

## **HIS320-01 Central America—Fall 2009 (Fulfills GN, RI, and WI requirements)**

### **Syllabus**

**Required Text:** There is no required text for this class.

#### **Course Description:**

An investigation of the political structure and economies of the Central American republics from independence in 1821 to the beginning of the twenty-first century with particular attention to the 1980s, when Central Americans took the debate over land, resources, income inequality, and a host of other issues that had divided them for centuries into the battlefield. Only Costa Rica and Panama stood apart from the violence. Why did violence come to dominate? What role did the United States play in supporting or alleviating the crisis? Any number of questions arose out of "the lost decade" of the 1980s. This course fulfills the following requirements: GN, RI, and WI.

**Course Requirements:** Students will write paragraphs in response to questions, engage in discussion in several forums, take map quizzes, prepare three 10-item annotated bibliographies, and write three short research essays with footnotes and bibliography (3-5 pages). For all assignments, including the discussion forums, grammar, punctuation, and syntax matter as much as content.

Below you will find a more complete description of the course components. This syllabus is organized alphabetically.

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**Annotated Bibliography (AB) (25%):** Each student will prepare three 10-item annotated bibliographies. Each bibliography is a list of books and other works used in putting together a research project. The annotation is a brief paragraph (3 or 4 sentences) stating the main points of the work. It follows the citation. Think of it as a brief summary indicating the author's argument. Complete instructions are in Blackboard under Essays/AB.

**Blackboard:** All information concerning the course is in the Blackboard course-management system.

**Calendar:** The calendar provides all of the due dates for assignments in one place. Note the due dates and read the calendar thoroughly and check it frequently as it might change.

**Discussion Board:** Take advantage of the Ice Breaker to introduce yourself to the other class members. You may also submit questions to the Question to the Professor. I will respond promptly to questions.

**Discussion Forums (20%):**

Students have the responsibility to write a response to a question or statement in several units. This exercise will require each person to participate at least five times in the conversation. You must read, think, and respond. Full credit will only be given to those who post an initial thought and who respond to the thoughts of at least five of their classmates (at least five responses). Discussion responses must be posted by 12 noon on the day specified. However, you may post your responses **before** the due date if you wish.

**Due Dates:** Due dates are on the Calendar and in the Units. Please make note of the deadlines. All work may be submitted before the deadline. There will be no extensions of time for any assignment. On occasion, a due date might change, but always to the benefit of students. Any change will be noted on the Announcements page.

**Extra Credit:** You may earn 4 points in extra credit by taking the FAQ quiz (the score you make on the quiz; one point is possible) and First Week Survey (one point) and the two surveys at the end of the course (one point each).

**FAQs:** Students often have many questions about this class. To help you get started, go to the FAQ page in Blackboard. A quiz on the FAQs may earn you one point extra credit if you answer all questions correctly. The quiz will only be available during the first 5 days of the course. Be sure to take this FAQ quiz before starting the course. The score will appear in the Blackboard grade book.

### **Grading:**

- Research Essays = 45 points
- Annotated Bibliographies and Paragraphs (Response to study questions) = 25 points
- Discussion Forums = 20 points
- Quizzes = 10 points

**Grading Scale:** A=Superior (100-90); B=Good (89-80); C=Satisfactory (79-70); D=Poor (69-60); F=Failing (59-0). See UNCG Grading System in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*. A student who earns an “A” has performed with “distinction and excellence.” Pluses and minuses apply.

**Honor System:** The Honor System is just as much a part of the class as if it were in the classroom.

**Paragraphs (25%):** Students will post responses to questions based on the reading.

**Quizzes (10%):** Students will complete four map quizzes. Once you open a quiz, you will have to complete it. You can only take a quiz once.

**Research Essays (45%):** Each student will write three brief research essays (3-5 pages) which require using both primary and secondary sources and preparing a bibliographic page. The dictates of Turabian will guide the formatting of the footnotes and

bibliography. For electronic citations, use the Modern Language Association (MLA) style manual.

**Student Learning Goals:** A few years ago the faculty developed a new curriculum with new student learning goals which represent ideals toward which each faculty will work. Although I will provide students with the opportunity to learn and to achieve those goals, I cannot guarantee that students will achieve them. A student's achievement is his or her decision. In other words, I cannot ensure that a student will demonstrate a general knowledge of anything if that student has decided that he or she does not wish to learn. Keep in mind your commitment to learning as you proceed through the course.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** On completion of this course, students, if they choose, will be able to identify major historical developments defining the Central American experience, major leaders, and documents of significance in the history of the Central American republics. They will have some understanding of how historians go about their craft, having had an opportunity to analyze many primary sources.

**Tests and/or self-tests:** Students will take map quizzes, the FAQ quiz, and surveys, all accessed through Blackboard.

**Unit/Lessons:** The course is organized in Units/Lessons. Each unit has all the information and due dates required for the assignments.

**Windows 2007 for Dummies or Windows 2003 for Dummies:** If you are unfamiliar with the software you are using, invest in one of these plain and simple guides. You will be held responsible for the very simplest of procedures.

**Written Work:** Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and syntax are important for discussion and for any other work submitted to the instructor, for example, extra credit. They count in the grade as much as content. It is best to write your responses in Microsoft Word, turn on the Spelling and Grammar option under Tools, and pay attention to what Word tells you. On occasion, Word is incorrect, but I know when that happens. After double-checking your written work, copy and paste into the appropriate forum. Posting with errors will lose you points.