



**CUL 2208-09 Central America: Politics, Culture, and
Language (3.0 Units) Summer 2019**

Meets Wednesdays 6:00pm-10:15pm

June 26th-August 7th, 2019. Class Location: St.Mary's Hall Room 113

Instructor : Natashia López-Gómez, M.Ed.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION : This course examines the economic and political relationship between the United States and Central America. Historical and current events will be discussed. Some of the topics to be addressed are: The civil wars in El Salvador (1980-1992) Nicaragua (1979-1990), and Guatemala (1960-1996); and the U.S. involvement in these wars including the funding and training of death squads. The role of Catholic Social Teaching during the civil wars, especially as it pertains to El Salvador and the work of Saint Oscar Romero, human trafficking, for profit immigration detention centers, and the current border crisis. *Fulfills Cultural Diversity Requirement. Fulfills Culture and Language requirement.*

REQUIRED READING:

- A History of Violence: Living and Dying in Central America by Óscar Martínez
ISBN: 978-1-78478-171-2
- *Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community (this small booklet can be purchased at the NDNU bookstore).*
- *Weekly electronic readings. Links provided on Moodle.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES : Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Understand the economic and political factors behind the United States' interventions in Central America.

2. Understand the forces driving Central Americans to leave their homes and put their lives at risk to get to the U.S. border are deeply rooted in Central America's history of inequality and violence, in which the United States has long played a defining role.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the civil wars in Central America.
4. Engage in discussions on current political issues between the United States and Central America such as the border crisis, for profit immigration detention centers, and human trafficking.
5. Discuss current calls to action, proposed solutions, and ways to assist Central America with humanitarian efforts.

The learning objectives above cover the following institutional learning outcomes:

- *Engage in and absorb diverse perspectives and appreciate and value human diversity*
- *Enjoy a full college experience and engage in a variety of out-of-the-classroom experiences, including clubs, student government, sports, community-based learning, cultural events, and recreational activities*
- *Consider alternative systems of thought impartially, recognizing and assessing assumptions, implications, and practical consequences*
- *Choose and narrow oral presentation topics appropriately for audience and occasion, keeping in mind the time and place allotted for the presentation*
- *Generate prose that is relatively free of mechanical errors and uses format and documentation style appropriate to the discipline*
- *Use full, credible, appropriate, and convincing evidence in support of a writing project's contentions and assertions*

CLASS ATTENDANCE: The nature of accelerated classes requires a more stringent absence policy since even one absence may significantly impact achievement of course learning objectives. Therefore, for all seven (7) week classes if a student misses more than one week's worth of in-class time (or its equivalent) he or she will be assigned a failing grade for the course unless the student officially drops or withdraws from the course. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the drop or withdrawal. See the Refund Policy for conditions under which some portion of the charges for the course may be reversed.

LEARNING and OTHER DISABILITIES: The Disability Resource Center (DRC) works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure an equitable and inclusive environment for students with disabilities at Notre Dame de Namur University. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) be provided with support for equal access to academic courses and campus life by providing reasonable accommodations. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the DRC as soon as

possible at drc@ndnu.edu or by phone at 650-508-3670. Accommodations are not provided retroactively.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: One of the highlights of engaging in critical academic discussions is the use of real-world experiences from students' personal and/or professional lives. However, it is imperative that students not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature.

SYLLABUS UPDATES : *The format of the course, including assignments and due dates, is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Exam 1	July 3rd	50
Exam 2	July 17th	50
Exam 3	July 31st	50
Article Reflections 1	June 26th	10
Article Reflections 2	July 3rd	10
Article Reflections 3	July 10th	10
Article Reflections 4	July 17th	10
Article Reflections 5	July 24th	10
Final Exam	August 7th	30
Call to Action Presentation	July 31st or August 7th	20
Total Points Possible		250

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Article Reflections Guidelines

All Article Reflections must be computer generated, with 1.5 inch spacing and 1 inch margins. They must be **at least** three paragraphs long (one paragraph min. for each of the articles you choose) ,and a maximum of three pages (one page maximum for each article you choose). A title page is not necessary. Hard copies must be submitted in class on the due date. Each Article Reflections assignment covers three articles.

All articles are arranged by week, and posted on Moodle. You must click on the article title to open each reading. Please note that some articles may include images to scroll through in addition to text.

