LASC 486: Experiential Learning in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
Spring 2021 || January 25 – May 11, 2020

Instructors: Eric Tomalá
The Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center
University of Maryland, College Park

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Course Description:

To address our planet’s most pressing issues – including climate change, class struggle, immigration, and human rights – we need culturally competent problem solvers who can think critically at transnational scales. The knowledge you have gained during the course of your LASC Minor or Certificate has prepared you to engage with such issues; your degree is in high demand. How will you choose to apply the skills you have acquired? Upon graduation, which professional paths will you follow in the pursuit of a more just world? An internship allows you to consider your career options, while developing new aptitudes and building your personal network.

The DMV (DC/MD/VA region) is an unparalleled location to explore a career in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Within the 20-mile radius surrounding UMD College Park, there are 31 embassies, numerous organizations and companies, and an abundance of Latin-America related projects. Our region is home to a growing number of Latinx and diasporic communities; the greater metropolitan Washington ranks as the 7th largest metropolitan concentration of immigrants in the United States, and people from the Latin Americas or Caribbean comprise 40% of these immigrants. The LASC internship at UMD is well situated to connect students to the wide range of networks and opportunities that our area has to offer.

Through this internship class, you will earn course credit for work experience with an organization that focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean or on topics relevant to studies of the region. Our experiential learning course provides semester-long training that enriches your academic field of study and the LASC Certificate or Minor. It also provides supervised professional development.

Course Objectives:

LASC 486 integrates experiential learning, professional development, and academic reflection. The following are our goals for the class, as well as how those objectives will be assessed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Form of Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the complex relation between applied and theoretical knowledge;</td>
<td>Journal entries; poster presentation; professionalization activities (mock interview &amp; report); final paper</td>
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<td>Expand your knowledge of Latin America and the Caribbean through live interaction in a workplace;</td>
<td>On-site work; journal entries; poster presentation; final paper</td>
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<td>Learn about the relationship between Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos, and between Caribbean and diasporic communities, by working in institutions where both may be present;</td>
<td>On-site work; journal entries; poster presentation; final paper</td>
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<td>Develop professional skills including workplace communication, relationship building, navigating expectations and responsibilities, goal setting, and advocacy (for self and for others). Reflect on those experiences;</td>
<td>On-site work; journal entries; final paper</td>
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<td>Practice interview skills, create and refine a resumé or C.V., attend and reflect on a career-related event.</td>
<td>Mock interview; resumé workshop; event report</td>
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Course Policies and Guidelines:

- The Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center allows undergraduates to take from 1 to 6 credit hours per course. The number of credits earned depends on the number of hours that you will intern, excluding travel and meals but including required class activities (such as meetings and events). You can receive 1 credit per 45 semester hours of interning.
- LASC requires 3 credits for the completion of the minor or certificate, for a total of 135 hours. Students should plan to spend no more than 120 of these hours on-site at your internship. You will allocate the remaining 15 hours to course requirements including meetings, presentations, and professionalization activities.
- Students taking internships for credit must have 60 credits or higher, an overall average GPA of 2.5 or better, and at least two LASC courses, one of which must be a required/core course (LASC/SPAN234, LASC/SPAN235, LASC/HIST250, or LASC/HIST251). Internships must have direct relationship to the work of understanding, interpreting, or presenting Latin America and the Caribbean or related themes. The course is primarily intended for students seeking the Latin American Studies Center Certificate or Minor, but exceptions will be considered for students with educational or career interests which lie in this area.
- Student internships must be approved by Assistant Director Eric Tomalá. Your faculty mentor will be the 486 instructor of record, Eric Tomala.
- Eric is your main person of contact. He will closely monitor the internship: approve the project; discuss the internship with the site supervisor at the beginning; guide you through professionalization activities; provide support to prepare presentations; assess your final report and/or paper; and get an evaluation of your work from your internship supervisor at the end of the project. The faculty mentor will grade the internship course.
- All internship courses require the student to submit a substantial written report/paper and may require appropriate supplemental reading for completion.

Course Requirements:

You must first secure an internship. You must have an on-site supervisor, who agrees to provide a formal evaluation to your faculty mentor. You must provide your mentor with a brief description of the internship and supply contact information regarding your supervisor.

We require 4 group meetings over the course of the semester: a welcome and introductions meeting, a C.V. and mock interview workshop, a presentation, and a wrap-up session. These meetings are mandatory. For dates and times, see the course schedule below. We are happy to meet with you beyond these dates; do not hesitate to reach out to us as issues or joys arise!

