object pronouns; position of object pronouns
- Commands with object pronouns
- Gustar, faltar, and similar verbs
- Affirmatives and negatives
- Use of the subjunctive in descriptions of the unknown or indefinite
- Use of the subjunctive with certain adverbial conjunctions
- Reflexive with command
- Reciprocal reflexive
- Impersonal se; the se for passive
- Imperfect subjunctive
- “If” clauses
- Adverbs
- Infinitives
- Verb acabar
- Past participles as adjective
- Perfect indicative tenses
- Present perfect and past perfect subjunctive

Verb haber; expressing obligation  
Passive voice  
Sequence of tenses with the subjunctive  
Conjunction  
Por versus para  
Present participle and the progressive forms  
Relative pronouns; the neuter lo, lo que  
Diminutives

480 Advanced Spanish, 60 hours, 4 credits: This course is designed for native or fluent/near fluent Spanish speakers. The course focuses on Cuban literature, poetry, film and other expressions of Cuban culture.

Prerequisite:

Exhibit fluency or new fluency in speaking, writing and reading Spanish.

Primary Texts and Required Materials:

Texts and resources are drawn from Cuban classics as well as modern-day political and social documents. The selection of materials will depend on the previous experiences of students, with an effort made not to repeat texts with which students are already familiar.

Texts and resource materials may include the following:

Cuban literary authors:

Heredia, Jose Maria  
Villaverde, Cirilo  
Morejon, Nancy  
Carpentier, Alejo  
Alonso, Fernando

Cuban political and social figures

Marti, Jose  
Castro, Fidel  
Guevara, Che

Cuban films

Lista de Espera  
Fresa y Chocolate  
Muerte de un Burócrata  
Memorias de Subdesarrollo  
Hasta Cierta Punto

## La Vida es Silbar

### Learning Objectives:

Students will read and analyze classic and modern Cuban literature, poetry, significant political and social documents, films and other cultural expressions. Subject matter and raw materials are coordinated with subject matter from other academic courses. The class provides a broad overview of cultural production combined with an analysis of the social, historical and political importance of cultural expressions. To the extent that new Spanish words, phrases and meanings are encountered, they will be incorporated into the working language of the students through discussion and short written assignments summarizing the cultural work under study.