

Mass-Mediated Politics in Modern Latin America

Alfonso Salgado

course number: HIST BC3698

class meets: Tuesday, 4:10-6:00 PM

classroom: TBA

course level, type, and credits: undergraduate seminar, 4 points

instructor: Alfonso Salgado (as3918@columbia.edu)

office and office hours: 612 Fayerweather, Thursday, 3:00-5:30 PM



I. Course Description

This undergraduate seminar offers an introduction to the study of mass media and politics in Latin America from the early 19th to the early 21st century. Throughout the course, the students will get acquainted with some of the key concepts, problems, and methods through which historians and communication scholars have probed the relationship between mass media and political power in the region. We will define and understand media broadly, but we will focus largely on printed media and, to a lesser extent, radio, cinema, and television. We will discuss both breaks and continuities between different media technologies, journalistic cultures, and political regimes. Knowledge of Spanish is welcome, but not mandatory.

Relevant texts for this class will be available for purchase at Book Culture (536 112th Street, NY, NY). You will also find these texts on reserve at Butler Library.

- McCann, Bryan. *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Rama, Angel. *The Lettered City*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Samet, Robert. *Deadline: Populism and the Press in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

- Smith, Benjamin T. *The Mexican Press and Civil Society, 1940-1976. Stories from the Newsroom, Stories from the Street*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

All the rest is available at Columbia University Libraries, Barnard College Library, or as e-resources through CourseWorks.

II. Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate broad factual knowledge of the relationship between political power and mass communication in modern Latin America.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the continuities and transformations brought by different media technologies (especially print media, radio, and television broadcasting) and by different journalistic cultures (especially “combat journalism” and “modern journalism”) in modern Latin America.
3. Compare different analytical approaches by authors such as Jurgen Habermas, Benedict Anderson, and Angel Rama, engaging with concepts such as the “public sphere,” an “imagined community,” and the “lettered city.”
4. Write focused essays analyzing the key arguments, concepts, and issues or questions in assigned readings.

III. Assessments and Grading

Participation	15%
First Essay	20%
Short Response Papers	35%
Final Paper	30%

Attendance:

Class attendance is mandatory. In order to pass the course, you will need to attend at least 7 classes. Absences need not be justified, because even justified or justifiable absences (e.g., health problems) will not count toward the minimum attendance required.

Participation:

Participation plays a key role in the quality and success of the class. While the texts are central to the class, they are also a starting point for our conversations and collective interpretations which are the work of the course itself. Your grade will be based on your participation in 9 classes.

First Essay:

The essay should be submitted in the following format: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced. Essay length should be no less than 1,300 words and no more than 1,800 words (including footnotes and bibliography), which is roughly equivalent to four or five

pages. The prompt themes will be provided a few days before the due date. The essay will be based on the following book:

- Rama, Angel. *The Lettered City*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

First Essay due date: February 28

Response Papers:

Throughout the semester, you will have to submit response papers to the week's readings. Papers should be between 350 and 500 words each. They should include assessments or critiques of the readings. They may also raise questions for the discussion. You may choose which weeks to submit response papers, but you must write at least 9 by the end of the semester. Response papers have to be submitted in advance, via Courseworks. You may submit them up to three hours before the discussion session.

Final Paper:

The final paper should be submitted in the following format: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced. Length should be no less than 3,000 words and no more than 4,500 words (including footnotes and bibliography).

You can choose to write a *historiographical paper* or a *research paper*. If you choose to write a historiographical paper, you will have to discuss 7 or more texts (at least 3 of them books) by different authors. If you choose to write a research paper, you will have to agree on a corpus of sources with the instructor.

You will have to submit a short description of the topic and a list of tentative references (in the case of a historiographic paper) or corpus of sources (in the case of a research paper) by Friday, March 28, on which I will comment and make suggestions.

You will also have two meetings with the instructor to discuss your progress, one on Friday, April 4 and the other on Friday, May 2.

Final Paper due date: Friday, May 16.

IV. Class Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 21):

Introduction to the Course

No readings assigned for this week.

