

LALS 3300 (CRN 34729)  
Contemporary Cuba  
May 2017

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Course description and objectives

This unique course offers the student a study-abroad experience as well as an opportunity to provide service to people in need abroad. Students will attain first-hand knowledge about contemporary Cuban culture through a one-week service trip to Havana, Cuba as a required component of this course. There will be one week of instruction on campus before the trip and one week of instruction upon return. On the trip, students will participate in service projects (such as tutoring in English and improving educational facilities), practice speaking Spanish with Cubans, learn about Havana, including its architecture, music and dance traditions, and gain knowledge about the geology, agricultural production and ecological projects in contemporary Cuba. This learning experience will culminate with public presentations in which the student will give back to the UCA community by sharing what they have learned about Cuba. This course will be held concurrently with Spanish 3315. Instruction, writing assignments and formal presentations will be in English.

Evaluation

Participation: 15%  
Service reflection journals: 25%  
Oral presentation: 25%  
Final paper: 35%

Percentages

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

Methods of Evaluation

*Participation:*

Students must attend and participate actively and attentively in all required classes and excursions. In order to receive the maximum points, they must demonstrate their engagement by asking and answering questions when appropriate.

*Service reflection journals:*

Students will write a two-page reflection upon completion of each day of service work that they complete. These journals should describe the activities and accomplishments as well as reflect on any frustrations or difficulties during the project. They are also a space for you to connect what you have been learning about the culture elsewhere with your experience on the project. Finally, you should outline what you learned or are inspired to find out more about after working on this

project. In addition to documenting your learning, these journals will help you develop your ideas for your final projects and oral presentations.

*Oral presentation:*

Approximately two weeks after returning from Cuba, students will present to the UCA and Conway communities regarding what they learned about Cuba and themselves through their personal experiences working and learning abroad.

*Final paper:*

The final paper will consist of a ten page paper that frames the service experience and the cultural knowledge gained during the week-long trip to Cuba with documented research that demonstrates a contextual understanding of the issues and problems specific to each community that you worked with. This paper should not simply be a resubmission of the service journals, but should put the service experience in a cultural context based on what you have learned through lectures, readings, excursions and guided tours, as well as your own research. At a minimum, your paper should answer the following questions: Was your project effective? What impact did it have on you and the community you served? What were the cultural obstacles to the successful implementation of this project's goals? Are there similar needs in your community? Are the obstacles to resolving them similar or different? In preparing your paper, you should look back at your journals and note areas of confusion or frustration and conduct further research if necessary. This research might take the form of oral interviews inside or outside Cuba, or traditional print-based library research. Students should explain in their paper how this new knowledge changes their perspective on their service experience and/or explain how they might approach the projects differently, either in attitude or in terms of the project setup and organization.

• **STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

• **DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3135. You may also wish to speak with your instructor. Please refer to the UCA Undergraduate Bulletin for information on UCA's sexual harassment policy and all other university-wide policies.

• **BUILDING EMERGENCIES:** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes. Site specific emergency plan for Irby Hall: <http://uca.edu/mysafety/files/2013/06/bep-irbyhall-eps-20122013.pdf>

• **Title IX Disclosure**

If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student

may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. \*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.

## SCHEDULE

Pre-Trip instruction at UCA *Pre-trip instruction will take place from 9-11am Monday-Friday in a UCA classroom*

Monday May 15 Course introduction. Lecture on **Cuban politics and economics**: Batista, the Castro Regime, the dual-currency system and U.S.-Cuban relations.

Tuesday May 16 Homework: Watch film *Habana Blues* before class and prepare the following questions: What happens when the artist enters the commercial sphere? Are artists really free in capitalist societies? How do Cuban artists change when they leave the country? Is communism good for art?  
Discussion: **Art and Revolution**

Wednesday May 17 Homework: Watch film *Suite Habana* prior to class and prepare the following questions: Did the pace of life in the film seem typical of an urban environment? What were some of the surprises or plot twists in the film? Mention one unusual juxtaposition of events or scenes. What were the varied roles and activities of some of the featured characters. How does this compare with the lives of you and your friends and family in the States?  
Discussion: **Everyday life in Habana**

Thursday May 18 Homework: Watch film *Fresa y chocolate* before class and prepare the following questions: Despite what we have learned about the tension between homosexuality and the Castro dictatorship, one could argue that Diego is very patriotic. What are some of the statements or actions that make him so? Might he be considered a revolutionary? Justify your answer.  
Discussion: **Sexuality and Gender in the communist state.**  
Lecture: from concentration camps to pride parades: advances in LGBT rights in Cuba.

Friday May 19 Homework: Read article “Black Music in a Raceless Society”; read selections of poetry by Nicolás Guillén and prepare the following questions: What have been some of the positive changes in the visibility and appreciation for Afro-Cuban culture since the Revolution? What have been some of the limitations of the Cuban

State's promotion of Afro-Cuban Culture? How does Guillén negotiate between White and Black culture in his poetry? Is "Tengo" a pro-Revolution or anti-Revolution poem? What does it imply about social changes related to race under communist rule?  
Discussion: **Race and the Castro Regime**

Instruction in Cuba

*Discussion session times will vary depending on service and excursion schedule, but will last 1 hour and will take place primarily in the evening at the Casa.*

Sunday May 21

Travel to Cuba. Introduction and orientation.

Monday May 22

Excursions: Calle Obispo, Havana Vieja cultural overview; dance lesson; Canonazo ceremony  
Lecture: Cuban economic changes and labor environment; overview of work project and facility

Tuesday May 23

**Service project 1:** English tutoring for professionals  
Excursion: the malecón  
Discussion: service project 1 and reports on conversations with Cubans  
Cooking class  
Homework: write service journal 1

Wednesday May 24

**Service project 2:** Repair and maintenance of educational facility  
Excursions: Afro-Caribbean Mural Art Project; Revolutionary Museum; Paseo del Prado  
Discussion: draw parallel between films, *Fresa y chocolate*, *Habana Blues* and the art projects you have learned about today.  
Homework: write service journal 2

Thursday May 25

Excursion: Viñales Valley agricultural, geological and ecological tour  
Discussion: service project 2 and reports on conversations with Cubans

Friday May 26

Excursions: Muraleando Community Art Project; Vedado architectural tour  
**Service project 3:** elderly rehabilitation  
Homework: write service journal 3

Saturday May 27

Return trip to U.S.

Post-trip instruction at UCA

*Post-trip instruction will take place from 9am-11am Monday-Thursday.*

- Monday May 29                      Discussion: reflections on trip, preparation and instruction for oral presentations and final projects.
- Tuesday May 30                      Homework: Read “Cuba and its Music” and answer the following questions: What are the main differences between African American and Afro-Cuban music and why are these two traditions so different? Describe some of the main features of the Lucumí, Abakuá and Palo traditions.  
Discussion: **Afro-Cuban music and religious practices**
- Wednesday May 31                      Homework: Read *The Agüero Sisters* before class and prepare the following questions: What are the different attitudes of Reina, Constanca and Heberto toward communism versus capitalism and how do their viewpoints change throughout the novel? How do the Afro-Cuban traditions that we’ve learned about come into play in the novel? Pick one topic that we have studied and explain how it relates to the novel.  
Discussion: **Cuba and its Diaspora**
- Thursday June 1                      Class oral presentations and community discussion  
Turn in final paper