

## Summer Study Abroad in Cuba History, Culture and Politics of Cuba

A five-week, 6-credit study abroad program in Cuba

### 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 debate and 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 face in Cuba are:

- Decision-making processes and citizenship rights - democracy vs paternalism, democratic centralism, 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 social 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? What is Cuba's history with issues of sexual orientation and AIDS treatment?

These questions and contradictions are not simple abstractions. They manifest themselves in grocery store discussions, 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 two 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 13 hours of formal academic classes each week organized around discussion of assigned readings. Two workshops or meetings each week (6 hours) allow students to work directly with Cuban academics, political leaders and social actors. One or two 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.



Students also prepare a final project, in which they begin to think about their re-entry to the US and how they will put their experiences in Cuba to work both academically and socially. The final project may be a paper, written individually or collectively, or it may involve production of a play or video, development of an educational program for a US audience, production of art, planning a conference, production of a zine, etc., with subject matter determined in consultation with professors. Students whose final project consists of a performance, presentation, or work of art will also be asked to write a theoretical justification of their project. The final projects are presented in seminar-style format with fifteen minutes for presentation and twenty minutes for discussion/critique by fellow students and professors.

In addition to spending 4 weeks in and around Havana, students spend a week in central Cuba and at least one weekend at Cuba's world famous beaches.

#### Grading rubric (0 to 10 point system)

Attendance/Class Participation - 33%

Weekly reflections - 33%

Final Project - 33%

#### Housing and meals

Students live with families in Marianao who are associated with the Martin Luther King Memorial Center. Marianao is located on the southwest side of Havana, about 20 minutes from the city center. It is a popular barrio with a large Afro-Cuban population. Families are carefully screened by the MLK Center, perhaps Cuba's most important non-governmental organization with a 25 year history of work in Marianao and throughout the island. Home stays provide students with a unique opportunity to learn firsthand from Cuban families while also improving their Spanish. Breakfast is eaten with families, while lunch and dinner are prepared at the MLK Center.

#### Communication with the US

Internet is sporadic and very slow. Students should only expect internet access a couple evenings a week, and almost never during the daytime. Skype does not work in Cuba. Phone calls to the US are possible at a cost of about US\$1.50 per minute. Students can receive phone calls at the MLK Center (assuming their families or significant others are willing to bear the high costs).

#### Courses

Cuba, Yesterday and Today, 45 hours, 3 credits: Overview of recent Cuban history and the social and political dynamics on the island today. The course covers independence struggles, the 1959 revolution, the social impacts of the revolution, and the special period, with particular emphasis on US-Cuba relations and recent social and political changes. 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 historic cultural/political influence of the US on the island.
- 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 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party.
- Understand current social dynamics, particularly regarding race, gender and sexual orientation.

Professors:

- Fernández Martínez Heredia: Author, political analyst and President of the Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales Juan Marinello.

- Thomas Hansen: Professor at the Autonomous University of Social Movements.
- Gladys Hernandez, Researcher at the Center for Research on the World Economy
- Isabel Moya, specialist in gender studies, journalist.
- Alfredo Prieto, specialist in US-Cuba relations and editor of the journal *Temas*
- Juan Vlades Paz, sociologist at the University of Havana and the Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales Raul Roa Garcia.
- Lesbia Canovas, former assistant director of the National Education System

**Bibliography:**

- Gott, Richard, *Cuba: A New History*
- Castro, Raul, "Central Report to the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba"
- Tulchin, Bobea, Espina Prieto, Hernandez, "Changes in Cuban society since the nineties"
- LeoGrande, William, "The Cuban Communist Party and electoral politics: Adaption, succession and transition"
- Benjamin, Jules R, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution*
- Azicri, Max, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow: Reinventing Socialism*
- Angotti, Tom, "Fifty years of rectification"
- Evenson, Debra, "Opening paths to renewed popular participation"
- Hernandez, Dilla, Dugan Abbassi, Diaz, "Political culture and popular participation in 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"
- Casal, Lourdes, "Revolution and Race: Blacks in Contemporary Cuba"
- De la Fuente, Alejandro, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba*
- Gasperini, Lavinia, "The Cuban education system: Lessons and dilemmas"
- Royce, Frederick, "Agricultural Production Cooperatives: The Future of Cuban Agriculture?"
- Randall, Margaret, "The family code"
- Kirk, Emily, "Setting the agenda for Cuban sexuality: the role of Cuba's CENESEX"

