

**\*Provisional Syllabus: Subject to Changes\***

**HIST/LALS 1475-401**

**HISTORY OF BRAZIL:  
Slavery, Inequality, Development**

**Fall 2023**

**Prof. Melissa Teixeira**  
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**Mondays/Wednesdays, 1.45pm-3.15pm Eastern Time  
ROOM TBD**

**Office Hours  
College Hall 206F  
TBD**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Brazil is a leading global power. As the world's fifth-largest country, by size and population, and the ninth-largest by GDP, Brazil exerts tremendous influence on international politics and the global economy. Brazil is often in the news for its strides in social welfare, leading investments in the Global South, as host of the World Cup and Olympics, and, most recently, for its political instability. It is also a nation of deep contradictions, in which the myth of racial democracy – the longstanding creed that Brazilian society has escaped racial discrimination – functions alongside pervasive social inequality, rapid deforestation, state violence, and political corruption.

This course examines six centuries of Brazilian history. It highlights the interplay between global events – colonialism, slavery and emancipation, capitalism, and democratization – and the local geographies, popular cultures, and social movements that have shaped this diverse and expansive nation. In particular, the readings will highlight Brazil's place in Latin America and the Lusophone World, as well as the ways in which Brazil stands as a counterpoint to the United States, especially in terms of the legacy of slavery and race relations. The course will conclude with the current political, economic, and public health crises unfolding in Brazil. How has the global rise of populism in recent years impacted Brazil's political climate? What is the impact of COVID-19 in Brazil? How can deep engagement with Brazil's history help us to understand our contemporary moment, in Brazil and beyond?

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**20% Attendance and Class Participation**

Active, thoughtful, and engaged class participation is an important part of your performance in this course. Participation means reading the assigned materials before class meetings, *and* coming to class prepared to raise questions, doubts, opinions, and thoughts on the topics covered. In order to ensure dynamic and productive class discussions, regular attendance is expected. Planned absences should be discussed with Professor Teixeira in advance. More than two absences may impact your participation grade. Students are encouraged to attend office hours in order to prepare assignments and/or review any material.

**5% Map Quiz**

Map quiz to be held **TBD** at the beginning of class. A list of possible places will be distributed one week prior.

**15% Essay #1**

A 3-**page (double spaced)** paper analyzing two primary sources assigned in the first five weeks. Due in hard copy in class and on Canvas on **TBD**.

**20% Midterm**

In-class midterm on **TBD**. You will receive a detailed study guide the week prior to the exam.

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**10% Digital Assignment**

This assignment asks you to read newspaper articles about Brazil in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Use newspaper digital resources available at Penn Libraries. I have created a page on Canvas – **Library Guide** – with direct links to digital newspaper archives that you can access with your Penn library ID. Find 2-3 newspaper articles on Brazil. Write your own **500-word** op-ed response piece on Brazil. What is your assessment of Vargas Era politics? What is the economic outlook for Brazil? How is populism re-making Brazilian politics? What topics were relevant to readers in the United States and why? Ask your own questions: be the journalist! **Due TBD.**

**15% Essay #2**

A **3pp (double spaced)** review essay on one academic essay or book chapter on Brazil, on a topic of your choosing. **Due TBD.**

**15% Group Presentation**

A **15-minute** presentation on contemporary Brazil, on any topic of your choosing. Groups should comprise 3-4 individuals. Each group is required to submit to Canvas the PowerPoint slides with bibliography for the materials consulted in preparation. Visual, audio, etc. media encouraged.

**Note:** Late assignments will be penalized **5pts/day** unless an extension is requested at least **24hours** before the deadline. Please be in touch with Professor Teixeira.

**Note:** To receive a passing grade in this course, students are expected to complete each of the above assignments and attend a majority of classes. If circumstances arise that make it difficult for you to complete any portion of this course, please be in touch as soon as possible. I want to see every student succeed.

**OFFICE HOURS**

Students are highly encouraged to attend office hours. Office hours will be held Mondays, 3.30pm-5.30pm & by appointment at Professor Teixeira's office in College Hall 206F.