Week 2 (January 28):

The Birth of the Public Sphere—in Europe and Latin America [~95 pages]

- Habermas, "The Public Sphere."
- Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (chapter 2).
- Soriano, *Tides of Revolution* (chapters 1 and 2)

Week 3 (February 4):

Journalists, Printers, and the Problem of Freedom in 19th Cent. Mexico [~120 pages]

- Piccato, *The Tyranny of Opinion* (chapters 2 and 5).

- Zeltsman, *Ink under the Fingernails* (chapters 3 and 7).

Week 4 (February 18):

Latin American Newspapers and the Question of (National) Identity [~100 pages]

- Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (excerpts).
- López, “The India Bonita Contest.”
- Andrews, “Afro-World.”

Week 5 (February 25):

Political Power, Lettered Elites, and the Written Word in Latin America [~125 pages]

- Rama, *The Lettered City* (full book).

Friday, February 28: Submit the first essay, on Angel Rama’s book.

Week 6 (March 4):

Industrialization, Professionalization, and the Modernization of the Press [~75 pages]

- Chalaby, “Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention.”
- Cane, *The Fourth Enemy* (chapter 1).
- Bernedo and Arriagada, “Los inicios de El Mercurio de Santiago.” (If you cannot read Spanish, read instead Caimari, “News from around the World.”).

Week 7 (March 11):

The PRI, the Press, and the Problem of Freedom in 20th Century Mexico [~125 pages]

- Smith, *The Mexican Press and Civil Society* (introduction, chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, and conclusion).

Spring Recess (March 17-21):

Spring recess. No class this week!

Week 8 (March 25):

Movies, Cinemas, and Cinemagoers [~90 pages]

- Butsch, “Audiences.”
- Gatica Mizala, *Modernity at the Movies* (chapter 4)
- Navitski, “The Cine Club de Colombia.”
- Rubenstein, “A Sentimental and Sexual Education.”

Friday, March 28: Submit a topic proposal and a list of tentative references or corpus of sources for your final paper.

Week 9 (April 1):

Radio, Music, and the Making of a National Culture in Brazil [~125 pages]

- McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil* (introduction, chapters 1, 2, 6, and conclusion).

Friday, April 4: One-to-one meetings, scheduled in advance, to discuss the progress made on your final paper.

Week 10 (April 8):

Television, Representation, and Power [~130 pages]

- Lambe, "The Medium Is the Message."
- Rivero, *Tuning Out Blackness* (chapter 2).
- Levi, "Masked Media."

Week 11 (April 15):

Hemispheric Mediations: The Colossus of the North and World War II [~80 pages]

- Sadlier, *Americans All* (chapter 1).
- Ehrick, "Buenas Vecinas?"
- Hiatt, "Slapstick Diplomacy."

Week 12 (April 22):

Hemispheric Mediations: The Cuban Revolution and the Cold War [~60 pages]

- Keller, "The Revolution Will Be Teletyped."
- McEnaney, *Acoustic Properties* (excerpts from chapter 5).
- Corrigan, "Visual Rhetoric and Oppositional Consciousness."

Week 13 (April 29):

The Press, Crime, and Politics in Contemporary Venezuela [~95 pages]

- Samet, *Deadline* (introduction and chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6).

Friday, May 2: One-to-one meetings, scheduled in advance, to discuss the progress made on your final paper.

Friday, May 16: Submit your final paper!

V. Bibliography

Required Readings:

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: New York, 1996 (excerpts).
- Andrews, George Reid. "Afro-World: African-Diaspora Thought and Practice in Montevideo, Uruguay, 1830-2000." *The Americas* 67:1, 2010, 83-107.
- Bernedo, Patricio, and Eduardo Arriagada. "Los inicios de El Mercurio de Santiago en el epistolario de Agustín Edwards Mac Clure (1899-1905)." *Historia* 35, 2002, 13-33.
- Butsch, Richard. "Audiences: Publics, Crowds, Mass." In: Simonson et al. (eds.), *The Handbook of Communication History*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Caimari, Lila. "News from around the World: The Newspapers of Buenos Aires in the Age of the Submarine Cable, 1866-1900." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 96:4, 2016, 607-640.
- Cane, James. *The Fourth Enemy: Journalism and Power in the Making of Peronist Argentina, 1930-1955*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011 (chapter 1).

