CUBA: Culture, Art, & Society

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Contact phone: 78793488 and 78329000
Length: 16 weeks
Contact Hours: 64
Credit Hours: 4 U.S. Semester credit hours
Language of Instruction: Spanish
Location: 455, 25th Street between J and I
University of Havana

General content
This anthropology course introduces students to the interwoven relationship amongst Cuban culture, society and art. We will inscribe, in time and space, various contexts, including: historical, architectural, urban, social and how these elements create artistic values and influence local cultures and communities.

In addition to this course, students are encouraged to engage with the communities in which they are living and question their and other perspectives, while learning to appreciate similarities and differences to achieve a meaningful integration.

General Objectives
Understand how Cuban culture, society and arts relate to each other and to the communities in which they are inscribed, through time and space. Understand the contribution of Cuban culture in the course themes by way of historical context, architecture, urban studies, and social contexts.

Academic Honesty
IFSA-Butler takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your professor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a fail for the course and disciplinary action may occur. The incident will be reported to the resident director as well as your home university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic misconduct, as definitions vary by culture and educational system.
Attendance
A minimum of 80% attendance is required to pass the course.

Methodology
Students in this course will have an active participation in and outside of the classroom. It combines lectures, audiovisual presentations, instructor-guided field trips to historical locations and museums, and a four-day participatory visit to a rural community. Lectures are based on readings.

Contact hours
3 hours contact time for 15 sessions (45h)
1 instructor-guided rural community visit (9h)
5 instructor-guided field trips in the city (2 visits and 3 museums) (10h)
Total number of contact hours: 64

This course will require 3 hours per week commitment of out-of-class independent work for reading and weekly journal entries (homework).

Evaluation
Students will be evaluated for participation in class discussions, a midterm paper and a final paper
20% Oral contributions to class dialogue (class participation)
30% Written contributions (reflective essays)
20% Participation in community visits and outings
30% Final projects (individual presentations using selected media)

Midterm Paper (week 8): a 3 page printed essay in Spanish outlining the topic of interest related to the themes discussed in class, to later be developed into a final paper. It includes an introduction, a description of its main objective, and a basic bibliography.

Term Paper (week 14): a 10 to 12 page printed essay in Spanish, approved by the course professors during the midterm evaluation, including an introduction, a statement of objective, a theoretical and a methodological framework, and a bibliography. The paper will be discussed and submitted in class during a 10 minute oral presentation.
STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Theme 1: Historical Context, Architecture, Urbanism and Tourism

Week 1
Orientation Session: a general introduction of the professors, teaching methods, themes, and midterm and final papers.

Race and Ethnicity

Watch: Black in Latin America by Professor Henry L Gates of Harvard University.

Exercise: 2p essay: What does it mean to be Cuban? What do you think about Cuban art, culture and society?

Week 2
Cuba and its Historical Context I
The Historical Center of La Havana Vieja: An instructor-guided walking tour
The visit will include the Main Square (Plaza de Armas), Small Temple (Templete), San Francisco Church and Square (Iglesia y Plaza de San Francisco), Old Square (Plaza Vieja), Church of the Christ (Plaza del Cristo), Bishop and Merchants Streets (Calle Obispo y Mercaderes) and other historical sites.

Reading:

Week 3
Cuba and its Historical Context II
A visit to Square of the Revolution and Playa Municipalities: An instructor-guided walking tour
Squares, monuments and architecture: tour includes the Square of the Revolution (Plaza de la Revolución), Columbus Cemetery (Cementerio de Colón), 5th Avenue and art schools west of Playa Municipality (Municipio Playa). Discussion: analysis of architectural changes in Havana.

Exercise: 1p essay: Compare the architecture and urbanism of the areas and describe your observations of people, their interactions and the activities they carry out.

Reading:

Week 4
Intercultural Approaches that Enhance Anthropological Study
Culture and community. Organization of a trip to a rural community La Picadora, Yaguajay municipality, Sancti Spíritus province in the central region of Cuba. This 4-day community visit will typically take place in May and October. The students will work with farmers, do domestic work, cook, and participate in other activities of a daily life in rural Cuba. After the trip, they complete 3 exercises which will be explained.

Exercise: 2pp. essay: Describe your experience working in a specific community. Reference at least two of this week's readings to frame your experiences.

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Reading:


Week 5
Anthropology and Tourism
Exercise: 1p. essay: Do you feel in Cuba like a student or like a tourist? Explain your selection. Cite at least two academic sources.

THEME 2 Cuban Artistic Expression: An Anthropological Vision

Week 6
Music and Popular Culture
Exercise: 1p. essay: From your experience in Cuba, what impact has Cuban music and its rhythms had on you, and how is music enjoyed and/or used differently in your home community (in the U.S. or other home)?

Week 7
Ballet and dance in Cuba: Anthropology and theater. Contemporary Cuban theater. The Cuban Art Factory Project (FAC)
Week 8
Midterm evaluation: presentation of midterm essays and discussion of selected topics.

Week 9
Artistic Cultural Values
The Development of the Arts in Cuba: Painting, engraving and sculpting. A survey of most representative painters, engravers, sculptors and their works. 
Instructor-guided field visit: National Museum of Fine Arts.
Exercise: 2pp. essay: Choose one piece of art from the National Museum of Fine Arts and describe its relation with the historical moment and Cuban culture. Make sure to mention title of the chosen work, author and periodicity.

Week 10
Representation of Cuba and Cubans in Literature
Cuban literature from an anthropological point of view. An examination of classic books like Cecilia Valdés Gallego, Biografía de un cimarrón, Las Honradas Las impuras, La novela de mi vida, Fresa y Chocolate, El vuelo del gato, SAB.
Exercise: Class presentation about the book you received during the first class, keeping in mind the different communities represented in Cuban literature.

Theme 3: Cuban population and religion

Week 11
Demographics of Cuba
Contemporary Cuban population: composition, distribution and demographic characteristics. The challenges of low birth rate and aging population. Large family vs. small family.
Exercise: 1p. essay on the challenges of birth. Interview 2 women and 2 men about what it means to have a child in Cuba.
Reading:

Week 12
Early Cuban People
Native Cuban cultures. First population settlements. Are there descendants of native Cubans today? Cuban native heritage. Communities or social aggregations.
Instructor-guided field visit: Montané Museum.
Reading: Rangel, A Historia del Museo Antropológico Montané

Week 13
Popular Religion
Instructor-guided field visit Museos de Guanabacoa y Regla
Exercise: 1p. essay on your impressions of the museum. Reference at least one academic work.

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Week 14
Final presentations and final paper submission.

Week 15
Debriefing and course evaluation.

Selected Bibliography


Colectivo de Autores (2011) Las relaciones raciales en Cuba, Fundación Fernando Ortiz, La Habana.