Please sign up here <https://calendly.com/mteixeir/office-hours>.  
Or email [mteixeir@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:mteixeir@sas.upenn.edu) to schedule an appointment.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

All required readings are on Canvas or available as Ebooks in the Penn library system. To access readings on Canvas, please go to **Modules** and/or **Course Materials @ Penn Libraries** page.

You may also find it useful to consult the textbook Thomas E. Skidmore's *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (1999), available as an Ebook. A version of this textbook is also accessible here: <https://library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/>

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**DISABILITY POLICY**

University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS). If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling 215.573.9235 or by emailing [disabilityservices@vpul.upenn.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@vpul.upenn.edu). SDS staff members are available by phone and email to answer questions about accessibility and accommodations. Contact SDS directly. All services are confidential.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to be familiar with the Penn's Code of Academic Integrity. You are encouraged to study and discuss course materials with other students, but all submitted assignments should be original and individual work. Please note that an important element of academic integrity is fully and correctly citing the work of others. If you have any questions or concerns about how to properly acknowledge the ideas, words, and research of others, feel free to reach out to me directly.

**COVID PROTOCOLS**

Mask usage and other covid protocols will be announced at the start of the semester, and updated in accordance with University and City of Pennsylvania policy. If necessary, classes may temporarily be moved to Zoom.

**COURSE UNITS & WEEKLY READINGS**

Please prepare readings marked with (M) for Mondays and (W) for Wednesdays

The textbook readings are **optional**, but may be helpful for context

**PART I: COLONIAL BRAZIL**

**WEEK 1**

Introduction: Thinking about Brazil

**Please take the survey quiz on Canvas**

**No readings for this week**

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**WEEK 2**

**Brazil before 1500**

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) Pedro Vaz de Caminha, "There Can Easily be Stamped Upon Them Whatever Belief We Wish to Give Them: The First Letter from Brazil [1500]," in *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*, pp. 43-58. **PDF on Canvas**

**WEEK 3**

**Monday:** Encounter, Conquest, Destruction

**Wednesday:** Life in the "New" World

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) "The Donatarial System," in *Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700*, pp. 13-36. **Ebook**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, introduction & ch. 3, pp. 1-15, 55-88. **Ebook**

**WEEK 4**

**Monday:** Slavery in the "Old" and "New" Worlds

**Wednesday:** Sugar and the Making of a Slave Society

**Map Quiz**

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) "The World of the Engenhos," in *Early Brazil*, pp. 198-233. **Ebook**

(M) "The State of Maranhão: A Letter from Father António Vieira S.J. (1653)," in *Early Brazil*, pp. 289-296. **Ebook**

**Secondary Sources:**

(M) Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, chapter 6, pp. 157-193. **Ebook**

(W) Stuart Schwartz, "Sugar Plantation Labor and Slave Life," in *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery*, chapter 2, pp. 39-63. **PDF on Canvas**

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**WEEK 5**

**Monday:** Century of Gold

**Wednesday:** Revolt

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) "Documents from Brazilian Conspiracies," in *Latin American Independence: An Anthology of Sources*, pp. 67-76. **PDF on Canvas.**

**PART II: POST-INDEPENDENCE BRAZIL**

**WEEK 6**

**Monday:** Independence

**Wednesday:** Brazil's Tropical Monarchy

**Readings:**

**Secondary Sources:**

Caitlin A. Fitz, "A Stalwart Motor of Revolutions:" An American Merchant in Pernambuco, 1817-1825," *The Americas*, vol. 66, no. 1 (2008): 35-62. **PDF on Canvas**

Emilia Viotti da Costa, "Independence: the building of a nation," in *The Brazilian Empire: Myths & Histories*, chapter 1, pp. 1-23. **PDF on Canvas**

**WEEK 7**

**Monday:** Coffee & Brazil's "Second" Slavery

**Wednesday:** Film Discussion

**Essay # 1 due in class Wednesday**

**Watch:**

(W) *Burn! [Queimada!]*, a film by Gillo Pontecorvo (Italy, 1969). **On Canvas.**

**Readings:**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Natalie Zemon Davis, *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Fiction*, chapter 3. **PDF on Canvas.**

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**WEEK 8**

**Monday:** Abolition

**Wednesday:** Politics of Disease Control

**Readings:**

**Primary Sources:**

(M) Machado de Assis, "Father against Mother," in *A Chapter of Hats and Other Stories*, translated by John Gledson, pp. 255-270. **PDF on Canvas.**

(M) Joaquim Nabuco, *Abolitionism: The Brazilian Antislavery Struggle*, translated and edited by Robert Conrad, chapters 1, 15. **PDF on Canvas.**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Sidney Chalhoub, "The Politics of Disease Control: Yellow Fever and Race in Nineteenth Century Rio de Janeiro," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 25 no. 3 (1993): 441-463.

