Course name: U.S.-Cuban Relations, Past and Present
Course number: POLI 2004 HACS
Programs offering course: Study in Havana
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description
This class explores the evolution of U.S. - Cuba Relations within the larger context of the Western Hemisphere. Using a combination of History and theories of International Relations the course aims to provide students with an overview of U.S.-Cuban relations from colonial times to the present. Historical data is complemented with current debates to offer an understanding of the new phase of relationships between the two countries that ensue after the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and continues through today.

Learning Objectives
• Learn about Cuba’s geopolitical and historical role in the Western Hemisphere and its relationship to the United States from its era of colonial independence from Spain through the present era of truncated diplomacy.
• Understand current political relations between student’s home and host countries utilizing a method of historical analysis.
• Provide students with knowledge of issues relevant to international relations and strategies towards global diplomacy.

Course Prerequisites
This course has no prerequisites.

Methods of Instruction
Methods of instruction for the class include lectures, debates, small and class group discussions, documentary film showings, readings, and written assignments. Students will be expected to come prepared for class discussions by completing weekly readings and assignments prior to each class. Students should be actively engaged in class discussions and ready to present informed opinions. Students are expected to respond with respect and civility to viewpoints that may differ from their own in class discussions.

Assessment and Final Grade
Essay assignments 20%
Film review and critique 15%
Research Paper 25%
Oral Presentation of research paper 20%
Class participation 20%

Course requirements

Essay Assignments
Each student will write two short essays on a topic of their choosing related to U.S. Cuban Relations. The first essay will have a theme based on the ideology of extra continental expansion, Cuba’s independence and the US military intervention and will be due on week #4, the second essay will have a theme of the road to Revolution, Batista, the US and the armed struggle and will be due on week #7. Each essay should be 1200-1500 words in length with 1-inch margins, double spaced, and with twelve-point font.

Film review and critique
Each student will write a 2000–2250-word summary critique of Oliver Stone’s film Comandante that will be screened on week #9 of the course. Students may incorporate content from lectures and readings from the course relating to the film. The film review and critique will be due at the beginning of week #11.

Research paper
Each student will write an in-depth research paper on a topic of their choosing relevant to the course themes and readings. Students will determine the topic of their paper in conjunction with the professor. Research papers should be 4-5000 words in length with 1-inch margins, double spaced, and with twelve-point font. Research papers will be due on the last week of class.

Oral presentation
Each student will give a 15-minute oral presentation about their research paper. Students will be given the date and time of their oral presentations in the midterm of the course; all presentations will take place during week #13.

Class participation
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program. Students must notify their instructor, beforehand, if they will miss class for any reason. Students are responsible for any materials covered in class in their absence. Students who miss class for medical reasons must provide the instructor and CIEE’s Center Director appropriate documentation. A make-up opportunity will be provided to the extent that is feasible.
Due to the intensive nature of the course schedule, all unexcused absences will result in a lower final grade for the course. Each unexcused absence will cause 3 percentage points to be dropped from the final grade. For example, a student with an 88% final grade (B+) and 1 unexcused absence will see it reduced to 85% (B).

CIEE program minimum class attendance standards are as outlined below:

- Excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students will be marked absent.
- Students who miss class for personal travel will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up opportunity will be provided.
- An absence will only be considered excused if:
  - A doctor’s note is provided.
  - A CIEE staff member verifies that the student was too ill to attend class.
  - Evidence is provided of a family emergency.
- Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or fieldtrip.
- Persistent absenteeism (students approaching 20% or more of total course hours missed, or violations of the attendance policies in more than one class) will result in a written warning from the CIEE Center Director, notification to the student’s home school, and/or dismissal from the program in addition to a reduction in class grade(s).

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
1.1 Pre-colonial Cuba and the Spanish conquest: a necessary introduction
- Description of content: The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students what Cuba was like when it was “discovered” by the Spanish.
- Pedagogical method: Conference
- List readings due for this day:

1.2 The Ideology of Extra Continental Expansion and the political tendencies in Cuba
- Description of content: The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the strategic considerations of the founding fathers of the United States regarding Cuba’s role in US territorial acquisitions and its early hemispheric hegemonic aspirations. It will also cover the political tendencies in Cuba.
- Pedagogical method: Conference
- List readings due for this day:
Week 2

2.1 Cuban nationalism and the wars of independence
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the role played by the United States during Cuba’s wars of independence.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

2.2 U.S. Cuba Relations through 1898. US Intervention and Nation Building in Cuba from 1898.
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students Cuba’s relevance in the Spanish-American war as well as the Implementation of the Neo-Colonial Model in Cuba.
- **Pedagogical method:** In-class documentary screening (*Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War*, Dir. Daniel Miller, 1999).
- **List readings due for this day:**

Assignment: Essay #1, theme of the first essay: The ideology of extra continental expansion, Cuba’s independence and the US military intervention. Due week 4

Week 3

3.1. Cuba under the Platt Amendment (1902-1934)
- Description of content: The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students what the Platt Amendment and the neo-colonial status really meant for Cuba.
- Pedagogical method: Conference
- List readings due for this day:

3.2. Good Neighbor Diplomacy: Cuban Revolutionary Situation in the 1930s and U.S. Political Intervention.
- Description of content: The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the role played by the United States during the Revolution of the 30’s in Cuba as well as the essence of the good neighbor policy towards Cuba.
- Pedagogical method: Conference
- List readings due for this day:

**Week 4:**

► First Essay due

► Theme of the first essay: The ideology of extra continental expansion, Cuba’s independence and the US military intervention.

