**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** Contemporary Latin American Culture, SN 314

**Home Department:** Modern Languages and Literatures

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Dr. Timothy Compton, 906 227 1107, tcompton@nmu.edu

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): Every Summer, some winters

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

1. Overview of the course content

SN 314 is an overview of Latin American culture focusing on the 20th century to present day, taught in English. It explores the diversity of geography, cultures, languages, challenges, perspectives and triumphs found in contemporary Latin America.

1. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

Critical Thinking: One of the explicit course objectives of SN 314 is to challenge students to think critically about what they read. Assignments call for critical observations on the part of students, who must draw evidence from the works being studied, formulate conclusions based on that evidence and on their own insights, and articulate their arguments.

Perspectives on Society: This course satisfies the component “Perspectives on Society” because in it, students…

1. Engage in analysis of social issues, structures, and processes/events.

2. Address ethical issues in society.

3. Explore themes in the development of human society.

Students in SN 314 focus on social structures and issues facing various peoples in a variety of locales during several different time periods in Latin America. Students then examine and think about the ethics and impact of those structures and issues on people over time, and analyze how modern society deals with similar issues.

1. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)

SN 314 is taught in English and requires EN 211, and sophomore status. It was designed primarily as a Liberal Studies/General Education course for students in a variety of disciplines.

1. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

SN 314 is in the core of the Latin American Studies minor (as an option) and counts toward the International Studies major and minor.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

SN 314 is taught online during the summer.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Task type and frequency: Critical thinking will be assessed in one or more response papers, one or more argumentative papers, and/or one or more exams. All of these assignments will require students to assess the information in course readings, and draw upon them, integrating them into a cohesive argument.  Overall Grading Weight: 40-70 %  Expected Proficiency Rate: 80%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practice from other courses using critical thinking skills. This course merely helps them further these skills. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Task type and frequency: Critical thinking will be assessed in one or more response papers, one or more argumentative papers, and/or one or more exams. All of these assignments will require students to formulate conclusions based on evidence drawn from the texts and on their own insights.  Overall Grading Weight: 40-70 %  Expected Proficiency Rate: 80%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practice from other courses using critical thinking skills. This course merely helps them further these skills. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Task type and frequency: Critical thinking will be assessed in one or more response papers, one or more argumentative papers, and/or one or more exams. All of these assignments will require students to articulate arguments that present conclusions based on evidence they have formulated.  Overall Grading Weight: 40-70 %  Expected Proficiency Rate: 80%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practice from other courses using critical thinking skills. This course merely helps them further these skills. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*Attainment of the PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Analysis of society** | Analysis of social issues, structures and processes or events | Task Type and Frequency: Task type and frequency: Students will write one or more response papers, one or more argumentative papers, and/or one or more exams in which they examine a variety of social and ethical issues relevant to the communities in and for which the texts discussed in the course were produced.  Overall Grading Weight: 60-80%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 90%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practiced writing and most write quite well. They find the assignments and topics very engaging, and typically have wonderful insights into the culture studied, particularly in comparison with their own culture. Because of their high level of engagement, students tend to do better. |
| **Ethical Issues** | Addressing ethical issues in society | Task Type and Frequency: In the papers and/or exams, students will consider the impact of the social and ethical issues raised in their analyses.  Overall Grading Weight: 40-60%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 90%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practiced writing and most write quite well. They find the assignments and topics very engaging, and typically have strong opinions on the ethics of what they study. Because of their high level of engagement, students tend to do better. |
| **Development and context of society** | Explore themes in the development of human society | Task Type and Frequency: Students will create a final project or presentation that explores the development of key themes studied in the class as they relate to contemporary society, evaluating the influence of other traditions.  Overall Grading Weight: 10-20%  Expected Proficiency Rate: 80%  Rationale: Because students have completed EN211 they are usually sophomores or juniors, and some are even seniors. They have practiced writing. Since this course focuses on contemporary Latin America, it includes less on development of society. Nonetheless, this class does examine the roots of the current situation in Latin America, and therefore societal development does surface. Students typically find this very engaging, especially as they compare it to the roots of their own culture. Because of their high level of engagement, students tend to do better. |

**Syllabus for Spanish 314--Summer 2012**

**Instructor:** Tim Compton **Office:** 227-1107, 145 Whitman

**E-mail:** tcompton@nmu.edu

**Textbooks:** Isabel Allende, The House of the Spirits

Mario Bencastro, Odyssey to the North

Sandra Branco, Brazil: Culture Smart

Ignacio Solares, There Is No Such Place

Luis Sepúlveda, The Old Man Who Read Love Stories

Jorge Reyes, Rediscovering Cuba

Boring but important Catalogue Stuff

This course is called “Contemporary Latin American Culture.” It is an overview, in English, “of Latin American intellectual, social and political issues as reflected in contemporary literature, art, film and other cultural forms from the various regions of Latin America.” It meets the upper division humanities and the world cultures requirement. It does not count toward a Spanish minor or major. Students need to have completed the English composition requirement and must have at least sophomore standing.

