CIEE Havana, Cuba

Course name: Cuba: Past, Present and Future
Course number: POLI 2001 HACS
Programs offering course: Summer Cuban Studies
Language of instruction: Spanish
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Summer 2019 (May 18 – June 15, 2019)

Course Details and Objectives
The course aims to get students to describe social processes of current day Cuba, describing concrete socio-historical phenomenon from a systemic-relational approach. The acquisition of knowledge will take place through the promotion of a logical-historical analysis of the object of study, engaging its complexities. This will require a continuous process of reflection to relate the facts of daily life to a historical foundation to interpret and conceive visions of possible futures.

Course Prerequisites
None

Methods of Instruction
This highly participatory seminar combines seminar discussion meetings and individual tutorials and field research in the preparation of an academic paper.

Assessment and Final Grade
1. Fieldwork and field notes: 30%
2. Attendance, class participation: 20%
3. Final Presentation: 15%
4. Final Paper (en Español): 35%

*** You must complete every assignment to pass the course.

Course Calendar:
Session # 1: Introduction
Objective: To discuss the course program in a participatory fashion.
Specific Objectives: Explore the disciplinary background and previous cultural knowledge of the students. Integrate individual and collective interests and expectations. Establish individual and collective goals. Lay out the topics of the final projects that the students will execute. Define the role of the students as agents that will be driving the course forward.
Method: The methods will emerge from the proposal of the course elaborated by the professor, considering it only a draft to be refined. Highlight the role of the students as agents in the learning process and consistently work from this principle. The classes will be supported in huge part by the inquiries and reflections of the students. The professor will bring guidance and information to bear on the pedagogical process.
Evaluation: Design the final course project.

Session # 2: Cuban history
**Objective:** To learn the historical antecedents to help contextualize understanding of the current conditions of Cuban reality.

**Content:** Principle characteristics of the colonial period. Cuban national formation. Principle moments in the process of struggle for national liberation. Stages of the process of initial transformation after the triumph of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Cuban participation in international relations: U.S., Latin America, Africa, the former socialist block.

**Session # 3: Cuban Revolutionary Thinking**

**Objective:** To relate the development of Cuban revolutionary thinking with the evolution of historical context.

**Content:** Revolutionary thinking vs. Reformist thinking: Independentism vs colonialism, latinamericanism vs. panamericanism, antimonopolism vs. anexionism. The vision of Jose Marti. Socialism according to Che Guevara. The revolution from within: an analysis of Fidel Castro.

**Evaluation Method:** Elaborate on coincidences and contradictions between aspects of contemporary Cuban reality and revolutionary thinking.

**Session # 3: Historical Development of the Cuban Nation and Contemporary Context**

**Objective:** To debate comments elaborated by the students about aspects of interest of Cuban history in the development of Cuban thinking, according to other sessions. To establish links between historic fundamentals and course themes (content sessions 2 and 3).

**Session # 5: What are Cubans like?**

**Objective:** To identify the general psychological and cultural features that characterizes Cuban identity.

**Content:** Socio-historical conditioning of the distinctive features of Cuban men and women. Cultural syncretism. Ways of life, social relations, families, religion, values. Fernando Ortiz: “the fourth discoverer of Cuba”. Current manifestations of Cuban identity in everyday life.

**Evaluation Method:** Submit written paper about Cuban identity and cultural features based on participant observation and dialogue with each student’s host family or friends.

**Session # 6: Cuban political system**

**Objective:** To characterize the Cuban political system

**Content:** The structure and role of the Cuban State. The role of the Communist Party. The Popular Power system. Territorial governance. Cuban elections. Civil Society. Mechanisms of political participation.

**Evaluation Method:** Turn in written paper about the Cuban political system based on conversation with the student’s host family or Friends.

**Session # 7: The construction of socialism in Cuba**

**Objective:** To analyze the main stages and features of Cuba’s construction of socialism.

**Content:** The conditions of the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution. Destruction of the oppressive capitalist apparatus. Relations with the Soviet Union and the socialist block. The real socialist model. Resistance and the search for development models. Ongoing reforms.

**Evaluation method:** Seminar
Session # 8: Social policies in Cuba
Objective: To analyze the evolution and trends of social policies in Cuba.
Evaluation method: Characterize social policy in a particular area or in a particular social sphere.

Session # 9: Social class structure
Objective: To explain the main processes of social mobility produced during the revolutionary period in Cuba.
Content: Social classes in Cuba. Class stratification by different social variables: gender, skin color, region. Processes of social heterogeneity since the 1990s.
Evaluation Method: Analyze the social mobility of a person in Cuba (by region, profession, industry, etc)

Session # 10: Seminar on sessions 6, 7, 8 & 9
Objective: Comparative analysis of the Cuban political and social reality.
Evaluation Method: Presentation of the results of independent study and participation in the analysis.

Session # 11: Alamar Community: Origen, development and present day
Objective: To understand the development of a community created by the revolution.
Content: Meet with neighbors, founders, visit the community of Alamar.

Session # 12: Cuba in the world
Objective: To assess the role of Cuba on an international scale.
Content: Principles that orient the international relations of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba in the Caribbean and in the new Latin American context. Relations with China and Russia. The Cuba-US dispute, the change in agenda. International organizations.

Sessions # 15 & 16: Daily Life in Cuba
Objective: To analyze daily life in Cuba in its complexity: opportunities and limitations.
Content: The diversity of the social scenes. Utopias and realities. Expressions of social inequality according to religion, gender, sexual orientation, and skin color. New forms of property. Individual-social relations.

Excursions & Cultural Activities:
- Visits to Jose Marti Memorial
- Visits to Community Development Projects
- Visits to Museums
- Excursion Weekend Playa Girón: June 7-9, 2019

Required Readings:

Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba (1992). Ley 91 “De los Consejos Populares”

Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba (2005). Constitución de la República

Espina, Mayra (2008). “Ambivalencias y perspectivas de la reestratificacion social” En http://nuso.org/articulo/ambivalencias-y-perspectivas-de-la-reestratificacion-social


Martí, José. Carta inconclusa a Manuel Mercado (Mayo 1895). En http://www.ecured.cu/Manuel_Mercado

Morales, Esteban (julio de 2015). “La relación entre acercamiento político y penetración cultural no es lineal, se trata de un camino de doble vía” En http://estebanmoralesdominguez.blogspot.com