History of the Cuban Revolution(s), 1898 to Today (HIST3826R)
Mon-Wed, 3:35 PM - 5:30 PM, PAC-2, Spring 2010
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Cuba has an impact on world affairs and culture completely disproportionate to its size and population. This is true not only in the political sphere but also in such varied areas as music, sports, and medicine. This course will look at elements of continuity and change in three revolutionary movements: the nineteenth-century struggle against slavery and Spanish colonialism, which ended with the U.S. occupation of 1898; a revolutionary anti-dictatorial upsurge in the 1930s, and the socialist revolution of 1959. We will examine how the internal dynamics of revolutionary Cuba have developed over the fifty years since 1959 (economic challenges, relations between workers and the State, race relations, changes in the family, art and revolution, generational differences and the role of youth). We will look at the reasons for the half-century of hostility between the United States and Cuba and the possibility of improved relations. We will use film, art, and first-hand accounts, as well as historical and political analysis, to look at the contradictory reality of Cuba today.

Readings

The following required and recommended books are for sale at the bookstore and also on reserve at the library. Other assigned readings will be on the MySLC course page or handed out in class. (See me if you want to do some of the reading in the original Spanish.) All reading must be completed by the date it is assigned below.

Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898
Louis A. Pérez, Jr., The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography
Alejandro de la Fuente, A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba
Ernesto Che Guevara, Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58
Fidel Castro, First and Second Declarations of Havana
Suyatha Fernandes, Cuba Represent! Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures
Isaac Saney, Cuba: A Revolution in Motion

There is no general text for this course, but the following histories and documentary collections may be useful for reference or for getting started on your conference project. All are on reserve at the library for this course:

Louis A. Pérez, Cuba: Between Reform & Revolution (Oxford UP)
Richard Gott, Cuba: A New History (Yale UP, 2004)
Short papers

I. Biography/autobiography paper. These are short (4-5 page) papers on the role in Cuban revolutionary history of the men and women listed below. The papers are due at different times through the semester, at which time you will also report briefly to the class on the individual you have chosen. You can propose another biography subject, but it must be approved by me, via email, before the names are divided up the second week of class. In most cases, your most important source will be a biography, autobiography or interviews; most of which are available in English.

Esteban Montejo (2/3-2/10)
Antonio Maceo (2/3-2/10)
*Julio Antonio Mella (2/22)
*Antonio Guiteras (2/22)
Maria de los Reyes “Reyita” (2/24)
Haydée Santamaria (3/3)
Frank País (3/3)
Armando Hart (3/10)
Enrique Oltuski (3/10)
Camilo Cienfuegos (3/10)
Víctor Dreke (4/7)
Carlos Franqui (4/7)
Celia Sánchez (4/14)
Vilma Espín (4/14)
Harry Villegas (4/21)
Reinaldo Arenas (4/21)
*best biographies available only in Spanish

II. “Opposing voices” papers. Each team of 2-3 students (at least one of whom reads Spanish) will collaborate on a short (5-6 page) paper analyzing the Cuban and US press accounts of controversial episodes of the early 1960s:

Agrarian reform law, 1959 (3/31)
Trials and executions, 1959 (3/31)
Popular militias, 1959-60 (3/31)
Nationalization US properties, 1960 (4/7)
Relations with Catholic Church, 1960-61 (4/7)

Class Schedule

Week 1. (A week). THREE revolutions?

Jan 25 – Introduction
    Film screening of “Lucia,” Tuesday, Jan. 26, 7:00-9:30pm, room TBA
Jan. 27: Assignment – come to class with three discussion questions on “Lucia”
Week 2. (B week). Revolutionary War
   Feb. 3 reading: *Insurgent Cuba*, 139-202
   Bios: Esteban Montejo, Antonio Maceo (to discuss Feb. 3; papers due Feb. 10)

Week 3. (A week). Views of 1898
   Feb. 8 reading: Pérez, *The War of 1898*, all
   Feb. 10 reading: Jose Martí, Letters of May 2, & May 18, 1895; essay “Our America”
   Alice Wexler, “Pain and Prejudice in the Santiago campaign of 1898,” in *JISWA*, 18, 1 (Feb. 1976), 59-73

   Conference project: A one-paragraph conference proposal and short initial biography (minimum 2 books, 2 articles) due in class Feb. 10

Week 4. (B week). Organizing and action in the 1930s
   Feb. 15 reading: De la Fuente, *Nation for All*, 1-171

Week 5. (A week). 1933 Revolution and “Government of 100 Days”
   Feb. 22 reading: *State and Revolution*, 55-148
   Bios: Julio Antonio Mella, Antonio Guiteras
   Feb. 24 reading: Julio Antonio Mella, “Where is Cuba Headed?”
   Three views of the 1933 revolution, Chomsky et al, *Cuba Reader*, 274-286
   Bio: Maria de los Reyes

Week 6. (B week). Moncada: Opening Guns of the 1959 revolution
   March 1 reading: *Nation for All*, 210-255
   March 3 reading: Fidel Castro, *History Will Absolve Me*
   Bios: Haydée Santamaria, Frank País

Week 7. (A week). Revolutionary guerrilla war
   March 8 reading: Guevara, *Episodes*, all
   March 10 bios: Armando Hart, Enrique Oltuski, Camilo Cienfuegos

   Conference project: Working bibliography due in class March 10

Have a nice spring break!

Week 8. (B week). Rebels in power
   March 29 reading: Castro, *First and Second Declarations of Havana; Guevara, Socialism and Man*
   March 31 reading: *Nation for All*, 259-316

Week 9. (A week). Conflict with the United States
   April 5 film screening: “Memories of Underdevelopment”
   April 7 reading: Saney, *Cuba: Revolution in Motion*, 151-176
Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 109-169
Bios: Víctor Dreke, Carlos Franqui

**Week 10. (B week). Women and the Cuban revolution**
April 12 film screening: “Portrait of Teresa”
April 14 reading: Vilma Espin on early history of FMC
*Revolution in Motion*, 90-121 (recommended)
Bios: Vilma Espin, Celia Sánchez

**Week 11. (A week). Cuba and the Soviet Union: Foreign policy and cultural politics**
April 19 film screening: “Strawberry and Chocolate”
April 21 reading: Blight, *San and Luminous Days*, 97-119
*Revolution in Motion*, 122-150
Bios: Harry Villegas, Reinaldo Arenas

**Week 12 (B week). “Special Period” of the 1990s**
April 26 reading: *Nation for All*, 317-339
*Revolution in Motion*, 740
April 28 reading, Fernandez, *Cuba Represent!* all

**Week 13. (A week) Cuba post-Fidel: Issues of contention**
May 3 reading: *Revolution in Motion*, 41-89

Rough drafts of conference papers due in class May 3 (mandatory for first-year students, optional for others)

**Week 14. (B week). Conference papers**

Final drafts of conference papers due in Matilde’s office Tuesday, May 11 by 5pm