

CPO 3990 Cuba, Castro & the USA
Fall 2010
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A country whose history overlaps with that of the United States, as in America's Revolutionary War of Independence, the Spanish-American War, and the October Missile Crisis, to mention only the most dramatic, Cuba has been ruled by half a century by the Castros—Fidel and Raul. An octogenarian, Fidel Castro has only recently returned to public view after two years during which he was convalescing from a near-fatal illness. At the time, he stepped down as “president” in favor of his brother, while retaining the post of head of the Communist Party. When he or his brother (also an old man) dies, the United States will have an opportunity to exert a strong influence on the future of the Island.

The objectives of this course are to foster understanding of pre-Castro Cuba, the nature of the Castro regime, how it got there, its doings over half a century, and how the Cuban people have fared under its rule. We will begin with an overview of Cuba before Castro. Then we will examine the Castro regime in some detail. Finally, we will consider the prospects for the establishment of a stable democracy, the revival of the economy, and the renewal of USA-Cuba relations in mutually beneficial ways.

The format of the course is a mixture of lectures and discussion, with an emphasis on the latter. There will be no exams: a combination of contributions to class discussion, essays, and an oral presentation will constitute the basis for the grade for the course. You are expected to come to class having read the assignment and prepared to discuss it. How much you contribute to the discussion during the week, in class and on the e-learning forums available for the purpose, will determine your “Preparation and Contribution” (P&C) grade. On days when oral presentations or individual consultations are scheduled, the P&C will count as much as a regular week.

There will be four written assignments: three “review of reviews” (R&R) essays and a “synthetic” essay. The R&R essays will run no more than five pages of text (double-spaced, excluding title page, table, references, illustrations, etc.), and the synthetic essay no more than ten pages of text (again, excluding title page, table, references, illustrations, etc.). Each of the R&R essays will compare and evaluate reviews of one of the books assigned for reading. I will post the reviews, as well as formats for the essays, in due course. As its name implies, the synthetic essay will integrate some of the assigned readings, plus several others selected in consultation with the instructor, pursuant to covering some aspect of Cuban politics or USA-Cuba relations, past, present, or future, from a list provided by the instructor. Finally, all students will make a ten to twelve minute oral presentation on their synthetic essays. Formats for the essays and the oral presentation will be posted in due course.

The final grade will be broken down as follows:

P&C, 25%; review essays, 15% each, for a total of 45%; the synthetic essay, 25%, and the oral presentation, 5%.

The texts shown below are required reading and available in the bookstore. Also, articles and papers will be assigned, as well.

Tom Gjelten	<i>Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba: The Biography of a Cause</i>	Penguin Books, 2008
Anthony DePalma	<i>The Man Who Invented Fidel: Castro, Cuba, and Herbert L. Matthews of The New York Times</i>	Public Affairs, 2006
Samuel Farber	<i>The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered (Envisioning Cuba)</i> (Paperback)	The University of North Carolina Press, 2006

Full disclosure. It is not without interest that your instructor was born in Cuba and with his family left the Island in April 1961, a week before the Bay of Pigs expedition. The reason for emigrating was political: like hundreds of thousands of Cubans, we did not want to live under a communist regime. We left Havana for Mexico by ship, and in September of that year we entered the U.S.A. with residence visas. I grew up in Miami, where I graduated from high school and earned a B.A. in Government and Economics at the University of Miami. I became a U.S. citizen in 1969, the same year I went to Indiana University to pursue a Ph.D. in political science. During my professional career, I have published a few items on Cuba or Castro. They are available on my webpage, and several will be assigned for reading. As a political scientist, I strive to study public affairs objectively, that is, guided by reason and abiding by the weight of the evidence. Needless to say, from experience and study and I have well-formed views on the Castro regime, what preceded it, its origins and development. Nevertheless, interpretations about Cuba other than mine are welcome. Of course, you need to be prepared to defend them, as I do mine. Feel free to speak your mind and offer alternative hypotheses and conjectures about Cuban politics and USA-Cuba relations. It is through discussion and mutual criticism that we sort out fact from fiction, accumulate knowledge, correct errors, and acquire confidence in the soundness of our judgments about the world.

Writing

No one should graduate from UWF (or from any College, for that matter) who does not write well. That's one of the skills you come here to acquire or perfect, and it is part of my job to require that you work toward that goal. Accordingly, if you know that your writing is not up to par, well before they are due you need to take drafts of your essays to the Writing Lab. An adequate rule of thumb for judging the quality of your writing is the grades you earned in Comp I and II. If it was less than a solid B in either course, you probably need help to improve it. To make sure that you do, if I encounter a badly written essay, I will assign a provisional grade of 0 and set a deadline by which you need to return it, along with an improved draft, after receiving assistance from the Writing Lab. Moreover, I will check your Comp I and II grades, and if you earned less than a B in either of them, I will take 10 points off what you actually earn in the second draft for not having taking the original to the Writing Lab in the first place. Needless to say, you need to start scheduling your appointments with the Writing Lab *right now*, and you need to start working on your essays at least a week in advance. If you wait

until the last day, you probably won't be able to get an appointment and you will suffer the consequences.

Integrity

It goes without saying, but it bears repeating anyway, that anyone enrolled in this course makes a commitment to act with integrity. As the home page of the Department of Government puts it, this means "conducting ourselves honorably, conspicuously refraining from lying or cheating about our work. There can be no phony excuses for failing to complete an assignment, no turning in another's work as one's own, no plagiarism." Anyone found to have plagiarized is subject to being assessed a penalty up to and including being assigned an F in the course and reported to university authorities for additional sanctions.

Regarding the last-named offense, here is UWF's plagiarism policy: "The UWF Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct, states: 'Plagiarism. The act of representing the ideas, words, creations or work of another as one's own.' Plagiarism combines theft with fraud, and the penalty is correspondingly severe: failure for the assignment and, in some cases, for the entire course. At the instructor's discretion, she/he may recommend that the student be suspended from the university. Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas." (For additional information on plagiarism, go the UWF's home page, click on keyword search, and enter "plagiarism policy" (in quotation marks), which allows you to download a word document several pages long.)

Just to be sure there remains to doubt in anyone's mind what plagiarism is, I require to take the Library's Tutorial on Plagiarism *and* to pass a test on the same, missing no more than 1 question. You will need to e-mail me the results no later than Wednesday, September 1, at 2:00 p.m. The module and test are available at http://library.uwf.edu/eli2/new_tutorials/module_plagiarism/outcomes.shtml

Student Conduct

It is the students' responsibility to read the Student Code of Conduct, available at <http://www.uwf.edu/judicialaffairs>. Please know that anyone violating its provisions may be penalized by expulsion from a course or the university.

Disability Services

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu, (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

Schedule of Readings and Writing Assignments
(through September 20 only—a complete schedule
will be made available before that date)

Date	Assignment
Monday, August 23	Introduction to the course
Wednesday, August 25	Gjelten, Preface and Chs. 1-4
Monday, August 30	Gjelten, Chs. 5-9
Wednesday, September 1	Gjelten, Chs. 10-13
Monday, September 6	NO CLASS. Labor Day
Wednesday, September 8	Gjelten, Chs. 14-18
Monday, September 13	Gjelten, Chs. 19-23
Wednesday, September 15	NO CLASS. Work on Review Essay #1
Monday, September 20	NO CLASS. Review Essay #1 due in drop box no later than 3:00 p.m. The dropbox will close at that time. No late submissions accepted, no excuses allowed