Societies of the World 15

The Cuban Revolution, 1956-1971: A Self-Debate

Jorge I. Domínguez
Fall term 2016
Office Hours: MW, 11:15-12:00
MW at 10, plus section
WCFIA, 1737 Cambridge St.
Course web site: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/12651
Office #K216, tel. 617-495-5982
email: Jorge_Dominguez@harvard.edu

WEEK 1

W Aug 31 01. Introduction

F Sep 2 Discussion in lecture hall: Why might revolutions occur?


[Coursepack] Louis A. Pérez, Jr., Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution (Fifth edition; Oxford University Press, 2014), 216-245

WEEK 2

(Weekly sections with Teaching Fellows begin meeting this week, times to be arranged.)

W Sep 7 02. The Unnecessary Revolution

F Sep 9 03. Modernization and Revolution


[Course website] Jorge J. Domínguez, “Autobiography of a Cuban Businessman in the 1940s and 1950s” (typescript)


[Course website] Edward Gonzalez, Cuba under Castro: The Limits of Charisma (Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 13-110
Week 3

M Sep 12 04. The Necessary Revolution: State Structures

W Sep 14 05. The Accidental Revolution

F Sep 16 Question Period


[Coursepack] Marta Harnecker, Fidel Castro’s Political Strategy: From Moncada to Victory, with History Will Absolve Me (Pathfinder Press, 1987), 14-17, 45-70

[Course website or click link] Fidel Castro, History Will Absolve Me http://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1953/10/16.htm

[Coursepack] Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution (Pathfinder Press, 1987), 45-50, 55-60, 73-81

Week 4

M Sep 19 06. The Rebellion: Castro’s Strategic Genius

W Sep 21 07. The Rebellion: Collective Insurgency

F Sep 23 Extra section just for Freshmen in lecture hall


idx?id=FRUS.FRUS195860v06


WEEK 5

M Sep 26 08. Revolution Betrayed: A New Dictatorship
W Sep 28 09. Revolution Fulfilled: The Logic of Socialism
F Sep 30 “Meeting of US Secretary of State Advisers” discussion in lecture hall

Harvard Coop or Lamont Reserves] Suchlicki, Cuba, 137-151

Coursepack] Pérez, Cuba, 246-267

Coursepack] Cuban Economic Research Project, A Study on Cuba, 740-770

Course website] O’Connor, The Origins of Socialism in Cuba, 279-314


WEEK 6

M Oct 3 10. US/USSR I: The Structure of US Hegemony
M Oct 3 FIRST PAPER DUE at class time
W Oct 5 11. US/USSR II: The U.S. Pushed
F Oct 7 General Hour Test Review in lecture hall

WEEK 7

M Oct 10 HOLIDAY
W Oct 12 HOUR TEST: in lecture hall
F Oct 14 12. US/USSR III: Cuba’s Initiatives

Coursepack] Philip Bonsal, Cuba, Castro, and the United States (University of Pittsburgh Press,
Societies of the World 15

1971), 38-77, 89-91, 100-153


WEEK 8


M Oct 17 Cuban feature film “Memories of Underdevelopment” at 7 PM, CGIS South, Tsai Auditorium #S010, 1730 Cambridge St., followed by discussion


F Oct 21 Documentary film: PBS “Castro’s Challenge,” in lecture hall

[Coursepack pages 108-111 are out of order; so read carefully or see course website for pages 87-117] Lee Lockwood, Castro’s Cuba, Cuba’s Fidel (Revised edition. Westview Press), 87-117, 147-191, 211-234, 290-294

[Course website] Gonzalez, Cuba under Castro, 146-189

[Course website or click link] Richard Fagen, “Charismatic Authority and the Leadership of Fidel Castro,” Western Political Quarterly 18: 2, Part 1 (1965), 275-284


WEEK 9

M Oct 24 15. Economy I: The Transition to Socialism

M Oct 24 Cuban feature film “One Way or Another” at 7 PM, CGIS South, Tsai Auditorium #S010, 1730 Cambridge St., followed by discussion

W Oct 26 16. Economy II: The Transition to Chaos

F Oct 28 Question Period

[Coursepack] Carmelo Mesa Lago, The Economy of Socialist Cuba (University of New Mexico Press, 1981), 7-28


[Coursepack] Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution, 203-204, 210-230

WEEK 10

M Oct 31 17. The Making of a New Society

M Oct 31 Documentary film “Nobody Listened” at 7 PM, CGIS South, Tsai Auditorium #S010, 1730 Cambridge St.

