Cuban – U.S. Relations:
Past and Present

Course Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Ernesto Dominguez Lopez

Course Description

The course is based on a combination historical, political, sociological and economic perspectives. The eighty percent of the time is dedicated to the study of the evolution of the relationship since the early republic to the most recent events, a little over a century. The last forty percent is dedicated to the study of the so call normalization process started in December 2014.

Course Central Objective:

The main objective is to provide the students with an overview of U.S.-Cuban relations from colonial times to the present, and an analysis of its main conditioning factors. The students will acquire the theoretical, methodological and factual tools the historical conflict between the two countries and the new phase inaugurated by the process of restoring the diplomatic relations and the series of negotiations announced on December 17th 2014.

Writing Assignments:

Final Essay

A final essay (10 pages maximum) about any topic of the program.

Oral Assignment:

Evaluative presentations and discussions on topics of the program.

Course Evaluation

Course’s attendance……………………20 %

Evaluative Presentations………………40%

Final paper*…………………………..40%

* 10 pages

Content Distribution:

Note, specific meeting dates are to be confirmed.
Week 1.

- Cuba’s Colonial Period and American intervention

Geography, Trade, and Strategic Considerations: Cuba in the Geopolitical Thought of U.S. Founding Fathers. The Role of Cuba in U.S. Territorial Acquisitions and Early Hemispheric Hegemonic Aspirations. Cuban Independence and U.S. Military Intervention

Week 2.

- The Republic

The Implementation of a Protectorate: Cuba under the Platt Amendment. Early Cuban republic. Cuban revolution of 1933, First Batista’s dictatorship, New Deal and Good Neighbor Policy. Transition to the neocolonial system.

Week 3.

- The Republic

The 1940 Cuban Constitution. The Contradictions between Cuban Constitutionalism and U.S. Interests. Second Batista’s dictatorship and revolutionary war

Week 4.

- The Revolution

The Triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the U.S. Response. Bay of Pigs Invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Socialist Cuba in the framework of the Cold War. Cuban foreign policy: early internationalism and relations with the Third World.

Week 5.

- The Revolution

Cold War, anticommunism and US politics. US political forces and actors in the formation of its Cuba policy.

Week 6.

- The Revolution

The formation of the Cuban American community. Its role in US policy towards Cuba.

Week 7

- Post-revolutionary development and foreign relations

**Week 8.**

- **Post-revolutionary development and foreign relations**


**Week 9.**

- **The post Cold War era**

Cuba in the “Special Period”: domestic challenges and international relations. Economic and social crises. Bush administration’s Cuba policy. Cuban strategies to cope with the crises.

**Week 10.**

- **New processes in Cuba-US relations**

Obama’s administration, December 17th 2014 and the new era in Cuba/US relations. The announced changes and its implications.

**Week 11.**

- **New processes in Cuba-US relations**

The explanation: the international system and Latin America. Changes in the global balances of power. The shift to the left in Latin America. Cuba as a critical issue.

**Week 12.**

- **New processes in Cuba-US relations**


**Week 13.**

- **New processes in Cuba-US relations**


**Week 14.**
New processes in Cuba-US relations

The evolution of the process. Negotiations, agreements and obstacles. First cooperation and investment projects.

Week 15.

New processes in Cuba-US relations

Impacts and ramifications of the process. Economic impact. Political impact. Relations with other countries. Effects on the international relations.

Basic Readings


Lars Shoultz, The United States and Cuban Revolution, UNC Press


Sidney Webster, “Mr. Marcy, the Cuban Question and the Ostend Manifesto”, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1(Mar., 1893), 1-32.

Documents Nos. 24 (McKinley), 25 (Teller Amendment) and 27 (Treaty of Paris)


Louis Pérez, Cuba in the American Imagination, UNC Press


Blackburn, Robin, “Prologue to the Cuban Revolution”


**Recommendations for further reading/research:**


The Origin and Purpose of the Platt Amendment, The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 8, No. 3. (Jul., 1914), 585-591.


Dorschner, John and Roberto Fabricio. The Winds of December/ John Dorschner and Roberto Fabricio.1980


Hal Klepak, Cuba’s Foreign and Defence Policies in the “Special Period”. Policy Paper. FOCAL, 2000


Walt Vanderbush; Patrick J Haney, “Clinton, Congress, and Cuba policy Between Two Codifications: The Changing Executive-Legislative Relationship in Foreign Policy Making. Congress & the Presidency; Autumn 2002; Vol. 29, No. 2; pg. 171-197

Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. Report to the President, June 2006