United States-Cuban Relations: A Debate

Professor Rafael M. Hernández Rodríguez is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana “Juan Marinello,” and a professor and researcher at the University of Havana, the Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales “Raúl Roa García.” He is one of Cuba’s most distinguished senior political science scholars of U.S.-Cuban relations. In addition, Hernández is a published poet and playwright, and the chief editor of Cuba’s premier intellectual journals Temas: Ideología, Cultura, Política.

This seminar will discuss the complexities of the U.S.-Cuba conflict, a case-study at the crossroads of North-South and East-West tensions, focusing on its most recent developments since the Cold War to the present, on domestic and multilateral interactions, national interests and international actors, as well as points of convergence and clash in the bilateral, regional and extra-hemispheric arenas. This conflict is explored as an intermestic relationship, considering the roles played by both countries in each other’s internal affairs. The seminar will emphasize the case of US-Cuba relations as a paradigm to understand nationalism and imperialism, the limits of US power and the dynamics of Third World revolutions. It focuses in depth on the major themes that have shaped current U.S.-Cuban relations, their different political values and national interests, ideological and cultural representations, and their current meanings; but also its “ties of singular intimacy”, cultural affinities, mutual images and civic cultures. This special relationship offers a case-study to discuss how a conflict matrix also involves instances of cooperation, actual and potential, where creative policies may thrive.

Cultural History of Cuba

Dr. Ricardo Quiza Moreno, with the assistance of Prof. Gerardo Hernandez. Dr. Quiza Moreno is full professor and researcher at the University of Havana’s Casa de Altos Estudios “Fernando Ortiz.” He has published a variety of books, articles and essays in Cuba, Colombia, Spain and England, including El cuento al revés: historia, nacionalismo y poder en Cuba (1902-1930), Editorial Unicornio, La Habana, 2003; Nuevos voces...viejos asuntos. Panorama de la reciente historiografía cubana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, 2005, and Imaginarios al ruedo: Cuba y los Estados Unidos en las exposiciones internacionales (1876-1904) Ediciones Union y Ruth Casa Editorial, La Habana, 2001, which was awarded the Annual Award from the Academy of Sciences and the Annual Research Award for Cultural Research Juan Marinello, both in 2012. He has served as a visiting guest lecturer in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Holland and Mexico.

This course examines the moments in the history of Cuba that have been key to its national and cultural formation, focusing on the most important aspects of its
history, including its social composition, architecture, religion and popular traditions. The concepts of nation and culture, and the country’s notions of identity, idiosyncrasies and Cuban identity will be reviewed by the instructors from a variety of perspectives. Beginning with a review of the principal events of the colonial and republican periods and leading up to the Revolution, the course will focus on those elements that have come to define Cuba in the last 20 years, including its economic development, international relations, social changes and generational conflicts. As a complement to the lectures, students will read a variety of carefully selected Spanish texts, observe audiovisual offerings, observe “in situ” locations of historical and patrimonial importance, visit museums and exchange ideas with specialists on these topics. Field visits associated with the course include the cities of Baracoa, Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba, Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Santa Clara and Mantanzas.

**Gender, Race and Inequalities in Cuba: Visions from Cuban Scholars**

Professor Marta Núñez Sarmiento, Ph.D. with the assistance of Roberto Zurbano Torres. Dr. Núñez Sarmiento is a professor of sociology and a researcher at the Center for Studies of International Migrations (CEMI) at the University of Havana. Her research has concentrated on transition projects for Cuba; women and employment in Cuba; gender studies in Cuba, images of women in Cuban and foreign mass media. At the University of Havana, she teaches courses related to methodology and methods of sociological research, gender studies and contemporary Cuba. She has serve as a consultant for several agencies of the United Nations (1988-2003), for the Association of Caribbean States (1999) and for several NGOs. She is one of the founders of the Cuban Federation of Women.

For more than half a century scholars, journalists and artists from all over the world and basically from the United States have intensely explored Cuba, and their visions have been widely spread by the “mainstream media”. But although Cuban social scientists living in the island have produced their studies while experiencing and being part of the transformations that started in 1959, their works have been scarcely published outside of Cuba.

This program summarizes recent studies produced by Cuban scholars on three of the most relevant challenges to eliminate discrimination in society: gender, race, and inequalities. Although the works refer to historical events explaining the evolution of the present situation in each of these topics, they will basically focus on case studies elaborated since the crisis and reforms of the 90s in Cuba – following the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries as well as the strengthening of the US embargo/blockade on Cuba.
The Imagined Island: Cuban Cinema

Professor Gustavo Arcos is a cinema critic and professor at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA).

In 1959, following the revolutionary victory, the Cuban Institute of Arts and Industries Cinematographic (ICAIC) was established to oversee a vast array of cultural projects and related work, and well into the 1990s, it continued to oversee nearly all of the country’s film production. With new technologies emerging in Cuba, through digital media and two new schools of cinema and television, productions have been and will continue to become more diversified, as the ICAIC previously controlled all productions. In the last two decades, new generations of filmmakers and audiovisual artists have been emerging who intend to tell stories from a more independent lens.

This course uses film as a way to understand Cuba through its own images. We will verify how the artistic discourse of filmmakers interprets, legitimizes, dialogues or generates conflict with the official discourse. Students will learn about aesthetic values, formal and artistic, as proposed by Cuba’s filmmakers in recent decades. This course will also aim to stimulate creativity between the students, encouraging student discussions based on their own experiences during their time in Cuba.

Slavery: Manifestations of Its Legacy in Contemporary Cuban Society

Professor Bárbara Danzie León is a history researcher and specialist in resources on the African presence and lecturer of the Instituto Superior de Ciencias Aplicadas del Ministerio de Ciencia Tecnología y Medio Ambiente. Several professors have been invited to guest lecture the course as well.

The enslavement of Africans and their forced arrival in Cuba from the 16th to 19th centuries is an important axis around which a significant part of the history of Cuba moves. This course proposes to address, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the African influence and contribution to the shape of Cuba’s nationality, where they are recognized as members of an important part of the values with which Cubans identify themselves. The multiethnic and multiracial state of the country is based on Cuba’s historical memory and diverse contemporary expressions. In the same way, the course will also distinguish the implications of the period of discriminatory and racist ideology based on skin color. Many times this is and has been expressed unconsciously and through colonial systems of marginalization, through which slavery came about.
21st Century Cuban and Latin American Literatures

Susana Haug is Professor of Literature, Faculty of Arts and Letters, University of Havana. She is the recipient of a number of important literary awards and her work has been included in diverse anthologies of contemporary literature in Cuba, Spain, Brazil and Mexico. She contributes frequently to Cuban and foreign journals and magazines and her work has been translated into Italian, French and Portuguese.

The Latin American “boom” resulted in an unprecedented revolution in Spanish language literature. The eyes of the world turned to a production of novels and stories by a group of authors who began publishing in the 1960s and constituted (and may continue to constitute) the literary version of “Greenwich mean time.” In this course, we will explore the directions taken by Latin American literature after the boom and focus on the literary production of younger authors, particularly those who began publishing in the 21st century. We will explore their many themes, esthetics, continuities and disruptions.