(W) Sidney Chalhoub, "Revisiting Brazil's Public Health Rebellion (A Century Before Bolsonaro)," *Americas Quarterly* (April 2020), accessed: <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/revisiting-brazils-public-health-rebellion-a-century-before-bolsonaro/>

**WEEK 9:**

**Monday:** Brazil in the Global Economy

**Wednesday:** Rubber Booms and Busts

**Readings**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) "The Industrial Future of the Amazon Valley," *The Economist* (3 May 1913), p. 1032-1033. **PDF on Canvas.**

(W) N.H. Witt, "Northern Brazil and Amazon Rubber," *The Economist* (24 May 1913), p. 1294. **PDF on Canvas.**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*, pp. 1-18, 202-219, 264-275, 294-342. **PDF on Canvas.**

**WEEK 10:**

**Monday:** Catch-up & Review

**Wednesday:** Midterm

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**WEEK 11:**

**Monday:** The Vargas Era – Dictatorship and Development

**Wednesday:** The Vargas Era – Populism and Citizenship

**Readings**

**Primary Sources:**

(M) “Why the Estado Novo?” & “Ordinary People: Five Lives Affected by Vargas-Era Reforms,” in *The Brazil Reader*, pp. 206-221. **PDF on Canvas.**

(W) Getúlio Vargas, “Vargas’s Suicide Letter, 1954,” in *The Brazil Reader*, pp. 222-224. **PDF on Canvas.**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*, introduction & chapter 2, pp. 1-17, 41-96. **Ebook**

**WEEK 12:**

**Monday:** The Modernist City – Brasília

**Wednesday:** Military Dictatorship

**Digital Assignment due in class on Wednesday**

**Readings**

**Primary Sources:**

(W) “Memorandum from Director of Central Intelligence Colby to Secretary of State Kissinger, 11 April 1974,” in *Foreign Relations of the United State*. Accessed <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve11p2/d99>

(W) Abdias do Nascimento, “The Myth of Racial Democracy,” in *The Brazil Reader*, pp. 379-380. **PDF on Canvas.**

**Secondary Sources:**

(W) Victoria Langland, “Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and Revolution in 1968 Brazil,” in *In from the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War*, pp. 308-349. **PDF on Canvas**

**WEEK 13**

**Monday:** Dictatorship and Counterculture: Music

**Wednesday: NO CLASS – IT’S A “FRIDAY” ON PENN’S CALENDAR**

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**PART III: CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL**

**WEEK 14**

**Monday:** Transition to Democracy

**Wednesday:** Inflation & Hyperinflation

**Essay #2 due in class on Wednesday**

**Readings**

**Secondary Sources:**

(M) Bryan McCann, *Hard Times in the Marvelous City: From Dictatorship to Democracy in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro* (Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 1-76, 121-197. **Ebook**

(W) Thomas E. Skidmore, "Brazil's Persistent Income Inequality: Lessons from History," *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 46, n. 2 (2004): pp. 133-150.

**Essay #2 due in class on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**

**WEEK 15**

**Monday:** Presentations

**Wednesday:** Presentations

**Don't forget to upload to Canvas your PowerPoint slides with bibliography!**

**WEEK 16**

**Monday:** Brazil Today

**Secondary Sources:**

(M) Recent news coverage, TBD

(M) Melissa Teixeira, "Health care as a human right: Reflections on Brazil's 1988 Constitution during a Pandemic" <https://histecon.fas.harvard.edu/climate-loss/brazil/index.html>

**HAVE A WONDERFUL WINTER BREAK!!**