Now What I Really want to say about this Course

I love Latin America. I love the people of Latin America. Latin America has huge problems and challenges, but I have great hope for it. The vast majority of Latin Americans I have met have been good-hearted, creative, resilient people with a zest for life. I love how different the people from different parts of Latin America are, even when there are commonalities. I love visiting Latin America. I have lived in Mexico on several occasions for up to 18 months, and I have visited Mexico City every summer for 21 years. I have also lived in Peru and visited Argentina and Cuba. I love Mexican food, but love trying food from all over Latin America. I love learning about the customs, geography, art, music, accomplishments, and literature of Latin America. My doctorate is in Mexican literature, and I go to Mexico City so often because I study Mexican theatre—I love to see it, try to figure out what it says about Mexico, and share what I have learned through it. This summer (May 2012) I spent nearly three weeks in Mexico City and saw 15 plays. I love talking and learning about Latin America, which is why I chose my profession and why I LOVE teaching this course. My idea is that most of what you study in this course is based on what I assign, but that you will get to choose some of what you study, and then you will share it with me and your classmates. Although I love teaching this class, the subject is so big that it is completely unmanageable. We could spend the whole course learning about any one country we’ll study. I’ve chosen readings with major Latin American themes as well as themes specific to several countries. We’ll get to know Chile, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador and Mexico better than other Latin American countries, but we’ll touch on others, and if you want to learn about others in more depth, you’ll be able to do so. This isn’t an easy class—it’s plenty of work, but stick with it and it will be worth it. I’m excited to be able to take you on a journey to some of the great places in the world, and to “meet” some of the world’s greatest people.

Web SN314!

I have taught SN314 ten times as a traditional classroom course. This is the fourth time I have taught it online. As I adapted the course to an online environment, I did not change the course objectives and think that the workload is very similar to my classroom versions of SN314, or maybe a little less. With any course I teach, I make adjustments on the way, often based on student suggestions, and I’m sure this course will be no different. Please forward your ideas and concerns to me and I’ll see what I can do. This format has some advantages. I am not a technological whiz, and do not expect you to be one, but you should feel very comfortable with e-mail and the web. You will need world wide web access on a regular basis. We will use threaded discussions a little bit in EduCat, and you will need to create and send to me a powerpoint presentation. If you have any concerns about all of this, please be in touch. Since we do not meet in person, I have made this syllabus more detailed than I usually do—parts of it are more technical than I would have liked. Sorry—I couldn’t figure out a better way. If you have questions, please be in touch. I should be able to answer most e-mails mid-week within 24 hours… (Sorry—I check my e-mail less on weekends.) I’ll be at my daughter’s wedding during part of our class. Hopefully you won’t even know which part of class!

Academic Honesty

I have designed the assignments and exams in this course to be personal enough to you to make cheating obvious and foolish. I am looking less for brilliance and more for evidence that you have done the reading, thought about it, have started to understand Latin American culture, and have made an effort to express yourself. If it becomes clear that you have engaged in academic dishonesty, I will follow the procedures in the student code, sections 1.2.3 and 2.2.3:

<http://webb.nmu.edu/dso/SiteSections/OurServices/HandbookSection1.shtml>

Course Objectives

Through readings, discussions, and presentations, this course will...

1. Help students start to understand several dimensions of contemporary Latin America. (social, political, economic, intellectual, racial, artistic, musical)

2. Help students start to feel the uniqueness and diversity of individual Latin American countries.

3. Help students to understand some of the "roots" of Latin America's current situation.

4. Acquaint students with some of the considerable artistic and cultural achievements of Latin America.

5. Give students an idea about the history and current status of the international relations several countries of Latin America have had with the U.S., and their effect.

6. Give students the desire and ability to continue to learn about Latin America.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Disability Services Office at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock (227-1700; TTY 227-1543). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state and University guidelines.

