SYLLABUS

Progress, Development, and the Future in Latin American and Caribbean History

LACS 262 / History 262, MoWe 4:20-6pm, Oxford Science Building 415

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Office Hours: Pierce 215, TuTh 9-10, W 3-4, and by appointment

Description

The goal of “progress,” the concept of “development,” and the elaboration of the “future” have puzzled Latin Americans throughout their modern history. Intellectual and political elites crafted ambitious goals based on them. To ordinary Latin Americans, they became in some occasions a concrete reality, and in others an elusive dream. Everywhere “progress,” “development,” and the “future” actually or presumably took place, they created new and unexpected challenges. This course discusses the crucial issues of progress, development, and the future in Latin America from the times of the Iberian reformism in the 18th Century to the present, with a focus on the 20th century. The course therefore deals with the problem of “historical time” and of conceptualizing the entire region.

“Progress” used to represent in the 19th century the very sense of universal history, a teleology inherited by visions of “Western modernity” and “globalization.” In the 20th century, “Development” became the master key of the modernizing social scientists. Crafting the “future” is the trait shared by almost all modern political traditions. But progress became to some a scam and a myth to debunk, development turned into a technocratic and failed fantasy, and the future morphed into a cynical mirage in our current pessimistic intellectual environment.

The three concepts are interesting objects of historical reflection. Was “progress” merely an illusion for Latin Americans? Should not we consider it a myth, not in the sense of a delusion, but a narrative through which a community gives to itself a sense of being in the world? Is “progressive” a politically meaningful category? What happened with “development” since WWII to the present? Can we integrate the future among our historical categories? Are the agendas of economic modernization and environmental policies compatible? Can both be included in a democratic vision of the future?

Students will choose a historical problem and trace its history in terms of the concepts of progress, development, and future at play in that specific realm. Students will be able, thus, to approach debates about the “progress,” the “development,” or the “future” of
economic regimes, political systems, environmental policies, institutions, technology, or culture, aware of their underlying ideological visions. The readings include philosophical and conceptual approaches, ethno-historical accounts of colonial times, and above all key studies on 19th- and 20th-century history.

Texts in Spanish and Portuguese will be available for those students interested. The grade will consider class participation and a short paper.

**Grading**
- Class attendance and participation: 50%
- Paper elaboration: 25%
- Final paper: 25%

**Grade Scale**
- A = 94-100
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 63-66
- F = 0-62

**Absences:** Only one unexcused absence is permitted. After that, one point per absence will be discounted from the final grade.

**Honor code:** Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will automatically result in an F grade.

**Laptops are not allowed in class, except on specifically indicated occasions. Smartphones are not allowed in class under any circumstance.**

**Office hours:** Students are expected to attend office hours within the first three weeks of class. Failure to do this will affect their class attendance and participation grade.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Students must contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) to receive a letter outlining specific academic accommodations and should discuss them with their professor as early in the semester as possible. OAS contact information: (770) 784-4690 oas_oxford@emory.edu / http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html

**Bibliography**

**Books (available at the campus bookstore)**

**Articles and book chapters (available on Canvas)**
- Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* [1845], California UP, 2003, Chapters I-VII & XV.
- Raymond Williams, “Progressive,” in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford UP, 1976.
Class Schedule

**Introduction: “progress,” “development,” “future,” “Latin America”**

1/ W Jan 17 Presentation: Temporalities in Latin America
2/ M Jan 22 Historical time, “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation”
   Reading: Benjamin, “Theses on the philosophy of history” + Veloso, “Tempo”
3/ W Jan 24 The colonial Holocaust
   Reading: Lomnitz, “Laying down the law”

**Millenarianism, prophecy, power**

4/ M Jan 29 Colonialism and time
   Reading: Timmer, “Providence and Perdition”
5/ W Jan 31 Maya Time
   Reading: Clendinnen, “Part II: Indians”
6/ M Feb 5 Millenarianism and slave rebellion in Brazil
   Reading: Metcalf, “Millenarian Slaves?”
7/ W Feb 7 French Revolution and slave revolution
   Reading: CLR James, *The Black Jacobins*

**Modernization**

8/ M Feb 12 Spanish Enlightenment
   Reading: Weber, *Bárbaros*
9/ W Feb 14 Collapse of the Iberian empires and emergence of a *criollo* elite
   Reading: Bolívar, “Jamaica Letter”
10/ M Feb 19 Progress and the national project
    Readings: Sarmiento, *Facundo*; Williams, *Keywords*
11/ W Feb 21 Environmental transformations
    Reading: Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*, Ch. 1 “Eternal Verdure”
12/ M Feb 26 Labor and the modernizing environment
    Reading: Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*, Ch. 2 “A laboring landscape”
13/ W Feb 28
    Reading: Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds*, Ch. 3 “A landscape of captivity”

14/ M Mar 5 Paper Workshop I: bring to class a 1-2-page idea to elaborate in a paper. It could be a reflection on a topic from the bibliography or a different topic, such as United Nations Development Program in Latin America; national or regional indicators of living or educational standards; “bio-power”; state apparatus; trade and development; Gross Domestic Product (GDP); Gini index; institutional stability; pluralism/peace/integration of religious/ethnic/political groups, etc.

**Development**

15/ W Mar 7 Informality and urban development
Reading: Fischer, “A Century in the Present Tense”

SPRING BREAK

16/ M Mar 19 National capitalism  
   Reading: Brennan & Rougier, *The Politics of National Capitalism*, Intro & Ch. 1

17/ W Mar 21 Developmental economics  
   Reading: Hirschman, “The rise and fall of developmental economics”

18/ M Mar 26 US Alliance for Progress  
   Readings: Arthus, “Alliance for Progress”; Hammond, “Popular Education in the Midst of Guerrilla War”

19/ W Mar 28 The limits of developmentalism: sex and patriarchy  
   Readings: Htun, *Sex and the State*, ch. 2 and 6

Neoliberal futurism

20/ M Apr 2 “Fordism” and NAFTA  
   Reading: Broughton, *Boom, Bust, Exodus*

21/ W Apr 4 Mexico under NAFTA  
   Reading: Broughton, *Boom, Bust, Exodus*

22/ M Apr 9 Agricultural commodities boom  
   Reading: Lapegna, “The dark side of the boom”

23/ W Apr 11 Pension policies  
   Reading: Arocena & Bowman, “Retirement with dignity?”

Neo-Developmentalism

24/ M Apr 16 NGOs and the State  
   Reading: Beckett, “Rethinking the Haitian Crisis”

25/ W Apr 18 Neo-Developmental State  
   Reading: Klein, “Engaging the Brazilian State: the Belo Monte Dam”

26/ M Apr 23 Critique of the neo-liberal and neo-developmentalist futures  
   Reading: Coronil, “The future in question”

27/ W Apr 25 Paper workshop II: bring an outline of the paper. We will discuss writing strategies, text organization, hypotheses, and arguments.

28/ M Apr 30 Conclusion

Final paper due date: TBA