

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Brazil: Social Justice & Inequality in São Paulo
Course Code / Title: (SP/LAST 330) Contemporary Issues in Brazilian Society
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Latin American Studies / Sociology, Economics, Political Science
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Course Description

In addition to contemporary social issues, this course also examines social representations and stereotypes about Brazil. A brief historicizing approach provides meaning and understanding to issues such as colonial power, race, religion, and rights in Brazil.

The course comprises three modules. Module I covers national identity in modern Brazil, citizenship, democracy and popular culture. In this module, special emphasis is given to the implications of the re-democratization process after the military dictatorship and the 1988 Federal Constitution. Module II explores environmental issues, social movements, indigenous resistance, and urban conflicts. Module III explores the contemporary social dynamics in Brazil sparked by the 2013 massive public demonstrations against the fare increase in public transportation.

Course discussions and materials include recent mass protests, mega-events, and militarization in the public space, media monopoly, mass media and religion, popular notions of justice, “judicialization” of politics, and current challenges to Brazilian democracy.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students:

- Examine the basic concepts of democracy and interpret them in the Brazilian context.
- Identify the key postulates and interpretations of Brazilian contemporary studies.
- Gain theoretical tools to develop critical assessment of contemporary arguments and debates.
- Understand social dynamics and contemporary trends in Brazil.
- Engage in theoretical and empirical debates on contemporary social issues in Brazil.
- Understand the roots and contours of Brazilian society.
- Develop awareness of contemporary issues in Brazil and increase intercultural sensitivity.

Course Requirements

Students are required to actively participate in class lectures, debates, open discussions, seminars and presentations. All assigned texts should be carefully read prior to each class. Attendance requirements are outlined in the CET Attendance Policy.

Graded components are as follows:

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- Student seminar presentation: Each student delivers a 20-minute presentation with 30 minutes for Q&A. Presentations will be based on a previously assigned reading.
- Final paper: A 15-page essay resulting from an empirical, in-depth investigation of a previously-assigned issue. The content of the final paper should address the relationship between a current development issue in Brazil scenario and its relevance to any of the main topics discussed in class.
- Participation: Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and case studies.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Student seminar presentation: 30%.
- Final paper: 50% (research proposal 10%, actual research 40%).
- Participation: 20%.

Readings

Albuquerque, A. "Protecting Democracy or Conspiring Against It? Media and Politics in Latin America: A Glimpse from Brazil." *Journalism*, 1464884917738376, 2017.

Arnaudo, D. "Computational Propaganda in Brazil: Social Bots during Elections." *Project on Computational Propaganda*, 8, 2017.

Azzi, V. F. *Security for show? The Militarisation of Public Space in Light of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games*. Contexto Internacional, 39(3), 589-607, 2017.

Bethell, L. "Politics in Brazil: From Elections without Democracy to Democracy without Citizenship." *Daedalus*, 129(2), 1-27, 2000.

Carvalho, N. R. & dos Santos, O. A., Junior. "Bolsonaro and the Inequalities of Geographical Development in Brazil." *Journal of Latin American Geography* 18(1), 198-202. University of Texas Press, Project MUSE Database, 2019.

Freire-Medeiros, B. "'I Went to the City of God': Gringos, Guns and the Touristic Favela." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 20(1), 21-34, 2011.

Freston, P. "Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Brief History." *Religion*, 25(2), 119-133, 1995.

Gordon, D. "A Beleza Abre Portas: Beauty and the Racialised Body among Black Middle-Class Women in Salvador, Brazil." *Feminist Theory*, 14(2), 203-218, 2013.

Hunter, W. & Power, T. J. "Bolsonaro and Brazil's Illiberal Backlash." *Journal of Democracy* 30(1), 68-82. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved September 24, 2019, from Project MUSE database, 2019.

Lamond, I. R. "The Challenge of Articulating Human Rights at an LGBT 'Mega-Event': A Personal Reflection on Sao Paulo Pride 2017." *Leisure Studies*, 37(1), 36-48, 2018.

Leu, L. "Music and National Culture: Pop Music and Resistance in Brazil." *Portuguese Cultural Studies*, (1), 4, 2006.

Porto, M. P. "Telenovelas and National Identity in Brazil." *IX International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA)*, New Orleans, 2008.

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- Power, T. J., & Taylor, M. M. *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil*. South Bend, IN. 2011
- Riccio, V. "Media, Images of Justice, and Brazilian Reality Television." *Observatorio (OBS*)*, 1(2), 2007.
- Robles, W. "Revisiting Agrarian Reform in Brazil, 1985–2016." *Journal of Developing Societies*, 34(1), 1-34, 2018.

Additional Resources

The professor uses major news websites to select excerpts for class discussion and case study, including:

<https://www.folha.uol.com.br>

<https://www.estadao.com.br>

<https://veja.abril.com.br>

<https://www.nexojournal.com.br>

<https://www.bbc.com/portuguese>

<https://www.dw.com/pt-br>

Outline of Course Content

1. Welcome to Brazil! Carnival, soccer, and beauty: social representations and stereotypes about bodies and souls
2. Contemporary democracy: building rights and citizenship in Brazil
3. Modern Brazil: telenovelas, romantic love and national identity
4. Popular culture: Brazilian music and politics
5. From the forests to the rural areas: territory, environment, social movements and indigenous resistance
6. The city of God: favelas, violence and inequalities in the cities
7. New social movements in Brazil: expressions of gender, class, race and generation
8. Mass protests and mega events: anti-terrorism and the militarization of public space
9. Beyond Citizen Kane: monopoly and media concentration in Brazil
10. Exorcism on TV: religion and mass media in Brazil
11. Reality shows: crime, justice and celebrity politics on TV
12. Judicialization of politics: corruption scandals and Car Wash Operation
13. Challenges to democracy in Brazil: fake news and 2018 elections

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14. Brazil under Bolsonaro's government I: illiberal backlash
15. Brazil under Bolsonaro's government II: inequalities of geographical development in Brazil