- Chalaby, Jean K. "Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention: A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s." *European Journal of Communication* 11:3, 1996, 303-326.
- Ehrick, Christine. "Buenas Vecinas? Latin American Women and US Radio Propaganda during World War II." *Feminist Media Histories* 5:3, 2019, 60-84.
- Gatica Mizala, Camila. *Modernity at the Movies: Cinema-Going in Buenos Aires and Santiago, 1915-1945*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023 (chapter 4).
- Habermas, Jürgen. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article." *New German Critique* 3, Autumn 1964, 49-55.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989 (chapter 2).
- Hiatt, Willie. "Slapstick Diplomacy: Charlie Chaplin's The Great Dictator and Latin American Theaters of War." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50:4, 2018, 777-803.
- Keller, Renata. "The Revolution Will Be Teletyped: Cuba's Prensa Latina News Agency and the Cold War Contest Over Information." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 21:3, 2019, 88-113.
- Lambe, Jennifer. "The Medium Is the Message: The Screen Life of the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1962." *Past & Present* 246:1, 2020.
- Levi, Heather. "Masked Media: The Adventures of Lucha Libre on the Small Screen." In: Joseph et al. (eds.). *Fragment of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001
- López, Rick A. "The India Bonita Contest of 1921 and the Ethnicization of Mexican National Culture." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82:2, 2002, 298-328.
- McCann, Bryan. *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004 (introduction, chapters 1, 2, 6, and conclusion).
- McEnaney, Tom. *Acoustic Properties: Radio, Narrative, and the New Neighborhood of the Americas*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017 (excerpts from chapter 5).
- Navitski, Rielle. "The Cine Club de Colombia and Postwar Cinephilia in Latin America: Forging Transnational Networks, Schooling Local Audiences." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 38:4, 2018, 808-827.
- Piccato, Pablo. *The Tyranny of Opinion: Honor in the Construction of the Mexican Public Sphere*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010 (chapters 2 and 5).
- Rama, Angel. *The Lettered City*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Rivero, Yeidy M. *Tuning Out Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005 (chapter 2).
- Rubenstein, Anne. "A Sentimental and Sexual Education: Men, Sex, and Movie Theaters in Mexico City, 1920-2010." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 36:1-2, 2020.
- Sadlier, Darlene J. *Americans All: Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012 (chapter 1).
- Samet, Robert. *Deadline: Populism and the Press in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019 (introduction and chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6)

Smith, Benjamin T. *The Mexican Press and Civil Society, 1940-1976. Stories from the Newsroom, Stories from the Street*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. *Society* (introduction, chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, and conclusion).

Soriano, Cristina. *Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies, and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018.

Zeltsman, Corinna. *Ink under the Fingernails. Printing Politics in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2021 (chapters 3 and 7).

Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

Barnard Honor Code

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources.

We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

Wellness Statement

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several areas of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

Primary Care at Barnard: <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>

Counseling: <https://barnard.edu/about-counseling>

Wellness: <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>

Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS)

If you believe you may encounter barriers to the academic environment due to a documented disability or emerging health challenges, please feel free to contact me and/or the [Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services \(CARDS\)](#). Any student with approved academic accommodations is encouraged to contact me during office hours or via email. If you have questions regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester, please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634, cards@barnard.edu, or learn more at barnard.edu/disabilityservices. CARDS is located in 307 Diana Center.

Affordable Access to Course Texts and Materials

All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. Barnard librarians have partnered with students, faculty, and staff to find ways to increase student access to textbooks. By the first day of advance registration for each term, faculty will have provided information about required texts for each course on CourseWorks (including ISBN or author, title, publisher, copyright date, and price), which can be viewed by students. A number of cost-free or low-cost methods for accessing some types of courses texts are detailed on the [Barnard Library Textbook Affordability](#) guide. Undergraduate students who identify as first-generation and/or low-income students may check out items from the [FLI lending libraries in the Barnard Library](#) and in [Butler Library](#) for an entire semester. Students may also consult with their professors, the Dean of Studies, and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for having access to course texts. Visit the guide and talk to your professors and your librarian for more details.