Assignment: Essay #2, theme of the second essay: The road to Revolution, Batista, the US and the armed struggle. Due on week 7.

4.1. The origins of the Cuban Revolution. Batista’s dictatorship and its links with the United States
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students what Cuba was like in 40s and 50s and what Batista meant to the United States in terms of its bilateral relations with Cuba.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

4.2. The Triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the U.S. Response. The origins of the blockade.
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students how the United States reacted to the Cuban Revolution as well as the basis of the blockade.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

**Week 5**

5.1. Socialist Cuba in the cold war context. The Bay of Pigs Invasion.
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the Socialist character of the Revolution as well as the US government in the Bay of Pigs Invasion.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

5.2. Mongoose Operation and the Missile Crisis
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the relevance of Mongoose Operation as well as the Missile Crisis.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

**Week 6**

6.1. Consolidation and Institutionalization: Cuba’s Internal Dynamics and the US Reaction.
- **Documentary screening:** *638 ways to kill Castro*
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the main changes that took place in Cuba’s political system and how they influenced the US policy towards the Island.
- **Pedagogical method:** In-class documentary screening (Dir. Dollan Cannell, 2006)
- **List readings due for this day:**
6.2. Consolidation and Institutionalization: Cuba’s Third World Projection
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students how Cuba’s foreign policy influenced the US policy towards Cuba.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

Week 7
- **Second essay due**
- **Theme of the second essay:** The road to Revolution, Batista, the US and the armed struggle.

7.1. From Carter to Reagan: the policy towards Cuba
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the policy of the United States towards Cuba during the Reagan Administration. Special attention will be paid to the differences between the Carter Administration and the Reagan Administration in their policy towards Cuba.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**
7.2. The end of The Bipolar Order International relations. George Bush and the Cuba Democracy Act

- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the changes Cuba suffered after the collapse of the Socialist Bloc and the Soviet Union and the reaction of the United States. Special attention will be paid to the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

**Week 8**

8.1. Cuba and the US during the Clinton Administration: the Rafter’s Crisis and the Migration Agreements

- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the Rafter’s Crisis and the consequent migration agreements between Cuba and the US during the first period of the Clinton Administration.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

8.2. Cuba and the US during the Clinton Administration: The Libertad Act (1996) and the end of the 90s in Cuba
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students what the Libertad Act of 1996 is and its implications for the elimination of the blockade. Attention will be also paid to the Pope’s visit to Cuba in 1998 and the Elián González Case.

- **Pedagogical method:** Conference

- **List readings due for this day:**

**Week 9**

9.1. **The end of the XX Century and Fidel Castro as a political figure. Documentary Screening Comandante.**
- **Description of content:** The students should be able to make a critical analysis of key elements of the documentary that will be asked in class.
- **Pedagogical method:** In-class documentary screening (Dir. Oliver Stone)
- **List readings due for this day:** None. The discussion will depend on the apprehension of previous readings on the part of the students.

9.2. **Cuba and the United States in the Post- September 11th International order: George W. Bush and his policy towards Cuba.**
- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students what 9/11 meant for the bilateral relations between Cuba and the US.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**
- U.S. Congress. Cuba’s Pursuit of Biological Weapons: Fact or Fiction? *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, United States Senate, One Hundred Seven Congress, Second Session, June 5, 2002.

**Week 10**

10.1. Cuba and the United States in the Post-September 11th International order: George W. Bush and his policy towards Cuba.

- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the policy of the United States towards Cuba during the second term of President George W. Bush. Emphasis will be made on Commander in Chief Fidel Castro’s proclamation of 2006.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**

10.2. Cuba and the United States in the Post-September 11th International order: Documentary Screening *Looking for Castro*.

- **Description of content:** The students should be able to make a critical analysis of key elements of the documentary that will be asked in class.
- **Pedagogical method:** In-class documentary screening (Dir. Oliver Stone)
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:** None. The discussion will depend on the apprehension of previous readings on the part of the students.

**Week 11**

- **Summary critique of Oliver Stone’s film *Comandante* due**


- **Description of content:** The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the policy of the United States towards Cuba during the Obama Administration.
- **Pedagogical method:** Conference
- **List readings due for this day:**
  - *Changing Cuba Policy –In the United States National Interest*, Staff trip Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, 2009.

Description of content: The students will discussed if there was a change in the policy of the United States towards Cuba or not. In order to do this, they must come prepared to class

- Pedagogical method: Class discussion

- List readings due for this day:

Week 12


Description of content: The lecture will be focused on explaining to the students the policy of the United States towards Cuba during the Trump Administration.

- Pedagogical method: Conference

- List readings due for this day:

**12.2. Cuba in the New Latin American Context of the 21st Century: The Trump Administration.**

**Description of content:** The students will discuss President Trump’s actions towards Cuba and what they may mean for the Cuban people.

- **Pedagogical method:** Class Discussion

- **List readings due for this day:**

**Week 13-14:**

▶ **Oral presentations by the students.**

Students oral presentations of individual research papers to be scheduled throughout the week 13.

**Week 15:**

▶ **Final research papers due**

**Course Materials**
Reading packet of assigned course readings will be provided.


Hare, Paul. *U.S. public diplomacy for Cuba: Why it’s needed and how to do it?* Issue Brief No. 1, Brookings Institution, March, 2010


United States Congress. Cuba’s Pursuit of Biological Weapons: Fact or Fiction? *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, United States Senate, One Hundred Seven Congress, Second Session, June 5, 2002.