**Supplemental readings:**

- Perez, Jr., Louis A, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture*
- Chomsky, Aviva, Barry Carter and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff (eds), *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*
- Olson, Gary, "Cuban internationalism as engaged empathy"
- Krook, Daniel, "Cuban internationalism in Angola, 1975-1991"
- Torres, Nelson, Henshall Momsen, and Niemeier, "Experiment or transition? Revisiting food distribution in Cuban agromercados from the 'special period'"
- Ibarra, Jorge, *Ideologia Mambisa*
- Morena, Fragnals, *El ingenio*
- *Revista Caminos, Raza y racismo*
- 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"
- Henthorne, George, Williams, "The evolving service culture of Cuban tourism: A case study"
- Nayeri and Lopez-Pardo, "Economic crisis and access to care: Cuba's health care system since the collapse of the Soviet Union"
- Font, Mauricio (ed), *Cuba today: Continuity and change since the 'periodo especial'*
- Cluster, Dick, "Northamericans looking at Cubans, *Cubanos mirando a los yumas*"
- Morales Dominguez, Esteban, *United States-Cuba Relations: A Critical History*
- Erlich, Reese, *Dateline Havana: The Real Story of US Policy and the Future of Cuba*
- Alzugaray Treto, Carlos, "Continuity and change in Cuba at 50: The revolution at a crossroads"
- Harris, Richard L, "Cuban internationalism, Che Guevara, and the survival of Cuba's socialist regime"



- Huish, Robert and John M. Kirk, “Cuban medical internationalism and the development of the Latin American School of Medicine”
- Smith, Wayne S, *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of US-Cuba Relations since 1957*

280/380/480 (Span) Spanish, 45 hours, 3 credits: Focus on conversational Spanish, reading and writing using popular education techniques. Readings and newspaper articles by Cuban authors, theater, music, and film provide generative themes, which are used to create conversation and develop vocabulary and grammar. Weekly writing assignments of three pages in Spanish encourage students to reflect on the events of the week. Readings and generative themes are closely related to topics in other academic classes so that students develop intellectually in both Spanish and English. Students take an initial placement test to determine their level of instruction. Classes are small (generally 5 to 8 students) allowing for close personal attention.

Course goals:

- Manage vocabulary and grammar appropriate for academic discussions about other courses in the program.
- Improve verbal, reading and writing skills in a structured environment.
- Improve verbal communication skills in unstructured social environments.

Professors:

- Olga Lidia Rodríguez Medina, Master in Didáctica de Español como lengua extranjera en el ISPEJV, 31 years of experience teaching Spanish as a second language
- Marianela Morán Canto, Master in Educational Psychology, 31 years of experience teaching Spanish as a second language.
- Reina Luisa Peña Castro, Licenciatura in Education from Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Lenguas Extranjeras ISPLE, 34 years of experience teaching Spanish as a second language.



## Programa Académico 5 Semanas: Verano 2016

### Semana 1 Lecturas

Domingo Llegada. Orientación Inicial

Lunes

9-10:45 Presentación de la UCPEJV

11-12 Recorrido por ciudad libertad

12:30 Almuerzo

1:30-3:30 Orientación Inicial

Martes

9-10:30 Examen de Español

10:30 Encuentra Marianao

1:00 Almuerzo

2:00 Encuentro con Estudiantes de la Facultad.

