This course examines the history of Latin America’s largest country from the earliest Portuguese colonial settlement to the present in its hemispheric, Atlantic, and global context. Brazilian history, for nearly as long as it has been studied, has been offered as a counterpoint for the histories of the United States, the rest of Latin America, and, most recently, the Global South. We will think deeply and critically about these comparisons and geographical constructions as, themselves, historical phenomena that deserve our scrutiny. Our readings and in-class discussions broadly survey the entire sweep of Brazilian history. We will, however, take advantage of the recent florescence and global influence of Brazilian historiography in such subfields as: the study of slavery and post-abolition society; innovative approaches to labor history; studies of authoritarianism and dictatorship; nineteenth- and twentieth-century liberalisms; citizenship and exclusion; human rights and justice; divided cities and urban shantytowns; and the critical study of historical memory and patrimony. Over the course of the semester, our coursework will be accompanied by a series of optional extramural academic and cultural events related to Brazilian history in the New York City area. No prior knowledge of Latin American history is required, and all required readings will be in English.

Course learning goals:

*To gain an in-depth historiographic knowledge of trends in the study of Brazil, both in our contemporary era and over the last century;

*To become familiar with the narrative of Brazil’s past, from the first European contact with its Indigenous peoples to its contemporary history;

* To gain a critical understanding of Brazil as part of Latin American regional history, as well as history of the Atlantic World and the Global South;

* To become conversant in a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of a nation-state in its broader regional and global contexts, including comparative, transnational, national, micro-, and translocal history;
*To gain experience in reviewing scholarly books, both in writing an in group discussions, and also in respectful yet trenchant critique of peers’ work and ideas; and

*To gain experience in producing a masterful piece of critical historiographic writing.

I will hold **office hours** from 2:30 to 4:00 pm on Tuesdays (office location: room 5405). In addition, I am available to meet with students by appointment; please contact me to set up a mutually convenient time. Please note that the quickest and most effective way to contact me is by email. I can also be reached by phone at either (212) 817-8463 or (718) 997-5371.

**Texts** for this class will be available for purchase on Amazon or any major bookseller. You will also find all of these texts on reserve at the library.


There is also a required **readings packet**, which will be on electronic reserve through Blackboard.

**Optional survey texts:**

Students who do not have a general knowledge of the sweep of Latin American history may wish to obtain one or more of the following books, and read or refer to them as needed. The following list, which is selective rather than comprehensive, includes some of the most frequently assigned Brazil history survey texts:

The following are required assignments for this course:

1. **Review essay.** Each student will be assigned to one week out of the semester in which (s)he must to submit a concise analytical essay that responds to and reflects on the readings for that week. The format for this assignment should be loosely modeled after the scholarly review essay; for examples of what this genre of scholarly writing looks like, please refer to such journals as the *Latin American Research Review* and the *American Historical Review*, which regularly feature review essays. You are strongly encouraged to do additional reading beyond the texts assigned for your week. During our first class meeting, I will circulate a sign-up sheet on which each student will commit to one week’s group of readings. On the Friday prior to our Tuesday afternoon class meeting, the student(s) assigned to write the review essay for that week must submit the essay electronically to the entire class using our email list. Please be sure to send your essay promptly by 5:00 pm. Prior to our class meeting, students are required to read their peer’s essay for that week, and come to class prepared to discuss it along with the other readings.

2. **Commentary.** In addition to signing up to write a review essay, each student will sign up to be the commentator on a given week (necessarily a different week from the one during which (s)he is signed up to submit the written review essay). The Commentary will take place at the beginning of our class meeting and will consist of a brief oral discussion of both the readings for that week and his/her peer’s written Review Essay submitted on the readings. Ideally, commentary should critically engage the assigned readings as well as the Review Essay, using these readings as a point of departure to start our class session with an analytical discussion of the topic scheduled on the syllabus. As with the Review Essay, you are quite welcome but by no means required to bring in outside readings, ideas from your other courses or your own research, images, artifacts, and so on. You are encouraged to bring our discussions and texts from prior classes into the commentary. This need not be lengthy or formal—10 minutes is sufficient—but should be a serious, carefully and thoughtfully prepared presentation. (In other words, please do not simply speak off the cuff; make sure to think in advance about and plan your comments.) No written work needs to be submitted whatsoever for this assignment, it is an oral presentation.