W Nov 2 18. The State versus the Society

F Nov 4 19. The Totalitarian Regime


[Coursepack] Lowry Nelson, Cuba: The Measure of a Revolution (University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 147-162


**WEEK 11**

**M Nov 7**  
20. The Good Socialist Citizen

**W Nov 9**  
Question Period

**F Nov 11**  
21. The Duty of Internationalism

[Course website] Jorge Valls, Twenty Years and Forty Days: Life in a Cuban Prison (Americas Watch, 1986), 1-68

[Coursepack] Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution, 231-241, 365-370


[Course website or click link] Ernesto (Che) Guevara, Letters to his children, his parents, his daughter Hildita, and Fidel Castro http://www.companeroche.com/index.php?id=33

[Coursepack] Fagen, The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba, 69-103


WEEK 12

M Nov 14  22. The Cuban Threat

W Nov 16  Question Period

F Nov 18  23. Building the State


[Harvard Coop or Lamont Reserves] Jorge I. Domínguez, To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba’s Foreign Policy (Harvard University Press, 1989), 61-77

[Course website or click link] Ernesto (Che) Guevara, “At the Afro-Asian Conference” (1965) http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/02/24.htm


WEEK 13

M Nov 21  24. Building a Socialist Nation

W Nov 23  HOLIDAY

F Nov 25  HOLIDAY

[Course website] Morley, Imperial State, 301-316
[Coursepack] Pérez, Cuba, 268-276, 283-287

[Course website] Gonzalez, Cuba under Castro, 190-216


[Coursepack] Nelson, Cuba: The Measure of a Revolution, 184-206

WEEK 14

M Nov 28 25. Cuba Today

W Nov 30 “Emergency Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba” discussion in lecture hall

F Dec 2 26. Presentation of Final Exam and Concluding Lecture

F Dec 2 SECOND PAPER DUE at lecture

READING PERIOD ASSIGNMENT. Read one of the following:


OR


S Dec 10 FINAL EXAMINATION, 9AM until noon

Course Requirements:

This course meets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 10:00 a.m., plus a section at some other hour to be arranged. Four films will be shown, three of them in the evening. You are required to attend all of these activities.

GRADING PATTERN:
Monday, October 3, first paper due, 15% of grade
Wednesday, October 12, hour test, 15% of grade
Societies of the World 15

Friday, December 2, second paper due, 15% of grade
Section participation: 15% of grade, includes 5 ONE-PAGE PAPERS
Final examination: TBD, 40% of grade
Failure to fulfill any one of the requirements leads to failure in the course. No pass/fail.

PAPERS: times new roman font, type-size 12, double-spaced. Late papers will receive a grade penalty.

FIRST PAPER (7-8 pp.): You are an Adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State or to the White House Chief of Staff. It is 1957 or 1958. You chair a meeting called to forecast events in Cuba. Write a memorandum to your boss. First, summarize briefly what you as the Adviser think are the facts; cite and refer to primary documents from WEEK 4 of the course. Second, sketch two policy options that emerge from the discussion. Assume that all public statements made by Cuban rebels are known to you as Adviser but assume also that the private correspondence in the Franqui and Guevara readings is not. Third, step outside of your role as Adviser: identify what difference (if any) it would have made for the statement of the facts or for either option if the private correspondence had been public. Refer to primary readings from the course. A good argument anticipates the objections that other reasonable people will raise. The first paper is due Monday, October 3 at class time.

SECOND PAPER (6-7 pp.): You can choose either of two topics: 1) Calculate the Soviet economic subsidy to Cuba through sugar purchases under two different quantitative assumptions. Formulate arguments that contradict each other based on the two calculations. Assess which calculation and which argument makes the most sense. Data will be given. Or 2) Assume that you are a political actor in Cuba in the 1960s and that you wish to promote or to change a particular policy. Design a strategy to accomplish your goal. Identify your likely supporters and opponents and assess the chances of success. Refer explicitly to course readings. The second paper is due Friday, December 2 at lecture.

POLICY ON COLLABORATION: Students are encouraged to engage in conversations with the Teaching Fellows and the professor as well as with each other about their work in this course. This course values the exploration of intellectual differences through respectful dialogue. However, it is also expected that all paper assignments and examinations represent the student’s own work. Students should always take care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from other people or sources. Collaboration in the completion of paper assignments and examinations is always prohibited.

SECTION PARTICIPATION AND GRADING: To improve your learning and the quality of section discussion, YOU WILL WRITE FIVE ONE-PAGE PAPERS, AT LEAST TWO OF WHICH MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE THE HOUR TEST. Turn them in to your Teaching Fellow prior to section. You will receive “discussion questions” in advance of section; pick a question to write your paper. You will get a check-mark on these papers; if warranted, you might get a “check-minus” or a “check-plus.” These papers will be part of the Teaching Fellow’s assessment of your section participation.