4 Feedback de la Marianao

Miércoles

9-12 HIST: Periodo Colonial y Guerras de Independencia

Discusion

12:30 Almuerzo

1-4 Encuentra Habana

Feedback de las actividades

Jueves

8-10 Español

11-12 Visita a la Habana

12:30 Almuerzo

1:30 Cinema: Jose Martí, El Ojo del Canario

Viernes

9-12 HIST: La Republica

12:30 Almuerzo

1:30 Discussion

3:30 Evaluación de la Semana/Proyecto Final

Sábado

9 Playa Santa Maria

Project/Paper

### Semana 2 Lecturas

Domingo - Libre

Lunes

9-12 HIST: La Revolución y el Socialismo

12:30 Almuerzo

1:30 Visita al Museo de la Revolución

Martes

8-10 ESPAÑOL

10-12:15 Introducción al Marxismo

12:30 Almuerzo

2-4 Cuba y los Movimientos Sociales

Miércoles

9-10:45 ECON: Economía antes de 1959

11-12:30 Sistema Educativo

12:30 Almuerzo

2:00 Visita a una escuela primaria

Jueves

8-10 ESPAÑOL

10-12:15 POL SCI: Dialectica Materialista e Historica

12:30 Almuerzo

2 Visita al ISA

Viernes

9-10:45 ECON: El Bloqueo/Periodo Especial

11-12:30 ESPAÑOL

12:30 Almuerzo

2:00 Visita al ELAM

Sabado

Varadero

### Semana 3 Lecturas

Domingo

Varadero

Lunes

9-10:45 ECON: Actualización del modelo socialista

11-12 Discussion

12:30 Almuerzo

2:00 Visita al doctor de la familia

Martes

8:30-10 ESPAÑOL

10-12 POL SCI: Relaciones Cuba y Union Sovietica

12:30 Almuerzo

2-4 POL SCI: Sistema Politico Cubano

Miércoles

9-11 POL SCI: Relaciones Cuba y EEUU

11-12:30 ESPAÑOL



12:30 Almuerzo  
2-4 Sociedad Civil

Jueves  
8:30-10 ESPAÑOL  
10-12:30 Democracia y Derechos Humanos  
12:30 Almuerzo  
2 Visita a ISRI

Viernes  
9-12 Discussion y Análisis.  
12:30 Almuerzo  
1:30 Evaluación

Sábado  
Project/Paper

#### Semana 4 Lecturas

Domingo

Lunes  
8 Salida a Cienfuegos  
Visita al Museo de Bahía de Cochinos  
Proyecto Comunitario

Martes  
Ciudad de Cienfuegos  
9 Caminata en la ciudad y visita con la historiadora  
Visita a la fortaleza de Jagua

Miércoles  
Salida a Trinidad Sancti-Spiritus  
Caminata y visita con historiadora  
Tour de la Playa de Ancón

Jueves  
Trinidad  
Visita al Valle de los Ingenios

Viernes  
Salida a la provincia de Villa Clara

Visita al memorial Che Guevara  
Caminata de la ciudad  
Visita del Mejunje, proyecto cultural

Sábado  
Regreso

#### Semana 5 Lecturas

Domingo

Lunes  
9-10:45 SOC: La educación y el género  
11-12 Visita a la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas  
12:30 Almuerzo  
2 Tiempo para estudiar

Martes  
8-10 Español  
10-12 La religión en Cuba  
12:30 Almuerzo  
2-4 Taller comunitario sobre la racialidad.

Miércoles  
9-12 Visita al CENESEX  
12:30 Almuerzo  
2 Fresa y Chocolate. Cinema y Debate

Jueves  
8:30-10 Examen de Español  
10-12:30 Presentación del proyecto final  
12:30 Almuerzo  
1:00 Presentación del proyecto final

Viernes  
9-4 Presentación del proyecto final  
12:30 Almuerzo  
6 Cena de despedida

Sábado  
Regreso a los EEUU