For each Article Reflections Assignment you must:

- 1- *First, read all of the assigned articles for the week in question. For example, the first Reflection is due June 26th, 2019 (week one), so you first must read all of the links provided under the Week One heading on Moodle.*
- 2- *Next, select 3 of the articles to reflect on.*
- 3- *Write at least 1 paragraph on each of the articles. For a total of at least 3 paragraphs. **Do not write all 3 paragraphs on one article.** You must reflect on at least 3 different articles for each assignment.*
- 4- *Use the KWL format in your reflections. K= KNOW. What did you already know about the topic of your article before you started reading? W= WANT to know/WONDER. As you read the article, what did it make you want to learn more about? What did it leave you wondering? L=LEARN. What did you learn from the article?*

Things you should not do when writing your reflections:

1. *Do not write a summary of the article without the KWL steps mentioned above. If you only provide a summary, you are merely regurgitating what you read. This is not exercising critical thinking.*
2. *Do not copy and paste long sections of the articles just to take up space.*
3. *Do not write all three paragraphs on one article.*

GRADE POINT CONVERSION

A 250-235

B 234-219

C 218-203

D 202-187

F 186 or less

STUDENT WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS:

29.75 hours in class

51.25 hours writing

50 hours reading/research

4 hours exams/quizzes

Weekly Lecture Schedule

I will do my best to stick to the following timeline, but I reserve the right to make changes as needed.

Week 1 June 26th, 2019

Lecture Topic 1 :Teaching Central America; A Movement Lecture Topic 2: El Salvador Part One

- *Central America Quiz: Test your knowledge*
- *Central America Map Activity*
- *The Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992)*
- *Saint Óscar Romero*
- *The Murder of American Nuns (1980)*
- *Catholic Social Teaching*
- *Farabundo Marti*
- *Maria Serrano*
- *Charlie Clements*

Call to Action:

- *Drop the I-Word Campaign*

Week 2 July 3rd, 2019

Lecture Topic: El Salvador Part Two

- *Casas de Carton by Los Guaraguao*
- *The Massacre of Jesuit Scholars and Priests (1989)*
- *The Massacre at the village of El Mozote (1981)*
- *Film Screening: Voces Inocentes (Innocent Voices)*

Call to Action:

- *WOLA's Beyond the Wall Toolkits and Resources*
- *Samaritan House*

Week 3 July 10th, 2019

Lecture Topic: Guatemala

- *The Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996)*
- *Guatemala Syphilis Experiment (1946-1948)*

- *Rigoberta Menchu*
- *The United Fruit Company*
- *Film Screening: Frontline; Trafficked in America*

Call to Action:

- *Know your Rights Toolkit*

Week 4 July 17th, 2019

Lecture Topic: Honduras

- *U.S. Occupation of*
- *Berta Isabel Cáceres*
- *Elvie Alvarado*
- *San Pedro Sula*
- *The 2009 Coup*

Call to Action:

- *The Berta Cáceres Act Toolkit*

Week 5 July 24th, 2019

Lecture Topic: Nicaragua

- *The Nicaraguan Civil War (1979-1990)*
- *The Somoza Regime*
- *The Sandinistas*
- *Ben Linder*

Call to Action:

- *The Sisters of Notre dame de Namur in Nicaragua*
- *NDNU's Alternative Spring Break options*

Week 6 July 31st, 2019

Lecture Topics: The Border Crisis, For-profit Detention Centers, Immigration Reform

- *Call to Action Presentations*

Call to Action:

- *Unlock your Pension; Dump the Prison Stock*
- *Detention Watch Network*

Week 7 August 7th, 2019

- *Course Review*
- *Final Exam*
- *Call to Action Presentations*

About your Instructor:

Natashia López-Gómez completed her Master's degree in Education from Harvard University (1994) and her Bachelor of Arts in Chicano Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (1992). She is of Chicana (Mexican-American) heritage, and is the first in her family to graduate from college. Prior to teaching she held several positions in both government and non-profit agencies throughout the bay area. Some of these agencies included: San Mateo County Human Services Agency, San Francisco District Attorney's Office; and the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County. She is published in several journals and anthologies including *In Other Words; Literature by Latinas of the United States* (1994). In 2009, the Women of Color in Action Network honored her as an outstanding mentor. She is an advocate for special needs children and their families and has been teaching at NDNU since 2006.

Syllabus addendum:

I _____ (print name) understand that my instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. This includes assignments and grading. It is the student's responsibility to check NDNU email and Moodle for any updates from the instructor.

_____ **(Student Signature) Date:** _____