

Tompkins Cortland Community College  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: HSTY/POSC 260**

**Year: 2023-2024**

**Course Title: Topics in Modern Latin America**

**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

### **Course Description**

This travel course introduces students to the modern history and politics of Latin America. Instructors select a nation to survey, for example Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, or Honduras etc. Students travel to the designated country as a group, and gain practical experience in the modern historical, political, social, economic, and religious climate by touring in both urban and rural areas. HSTY/POSC 260 can be used to fulfill the SUNY General Education Social Science or the Other World Civilizations requirement. Elementary Spanish skills highly recommended. Significant additional costs. Prerequisites: ENGL 100; instructor permission; RDNG 116 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in MATH 090 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (1 Lec., 6 Lab.) Occasionally offered December-January and other vacation periods.

### **Course Context/Audience**

This course bolsters TC3 initiatives to expand practical overseas education opportunities for our students, as well as students from other partner schools. Offering students a choice of HSTY or POSC designation, it would be suitable for liberal arts transfer for students interested in education, international business and political affairs, and general community interest. This course may be used to satisfy the SUNY General Education Other World Civilizations requirement, and is often offered as part of a Learning Community.

### **Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

**Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

**Math:** M1 Taking MATH 090 (if needed) – Course requires limited use of very basic mathematical skills.

**Reading:** R4 Before taking this course, students must satisfactorily complete RDNG 116 or have assessment indicating that no reading course was required.

### **Course Goals**

The goal of this travel course is to provide students with structured practical experience in observing and understanding the functioning modern world outside of a purely domestic American context. Visiting homes, farms, clinics, businesses, open marketplaces, religious sites, archaeological parks, and natural preserves, students will have a first-hand encounter

with modern Latin American nations. Students will be gathering information to compare and contrast their collective experiences in Latin America with their life state-side.

### Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
The student will be able to explain and apply historical understanding to the contemporary issues in the nation.	100%
The student will participate in class discussions of reading materials	25%
The student will participate in group discussions each day of his/her observations and discoveries.	100%
The student will organize and execute an oral presentation on a chosen field topic while in country.	10%
The student will conduct an interview with a resident of the nation.	10%
The student will keep a journal of experiences and observations.	100%
Note: Because student mastery of the knowledge, skills and understanding of individual objectives overlap, the sum of the amounts of class time assigned to the objectives exceeds 100%.	

### General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others</li> </ul>	<p>Foreign travel challenges all notions we have of ourselves and our world. Students will need to critically think of the strengths and weaknesses of their current modes of living and thinking. Students should have both structured and unstructured time while overseas to create time for personal discovery. Faculty should encourage interactions with local people in all manners to assure engagement not withdrawal.</p> <p>Pre-trip readings on directed topics of both personal and general interest will need to be created based on the country/countries to be visited. Directed discussions and presentations are key to this. A directed research project or focus is recommended. Research prior to the trip will allow for a better overseas experience. Students will be able to weigh the value of the information presented versus their own perceptions. Discrepancies will be noted, and will provide valuable “teachable moments” for faculty.</p> <p>Students will put their own lives in perspective and note the similarities and differences with lives of those overseas. The instructor should provide time for interviews and teamwork with the local people to draw them out in discussing their modern reality and to urge students to reciprocate.</p> <p>Preparing students with a general report on the conditions on the ground through readings and discussions will make the trip experience more dynamic. Walking a mile in the shoes of an international host will allow students to challenge pre-conceptions, myths, and propaganda about the nature of life and living abroad.</p>

SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li> <li>➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will have extensive readings and group discussions on how the USA and Americans are viewed and how they are seen as privileged in comparison to other peoples. The instructor should program time for role playing, review the power of stereotyping and follow up with intensive conversations on expectations students have of the trip and of each other, as well as to review how they will be perceived overseas.</p> <p>Students will have a practical understanding of their life in the USA and will be reading in preparation for their overseas experiences and learn basic social norms to be expected of them. Living, travelling and working with our international partner hosts will allow for a closer examination of the perception of Americans overseas. Students will experience local society, family life, gender roles, economic reality, etc.</p> <p>Students will investigate the impact of the global economy and trade network on the nation(s) visited to prepare for what they will see firsthand. Once in country, topics of international trade, globalization, trade agreements, tourism and remittance dollars will be investigated and experienced first-hand.</p> <p>Students will be preparing to enter a different culture and region through readings and discussions to assess their carbon footprint and standards of living to understand the impact they have on the world. As a travel course, students will be visiting various communities and regions to review the degradation of the environment, impact of globalization, and review varying responses to pollution, population growth, and competition for resources.</p>

### Instructional Methods

The course utilizes group discussions of assigned readings before departure. In addition, materials will be assigned and monitored by the faculty (scholarly articles in journals, newspaper articles, government reports, etc.). Once in country, students will travel as assigned and led by their instructional team. The instructors will present lectures on assigned topics, provide directed research advice, screen interview questions, facilitate daily discussions, and review student behavior and performance. Students will be directed by the instructors on various site visits, to clinics, marketplaces etc.

### Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Oral presentations to the class, group discussions	10-20%
Interviews of denizens of the country, joint travel and work projects as required	10-30%
Daily Journal of activities, perceptions and reflections	20-40%
Post trip analysis essay	10-40%
Attendance at classroom sessions, providing all needed paperwork	10-20%
Participation while in country	10-40%

**Text(s) - (This list is highly variable depending on nation(s) to be visited and should be adjusted accordingly.)**

A Short History of Guatemala, Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., Latest Edition,  
Current periodical literature from the previous 6 months regarding all relative topics: political, social, economic, religious, foreign relations, ecology, demographics. This will be a blend of scholarly and popular literature. The goal will be to provide students with discussion topics using popular weeklies (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, *The Nation*) as well as *NY Times*, *Christian Science Monitor* et al, and scholarly articles from *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnology and Foreign Affairs*. Current events topics will be paramount to cover before travel. Directed readings from Central American Encyclopedias on topics such as: Maya, Guatemala City, Quiche Province, Peonage, Mestizo etc. Each student will report back to the class on their directed readings.

### **Bibliography**

The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation, Greg Grandin, © 2000, Duke University Press.

Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process, Susanne Jonas, © 2000, Westview Press.

The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and US Power, Edelberto Rivas Torres and Susanne Jonas, © 2001, Westview Press.

Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, © 1952-1954, Nick Callather and Piero Gleijeses.

I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchu.

Fodor's Guatemala (Latest edition).

Lonely Planet Guatemala (Latest edition).

The Rough Guide to Guatemala (Latest edition).

Roads to Change in Maya Guatemala, John Palmer Hawkins and Walter Randolph Adams.

In Focus Guatemala: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture, Trish O'Kane, © 1999.

### **Other Learning Resources**

#### **Audiovisual**

There is a multitude of resources on Latin American topics, including immigration, multi-national corporations, tourism and emigration, NAFTA, The Cold War, Land use, tourism, and poverty. In addition, Cornell University has a large lending library of Latin American films as well as speakers on current events.

#### **Electronic**

Check with the TC3 research librarians for the latest information and assistance on accessing sources.

#### **Other**

Local NGOs are active in Latin America and can be excellent resources, OXFAM, Habitat for Humanity, etc.

The TC3 librarians will provide bibliographic instruction, help with assignments, etc.