

**ECUADORIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION:  
GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND POPULATION  
SYLLABUS**

**Lewis & Clark College  
Overseas Program in Cuenca, Ecuador**

**Instructor: Andrea Augusta Neira**

**Number of Sessions: 25  
Language of Instruction: English**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course focuses on the cultural diversity and complexity of Ecuador, always considering it within the Latin American context. We will analyze regional differences (Costa-Sierra-Oriente) from an anthropological perspective and discuss, from a historical approach, how social institutions and cultural practices and traditions have been shaped, and how they have dealt with continuity and change. Some case studies and specific historical events of Ecuador and other Latin American countries will be used to explore relevant topics related to ethnicity, social stratification, national identities, rural/urban relationships, cosmology and religious institutions and practices, human mobility, and gender. Following a roughly chronological approach, beginning with the encounter of the European and Native worlds, and continuing through the contemporary era, we intend to analyze the legacy of colonialism, the formation of the nation-state, the emergence of social movements, artistic expressions, post-colonial nationalism, the impact of migration and urbanization, and the effects of neo-liberal policies and globalization.

The topics are explored through different teaching methods such as traditional lectures, discussions, debates, simulations, readings, films, and music.

Along the course every student will be asked to engage in an independent research project under the supervision of the teacher. Such a project must begin with a brief written proposal and it is expected an article, discussion paper, essay or presentation as a final output.

Themes that we will focus on include concepts of race, ethnicity and gender as they appear in Latin America; political and economic processes; urbanization and migration; religious and ritual festivities; and indigenous social movements.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

After completing this course, students will:

1. To introduce students to the study and comprehension of Ecuadorian contemporary issues in order to encourage critical thinking, informed discussion, and motivation for further study.
2. To recognize the geography of Latin America, and have a general knowledge of its history and contemporary reality.
3. To acquaint students with existing social and political conflicts, and to understand present day Latin American beliefs and cultural practices.
4. To discuss and analyze essential traits, elements, and themes common to many Ecuadorian and Latin American cultural issues.

5. To understand Ecuador as part of an integrated part of the world, not just a separate piece.
6. To broaden the cultural experience of students and actively engagement on the local context and people.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY:**

This course will consist of lectures, group discussions, use of media and technology, excursions within the city, and in-class quizzes.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:**

1. Attendance and participation. All students are expected to contribute to class discussions, and to complete all assigned readings before class. The nature of the class is highly interactive, and students will be graded on active participation. (20%)
2. Students will be expected to write three small blog articles on different topics to be posted on the internet. The articles will be judged by narration, research, originality, photography, etc. Participation and comments in one another's articles will be taken into account. Publication dates will be announced throughout the course (30%)
3. Mini-projects and homework. All assignments are due before class begins. (20%)
5. A final project will be given to assess overall knowledge of course content through the students' work in the course. (30%)

Specific instructions will be provided in class for each assignment.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

#### **Sessions 1 to 5:**

Introduction to the course

Geographic aspects of Ecuador and Latin America

Understanding Ecuador's and Latin America's History

- Pre Hispanic civilizations

#### **Session 6 to 10:**

Understanding Ecuador's and Latin America's History

- The Clash of Civilizations
- The Colonial Period
- Independence process

#### **Session 11 to 15:**

Ecuador and Latin America during the:

- 19th century
- 20th century

#### **Session 16 to 20:**

Contemporary Ecuador and Latin America

- Population
- Cities and development
- Religion and Religious festivities
- Food

#### **Sessions 21 to 25:**

Contemporary Ecuador and Latin America:

- Medical practices
- Education
- Arts
- Literature
- Human Mobility

### **COURSE READINGS**

Selected readings from the texts listed below.

Heath, Dwight B., *Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America* (Waveland Press), 2002.

Chasteen, John Charles, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (W.W. Norton), 2011.

Chasteen, John Charles and Wood, James A, *Problems in Modern Latin American History: Sources and Interpretations: Completed Revised and Updated* (SR Books), 2004.

### **GRADING EQUIVALENCES:**

100-94: .	A
93- 90:	A-
89-88:	B+
87-85:	B
84-80:	B-
79-76:	C+
75-72:	C
71-70	C-
69-68:	D+
67-66:	D
65- And less	F