Schedule of Mandatory Meetings:

Monday, January 25 at 11:00 AM Introduction and Welcome

TBD Mock Interview and CV Workshop

TBD Presentation

TBD Wrap up

Your grade for this course will be calculated from a total of 1000 points, awarded as follows:

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Weekly Journal: 100 points

You will submit a journal reflection to ELMS every Friday by midnight. The entry will describe your experiences that week and connect what you have learned on the job with your LASC coursework. It must be at least 500 words and should include a running log of your hours. I will not accept late entries, but I will drop your three lowest scores.

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Professionalization Activities: 100 points (25 points per activity)

Over the course of the semester you will complete four professionalization activities, three of which will be asynchronous.

1. **Resumé Review and Careers4Terps Appointment:** Create an account with Careers4Terps and set an appointment to meet with a career adviser. Bring a resumé and cover letter to review and arrive prepared to talk about your career-related interests and questions. Be sure to request that the adviser you meet with sends me a report of your meeting.

2. **Event Report:** You will attend a career-related event of your choosing, and write a brief report (at least 500 words) about that event. Click here to see the events calendar for this semester.

3. **Interview Stream:** You will conduct your first mock interview using UMD’s interview stream program. Click here for more information about how to create an account.

4. **Mock Interview:** We will meet as a class to conduct mock interviews. Each student will be interviewed and will observe their classmates being interviewed, as well. You will also bring a copy of your resumé for your classmates to peruse. I have structured this interview as a group activity because I have found it is just as helpful to observe and learn from others being interviewed as it is to be interviewed ourselves.

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Presentation: 250 points

By the end of the semester, you will present about your internship as part of a student panel.

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Final Paper: 300 points

You will submit a final written report of your experience, including critical analysis of the institutional relevance to your major field of study and to Latin American and Caribbean Studies. I highly recommend you draw on your journal entries as you complete this assignment! Your paper should be 10 pages, double spaced, using 1-inch margins and 12 point font. It is due on midnight, the last day of class: May 11. To receive full credit, the paper must be reviewed by a tutor at the writing center (online or in-person appointments are both fine) and I must receive a report of your session. This is worth one whole letter grade, so that the highest score you may receive on an unrevised paper is a B.

Your essay should address the following points:

- Briefly introduce the organization for which you work, its scope of operations, and the area in which you worked. What is the mission of the organization, and (how) do you feel that your work contributes to it?
- Discuss in detail your experiences as an intern that utilized knowledge you acquired in LASC coursework.
• Reflect critically on what you learned in this internship and how it will impact your future academic studies and career goals. Evaluate (honestly) your work, performance, and contribution as an
• Questions to address in your paper:
  o How has your actual internship experience compared to your expectations on the first day of your internship?
  o How could you have been more effective and responsible?
  o Did you receive enough mentoring, and how have you responded to feedback and constructive criticism? What did you learn about supervision that you will use, and perhaps not use, when you are in a supervisory role?
  o What has been the most challenging aspect of your experience?
  o What has been most different, operating in a professional setting, compared to as a student?
  o (How) has this experience given you insight into what you'd like to do after graduation?
  o What have you learned about yourself through this experience?
• You will submit a timesheet of all your hours along with your final paper. You can find the timesheet under “files” on our course ELMS page.

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Supervisor Evaluation: 400 points
At the end of your internship, your supervisor will complete and submit an evaluation of your work.

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All materials must be in hand by no later than May 11, 2020. An extension of this deadline will be considered only in extreme circumstances and almost always with advanced approval.

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University Grade Scale:

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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-97</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
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University Policies:
Attendance and absences: Students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of medically necessary absences, and present a self-signed note documenting the date of the missed class meeting(s) or internship hours and testifying to the need for the absence. This note must include an acknowledgement that (a) the
information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. (The university’s policies on medical and other absences can be found at: [https://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html](https://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html)

Prolonged absence or illness preventing attendance from class or internship requires written documentation from the Health Center and/or health care provider verifying dates of treatment when student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

Absence due to religious observance will not be penalized, however, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor within the first 3 weeks of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the entire semester. [The calendar of religious holidays can be found at: http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html#religious (Links to an external site.)]

Academic integrity: The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibit students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: [http://www.shc.umd.edu (Links to an external site.)]

Students with disabilities: The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations are needed. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), a division of the University Counseling Center, please call 301-314-7682, e-mail dissup@umd.edu, or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

Copyright notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

Emergency protocol: if the university is closed for an extended period of time, please check your email regarding arrangements.

Course evaluations: are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. Your participation in this official system is critical to the success of the process, and all information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. (Instructors can only view group summaries of evaluations and cannot identify which submissions belong to which students.)

Academic Accommodations for Students Who Experience Sexual Misconduct:
The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence (as defined by the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy). To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. Disclosures made to faculty are not confidential and must be reported to the Office of Civil Rights and
Sexual Misconduct.
For more information visit www.umd.edu/Sexual_Misconduct/. (Links to an external site.)

Diversity: The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

This syllabus may be subject to change. Students will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.