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 complexities and pressures (resistance) exerted by historically marginalized groups for greater inclusion, recognition, and autonomy within Bolivia’s current social and political transformations.
- Discuss and evaluate the concepts of multiculturalism and globalization as they relate to Bolivia’s foreign-domestic relationships.
- Examine North-South relationships as they relate to Bolivia, and examine how western notions of aid and helping intersect with other cultures and worldviews, including Andean cosmovision.
**Language of Instruction**
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. The trauma of U.S.-trained military dictatorships in Bolivia will also be examined. Students will be encouraged to make sense of their role as young North Americans wanting to do right in an increasingly globalized world.

**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:
  or (in Spanish)

Recommended Reading:

**Session 4: Child Labor in Cochabamba’s Cemetery**
Discussion with children workers in Cochabamba’s cemetery

**Session 5: Trauma and Resilience: Bolivia’s Military Dictatorships**
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Session 6: Those Who Leave: Emigration from Bolivia
Lecturers: Ester Wilka y René Crespo, returned Bolivian emigrants

Required Reading:

Session 7: Racism, Ethnicity, and Conflict

Session 8: Afro Bolivian History and Resilience
Lecturer: Members of Mauchi, the AfroBolivian Community in Cochabamba

Session 9: The Devil’s Miner: Extractivism and Child Labor
Lecturer: Documentary Film “The Devil`s Miner” and AD facilitated discussion

Required Reading:

Session 10: Visit to Potosí Mine
Lecturer: Ex-Miner of Potosi

Recommended Reading

Session 9: The Plundering of Potosí
Lecturer: Official Tour Guide, Casa de la Moneda

Session 10: The Current Role of NGOs in the Lives of Mining Families
Lecturer: Director of NGO Wayna Pacha

Session 11: The Plundering of Potosi
Lecturer: Official Tour Guide, Casa de la Moneda

Session 12: The Current Role of NGOs in the Lives of Mining Families
Lecturer: Director of NGO Wayna Pacha
Session 13: Student-Led Discussion and Analysis of Module I

Module 2: Towards Decolonization: Resistance 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 cultures. Students will also explore the complex and tenuous historical and contemporary relationship between Bolivia and the West (including the U.S.) in the form of neoliberal economic policies, the U.S. War on Drugs, development projects and social responsible business models. Students will be encouraged to make sense of their role as young North Americans wanting to do right in an increasingly globalized world.

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: Historical Indigenous Resistance and Resilience in Bolivia

Required Readings:

Recommended Reading:


**Session 5: Women and Labor: Domestic Workers Push for Legitimization**
Lecturer: Leaders of Cochabamba’s Domestic Workers Union


**Recommended Readings**


**Session 6: Maria Auxiliadora Women’s Collective Property and Living Community**
Lecturer: Leny Olivera, Researcher, Democracy Center

Required reading:


**Session 7: Social and Worker’s Movements in Bolivia**

**Session 8: Las Imillas Alternative Urban Women’s Community**

**Session 9: Cocaleros Push Back Against the U.S. War on Drugs**

**Session 10: Auto-decolonization**
Lecturer: Documentary Film “Autodescolonization” and discussion with filmmaker Ismael Saavedra

**Session 11: Decolonization Efforts under Evo Morales**


Session 12: Discussion and Analysis of Module 2

Evaluation and Grading Criteria
Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

A more detailed description with specific grading criteria will be made available for each of the assignments below.

Description of Assignments:
- **Oral History Module Analysis Paper**: Students are required to conduct a life history interview with a Bolivian and write a 6 page paper analyzing and drawing connections between the interviewee’s life experiences and specific knowledge learned about Bolivia from the major historical, political, social and/or psychological themes presented in either Module 1 or Module 2 of this course. These papers must critically 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 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, including readings, lectures, and field visits. Students must prepare well-thought out discussion questions ahead of time for approval.
- **Participation**: This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions.

Assessment:
- Oral History Module Analysis Paper  60%
- Module Discussion Preparation & Facilitation  30%
- Participation  10%

Grading Scale  
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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.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.