**GRADES**

Possible Positives A 420-450 points

Midterm “Exams” 2 X 45 = 90 points A- 405-419

Final “Exam” 58 B+ 390-404

Powerpoint “Presentation” 50 B 375-389

Graded homework 7 X 30 = 210 B- 360-474

Graded postings 21 X 2 = 42 C+ 345-359

====== C 330-344

TOTAL 450 C- 315-329

Possible Negatives D+ 300-314

Miscellaneous points 6 X 20 = 120 D 285-299

Non-graded homework 13 X 10 = 130 D- 270-284

F -390-269

General Explanation

This is an unusual grading scheme, but it is the fairest system I can figure out. Do the positives, and you earn points; don’t do the negatives, and you lose points. So in the worst possible scenario, you can end up 250 points in the hole (wherein you earn none of the positive points and do none of the activities in the negative category). On the other hand, if you do the work in both categories—good work, you’ll be fine; if you don’t, your grade will suffer. Read on to learn about each category…

Homework Since this class is based on a traditional format, its readings follow the schedule I would have used in a traditional class. For each reading, you need to write a 400+ word response to it, which must include roughly equal portions of these sections: 1) Summary (keep it brief), 2) Cultural Elements (recognition of/your commentary on/your questions about/your reaction to the cultural elements you found—especially comparing them to US culture—similarities/differences), 3) My Reaction (your personal reaction to the reading--your favorite passages and why, passages you disliked and why, any questions). You must clearly label each section. Along with the response to the reading, each assignment will have a “bonus” question which you will need to answer briefly after looking something up, watching something, etc. Label that section as well. Each of the 21 homework assignments must be e-mailed to me NOT AS AN ATTACHMENT, but right in the body of an e-mail text. The subject line should say: “SN314: Homework 1” (or whatever number assignment it is). The assignments are due by midnight of the day indicated on the syllabus. (Recommendation: Write up the homework in a word processor, then copy and paste it to e-mail.)

I will assign a grade on seven of the 21 homework assignments, based on the following “rubric”:

**Grade for this homework assignment:**

Brief Summary /7 (Sufficient length [“SL”], hit main points, clear & quality expression[C&QE])

Cultural Elements /7 (SL, Similarities to/Differences from US or another culture, C&QE)

Personal reaction /9 (SL, Favorite/Least favorite passages & why, associations, reactions, C&QE)

Bonus question /7 (SL, addressed question, C&QE)

TOTAL: /30 -5 late = /30

I don’t tell you ahead of time which of the assignments will be graded—just do great work on all of them!

For the other 14 assignments, I will respond to each one telling you either that it is accepted (“Good”) or that you need to do something to get it accepted, and perhaps giving you a bit of feedback. I don’t always read every word, but I usually read most of sections 2 and 3 and the “bonus” response. If you don’t do the work, you will lose 10 points.

“Examinations” All “exams” will be available in EduCat (hopefully!—I’ll e-mail instructions to you). Some questions will elicit short answers (a sentence or two) and others will call for essays (I hate multiple choice tests—I am convinced they are unfair). The exams will be designed to allow you to show that you have learned something from the “lectures” (powerpoints from Prof. Compton), readings, postings, etc. The final exam will be comprehensive. All exams will have two hour time limits. The window during which you can take each one will be 2-3 days.

Miscellaneous points These are not extra credit points. Each student must spend six hours learning about Latin America outside the scope of class assignments. Possibilities include reading books, novels, Latin American movies, National Geographic articles, TV programs, etc. Use the log I e-mail you (and will hopefully be posted in EduCat), and e-mail it to me… Ten points per hour–maximum of 2 hours per week. The first half of these are due July 23, and the rest are due at the end of the course.

Postings/“Discussions”

We will have nine sets of threaded discussions during this course. I have divided the class into three groups. For each discussion, one group will get the discussion going with some initial posts, and the rest of the class will follow up within several days, in accordance with the schedule below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DISCUSSION/POSTING DEADLINES  Make your posts by midnight of the dates below depending on the first letter of your last name on this chart: | | | | | | |
|  | A through C | | D through L | | M through Z | |
|  | **Initial**  **Post** | **Reaction Posts** | **Initial**  **Post** | **Reaction**  **Posts** | **Initial**  **Post** | **Reaction**  **Posts** |
| 1 | July 5 |  |  | July10 |  | July 10 |
| 2 |  | July 10 | July 5 |  |  | July 10 |
| 3 (News) |  | July 17 |  | July 17 | July 13 |  |
| 4 |  | July 24 | July 19 |  |  | July 24 |
| 5 |  | July 24 |  | July 24 | July 19 |  |
| 6 (News) | July 27 |  |  | July 31 |  | July 31 |
| 7 |  | August 7 |  | August 7 | August 2 |  |
| 8 | August 2 |  |  | August 7 |  | August 7 |
| 9 (News) |  | August 10 | August 3 |  |  | August 10 |

