Course Syllabus

Historical and Contemporary Social Change in Bolivia
LACB-3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Bolivia: Multiculturalism, Globalization, and Social Change

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description
In this interdisciplinary seminar, students explore Bolivia’s complex history and current realities to contextualize the program’s theme of community well-being (or “vivir bien”). Students examine the encounter between indigenous groups and the Spaniards; the psychological impact of conquest, colonization and the extractivist mentality; and histories of resistance and resilience. With 36 ethnic groups, the largest indigenous population in Latin America, and the first indigenous president in the Americas, Bolivia provides a unique site in which to consider these issues. Students will explore the influence of indigenous cosmovision and systems of knowledge in the articulations of new visions of social change in Bolivia. Finally, students will consider the interplay between multiculturalism and globalization, including a critical examination of western models of “helping.” This course includes lectures by leading intellectuals and leaders of social movements in Cochabamba, Sucre, and Potosí.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Identify, describe, and analyze major historical, cultural, and political factors that shape Bolivia’s current realities with particular reference to colonization and the extractivist mentality.
- Examine and assess the pressures exerted by historically marginalized groups for greater inclusion, recognition, and autonomy within Bolivia’s current social and political transformations.
- Evaluate the concepts of multiculturalism and globalization as they relate to Bolivia’s foreign-domestic relationships.
- Discuss how Western notions of aid and help intersect with Andean cultures and worldviews..

Language of Instruction

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This course is taught in Spanish.

**Course Schedule**

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.*

**Module 1: The Psychology of Colonialism and the Extractivist Mentality**

In this module, students will examine how and why Bolivia went from being the richest and most promising country in South America at the time of its independence from Spain to the poorest country in the region just 40 years later, where it remains to this day. They will explore how Bolivia’s extractivist mentality affects the psychology and well-being of the nation, its communities, and its families. In addition to lectures in Cochabamba, students will visit the depressed city of Potosí (the 3rd largest city in the world during the colonial period) and see firsthand how extractivism and the colonial legacy currently affect workers, families, and children, focusing in particular on migration and child labor.

**Session 1: Understanding Bolivia’s Challenges: An Overview (Orientation)**

**Session 2: Course Overview**

Required Reading:

**Session 3: The Legacy of Potosí and the Mining Mentality**

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

**Session 4: The Devil’s Miner: Extractivism and Child Labor**

Required Reading:

**Session 5: Child Labor in Cochabamba’s Cemetery**

**Session 6: Racism, Ethnicity, and Conflict**

**Session 7: Women and Migration**

**Session 8: Visit to Potosí Mine**

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Session 9: The Plundering of Potosí

Session 10: The Current Role of NGOs in the Lives of Mining Families

Session 11: Student-Led Discussion and Analysis of Module I

Module 2: Oppressed Groups: Resistance, Revitalization, and Resilience
This module explores the ways in which Bolivia’s marginalized groups have pushed back against colonial and neocolonial oppression. Students will learn about the historical and contemporary resilience of campesinos, indigenous groups, Afro-Bolivians, women, and laborers who have found powerful and creative ways to resist oppression and to revitalize their communities and cultural identity.

Session 1: Module Overview

Session 2: Pushing Back Against the Globalized Music Industry: Teaching Folkloric Music as Youth Empowerment and Revitalizing Community

Required Reading:

Session 3: A Case Study in Ethnodevelopment: Revitalizing Andean Communities through Ancient Weaving Techniques

Required Reading:

Session 4: Museo Etnografico

Session 5: Campesino & Indigenous Resistance in Bolivia

Required Readings:
  - Pages 337-352 are optional.

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Session 6: Resilience in Afro-Bolivian communities

Session 7: Women and Labor: The Struggle to Legitimize Domestic Workers

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:

Session 8: The Role of Labor and Social Movements in Bolivia

Session 9: Discussion and Analysis of Module 2

Module 3: The Foreign-Domestic Dance
In this module students will explore the complex and tenuous relationship between Bolivia and the United States. Students will consider US economic policies, the War on Drugs, US-trained military dictators, foreign aid, development projects, and issues related to NGOs. Students will be encouraged to make sense of their role as young people wanting to do right in an increasingly globalized world. To this end, we will explore how Western notions of “helping,” (as helping or aid is conceptualized in lay terms, psychology and social work), must be considered critically in the context of cross-cultural interactions and difference.

Session 1: Module Overview

Session 2: A Critical Look at Western Models of “Helping”

Required Readings:

Session 3: Resisting Military Dictatorships

Session 4: Resisting Neoliberal Economic Policy

Required Reading:

Session 5: Cocaleros Push Back Against the US War on Drugs

Session 6: Decolonization Efforts under Evo Morales

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Required Reading:

Session 7: Bolivia and Home: Connecting the Dots and Telling the Story

Session 8: Discussion and Analysis of Module 3

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:
- Module Reflection Papers: Students are required to write two critical reflection papers, one at the end of each of each course module (for 2 out of the 3 modules). These papers must address the main theme of the module by drawing on lectures, field visits, and readings.
- Leading of Group Analysis and Discussion: For each of the three modules in this course, a group of students will be prepare and lead a stimulating class discussion about the concepts and controversies introduced in this module, referencing readings, lectures, and field visits. Students must submit thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion questions ahead of time for approval.
- Participation: This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions.

Assessment:
Module Reflection Paper 1 35%
Module Reflection Paper 2 35%
Lead Group Module Discussion 20%
Participation 10%

Grading Scale
94-100% A Excellent
90-93% A-
87-89% B+
84-86% B Above Average
80-83% B-
77-79% C+
74-76% C Average
70-73% C-
67-69% D+
64-66% D Below Average
below 64 F Fail

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Alternative Forms to Written Assignments
In this course, as for all courses on this program, students are invited to submit some or all assignments in formats other than the traditional written paper. Alternative (or nontraditional) formats could include photography, video, music, creative writing, painting etc. Students must obtain prior approval from the AD for nontraditional formats and set up clear criteria for insuring academic rigor.

Video Students
Students who plan to produce their ISP in video format are required to submit your journal either partially or completely in video format.

Expectations and Policies
- Assignments: Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation, and presentation of evidence.
- Excursions: Many of the visits will be to underprivileged areas, challenging students to understand how historical oppression and public policies affect the lives of peoples today. Students are expected to be respectful and curious as they engage with these experiences.
- Readings: Students are responsible for all of the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear in class. The readings will help place the classes in context, engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen student knowledge of particular issues discussed in class.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

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