3. **Final paper, “Problems in the Study of the History Brazil.”** You will have one major writing assignment to complete outside of class. You must write a **historiographic essay** of approximately 15-20 pages on any theme in the history of Brazil that has presented a particular problem to historians or other scholars. This is designed to encourage you to delve deeply into the secondary literature, and your main sources are expected to be the works of historians. However, please note that
any students who already have gathered archival data or who wish to break ground on a research project may certainly bring primary sources into this paper. If you are interested in writing such a paper, you are encouraged to meet with me for some suggestions about how to integrate primary-source material into your historiographic essay, or how to use this assignment as a way in to an incipient dissertation or other research project. This essay will be due on the Friday following our final class meeting. As the deadline draws nearer, I will distribute handouts that will help you with this essay and will provide complete instructions and guidelines for its submission. We will devote some time in the last two class sessions for each student to present his or her paper project to the class.

Please note that this term paper assignment has two parts. During our class meeting for Week Ten, you should submit to me a **paper prospectus**: a short essay (one to three paragraphs, or a maximum of two pages in length) describing the expected topic of your paper and citing at least three scholarly works of history that you intend to use as sources.

The following is a day-by-day **schedule** of topics we will cover in class and the corresponding readings assigned for each day.

Each reading below with an asterisk (*) is either an article or book excerpt and can be found in the Blackboard course reserves. (For complete information on where to obtain these texts, please refer to the section above, “Texts...”)

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Tuesday, January 28**

Week One: **Approaches to the Study of Brazil in Global Perspective: Beyond Compare?**

*(articles sent to students by email; please read in advance of first class)*

*Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Chapters 2 and 4 of *The Roots of Brazil (Os Raízes do Brasil)*, trans. G. Harvey Summ (Notre Dame University Press, 2012).*

**II. COLONIAL ERA**
Tuesday, February 4
Week Two
First Encounters, Early Colonial History, and Brazil’s Place in the Atlantic World

Tuesday, February 11
Week Three
The Colonial Period: Culture, Society, and Religion

Tuesday, February 18
Week Four
Late-Colonial Brazil: Gender, Family, and Slavery in a Mining Boom Area
forthcoming in *ellipsis* (special issue on Luso-Brazilian baroque, Vincent Barletta, ed.)

**Tuesday, February 25**

**Week Five**

**Independence Era: Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Liberalism, Brazilian Style**

Richard Graham, *Feeding the City*


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**Tuesday, March 4**

**Week Six**

**Slavery, Freedom, and Precariousness in Nineteenth-Century Brazil**


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**Tuesday, March 11**

**Week Seven**

**Bringing Indigenous People into the History of Nineteenth-Century Brazil**


HINT: The readings for this class are lighter than usual; why not get a head start reading the L. Schwarcz book for next week?

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**Tuesday, March 18**
Week Eight

The Brazilian Empire

Lília Moritz Schwarcz, *The Emperor’s Beard: Dom Pedro and his Tropical Monarchy in Brazil*

*Excerpt from Emília Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories*

Tuesday, March 25

*****CLASS DOES NOT MEET; INDEPENDENT STUDY WEEK*****

Week Nine

A Brazilian Belle Époque


Tuesday, April 1

Week Ten

Intellectual History of Race in the Early Twentieth Century


*Excerpt from Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala* (in English translation)


*Paper prospectus due in class*

Tuesday, April 8
Week Eleven

Modernism in Twentieth-Century Latin America: From Cannibalism to Brasilia
*excerpt from James Scott, Seeing like a State
**“Cannibalist Manifesto” (São Paulo, 1928)

Paper prospectus returned

***Tuesday, April 15 and April 22: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES***

Tuesday, April 29

Week Twelve

Perspectives on the Vargas Era


Tuesday, May 6

Week Thirteen

New Cultural and Social Histories of the Dictatorship

*Victoria Langland, “Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and Revolution in 1968 Brazil,” in In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War, Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds. (Duke University Press, 2008) 208-349.
Tuesday, May 13
Week Fourteen Case Studies in History, Memory, and Rights

READINGS FOR EVERYONE:

* 1988 Brazilian Constitution

Readings for Group A: The Legacies of Slavery in Contemporary Brazil

Readings for Group B: The Divided City
  * [2 short articles TBA on urban poverty and favelization]
  * City Statute (Federal Statute regulating articles 182 and 183 of 1988 Constitution of Brazil)

**Note:** For this class, students will be divided into two groups by lottery. Each group will be responsible for a group of thematically connected readings (listed above). In our class discussion, each student will have an opportunity to reflect on and share ideas about each group of readings, which converge on the larger question of human rights and social inequality in contemporary (post-1980s) Brazil.

Friday, May 16
Papers due: Please submit your paper in my box in the History Department Lounge by 3:00 pm