Initial posts are due by midnight of the date cited. Discussions 1, 4 & 7 will focus on the readings we do. Discussions 2, 5 & 8 will follow up on other parts of the class, whether on homework bonus questions, miscellaneous points, or presentations. EduCat will have specific instructions on each discussion topic. The initial posts for these will be easy--they will follow up on homework already accomplished. Discussions 3, 6 & 9 will require that you do research on current news events from Latin America, and give a short report on them. You have an advantage if you do these early, because you cannot receive credit for a report on which someone else has already reported.

Reaction posts are due by midnight of the date cited, but you cannot begin until AFTER the due date of the initial posts. For reaction posts, you must first read all the initial posts, then respond to three of them (per assignment) in each discussion for which you did not give an initial post (18 total reaction posts). Each reaction post must be several sentences in length and must add something significant to an existing discussion. (Responses can second what someone posted or disagree with it—use evidence from a class reading, from another task, etc.-- just be sure to give strong evidence to what you say.)

All posts will receive 2 points as long as they meet basic standards of length (either specified in the instructions for initial postings or at least several sentences for reactions), clarity of expression, and whether it added to the discussion. I will let you know if your posting did not meet minimum standards.

Presentation

You need to create a powerpoint presentation on a topic of your choosing related to Latin America. Steps to a successful presentation:

1. Choose and communicate a topic to Prof. Compton by July 17. (Topics can be on a place, a custom, a dance, a sport, food, a writer, a painter, a singer, a film maker, a festival, etc.) The range of possible topics is wide wide wide, but you should think fairly narrow. The sooner you get a topic to me, the sooner I can approve it and you can get started.

2. Do lots of research.

3. Prepare a powerpoint presentation as if you were going to present something roughly ten minutes long. Make your slides attractive, and don’t include too much text. Don’t animate it either—animation makes your file too long to e-mail, and your presentation has to make it to me via e-mail. Hopefully my powerpoint presentations will give you somewhat of a model to follow. I’ll send out a few samples from last year when we get closer to the due date, which is July 30.

4. Once I receive your presentation, I will either post it on EduCat or send it out to the rest of your classmates. You will need to review your classmates’ presentations and give me a very brief report (what and how much you learned) on each one (but all together in one e-mail—not an attachment) by August 8.

Your grade will be based on the quality of your presentation and whether I can see that you learned from your classmates in your reviews.

Tentative Schedule for SN 314

Summer 2012

July 2 Study this syllabus, poke around in EduCat, get to work!

3 Homework 1: House 1-72

4 Independence Day!

5 Homework 2: House 73-141 Initial Postings 1 & 2 due

9 Homework 3: House 142-208

10 Homework 4: House 209-291 Reaction Postings to 1 & 2 due

11 Homework 5: House 292-365

12 Homework 6: House 366-433  **Midterm 1**

13 Initial Postings 3 due

16 Homework 7: Borges

17 Homework 8: Old Man (All!) Presentation Topic & Reaction Postings 3 due

18 Homework 9: García Márquez

19 Homework 10: Brazil 8-53 Initial Postings 4 & 5 due

23 Homework 11: Brazil 54-109 **Miscellaneous Log (weeks 1-3) due**

24 Homework 12: Brazil 110-164 Reaction Postings to 4 & 5 due

25 Homework 13: Cuba xv-60

26 Homework 14: Cuba 61-99 **Midterm 2**

27 Initial Postings 6 due

30 Homework 15: Fuentes **Presentation due**

31 Homework 16: No Such Place 1-58 Reaction Postings 6 due

Aug 1 Homework 17: No Such Place 59-106

2 Homework 18: Odyssey 1-43 Initial Postings 7 & 8 due

3 Initial Positings 9 due

6 Homework 19: Odyssey 44-91

7 Homework 20: Odyssey 92-141 Reaction Postings 7 & 8 due

8 Homework 21: Odyssey 142-192 **Reaction to presentations due**

9 **Final Exam Miscellaneous Log (complete) due**

10Reactions to News Postings (9) due