Course Description: The course will examine the early history of Cuba, including the circumstances of its independence and the role of the United States in the early years of the Cuban Republic. It will examine how a small Caribbean island nation became an important player during the Cold War and the focus of a nuclear confrontation, and how Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution have managed to stay in power for half a century. The course will take a close look at United States relations with Cuba through the years, and how the Cuba issue has affected domestic policies in the United States and other countries. The course will also look at the role the Cuban diaspora plays in the foreign policy process. Finally, the course will discuss President Obama’s December 17, 2014 initiative to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba and possible scenarios for a transition in Cuba in the next few years.

Goal of Course: The goal of this course is to provide students with general knowledge about Cuba, its history, government, and economy, with a particular emphasis on the Cuban Revolution. The goal is for students to be able to critically analyze events in Cuba in an objective manner. Progress will be measured by class participation, a project (book report or participation in a debate), a midterm and a final exam.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course students will be able to identify important events in Cuban history, evaluate U.S.-Cuba relations through the years, be familiar with the conditions that led to the assumption of Fidel Castro in 1959, and be able to cite the different stages of the Cuban Revolution. Students will also be acquainted with the current dynamic of U.S.-Cuba relations, will be able to analyze Cuba’s actions in the international arena, and will be fully cognizant on how the Cuba issue has affected U.S. domestic politics. Students will be intimately familiar with Cuba’s current leadership, including President Raul Castro, and will be able to analyze possible future scenarios for U.S.-Cuba relations under the current Obama policy and make intelligent predictions about the future of Cuba.

Course Overview:

Part One: The Historical Roots of the Cuban Revolution

A. Cuba’s Independence
B. The Platt Amendment and Future Repercussions
C. The Rise of Fidel Castro

Part Two: The Different Stages of the Cuban Revolution

A. Castro Comes to Power
B. Spreading Revolution
C. U.S. Policy Through the Years

Part Three: Other Actors

A. The Diaspora
B. Human Rights and Dissidents
C. Enter Raul

Part Four: Cuba’s Future

A. Obama’s Gambit
B. Scenarios for Succession
C. What about democracy?

Grades will be determined thusly:

Class attendance and participation: 10%
Midterm: 25%
Class Projects: 25%
Final: 40%

For the class project, students will have one of two options:

Option 1

- A book report, of a minimum of 5 pages. Students will turn in the written report and give an oral presentation to the class; and
- Participation in class projects or a class debate as assigned by the instructor.

Option 2

- A paper on a topic relevant to the course. The topic must be approved by the instructor. The paper must be a minimum of 10 pages. There will be an oral presentation to the class. Graduate students must choose this option.

The following required texts are available for purchase at the Marvin Center bookstore:


The following texts are recommended for additional reading:


Schedule:

Part One: The Historical Roots of the Cuban Revolution

**September 3** – Introduction; Cuba’s Independence  
Suchlicki, pp. 1-74

**September 10** – The Platt Amendment and Future Repercussions  
Suchlicki, pp. 75-115

**September 17** – Who is Fidel Castro?  
Latell, pp. 24-59, 79-99, Suchlicki pp. 116-133

Part Two: The Different Stages of the Cuban Revolution

**September 24** – Castro Comes to Power  
Suchlicki, pp. 137-151, Latell pp. 142-159

**October 1** – Cuba in the International Arena  
Suchlicki, pp. 152-204, Latell, pp. 161-205

**October 8** – The Diaspora

**October 15** – MIDTERM EXAM

Part Three: Other Actors

**October 22** – The U.S. Response (Class Debates)

**October 29** – Human Rights and Dissidents (Book Reports)

**November 5** – Who is Raul?  
Latell, pp. 1-21, 61-78, 121-141

Part Four: Cuba’s Future

**November 12** – President Obama’s December 2014 Initiative (Papers Due)

**November 19** – Scenarios for Succession  
Suchlicki, pp. 205-225; Latell, pp. 207-264

**December 3** – Predictions for the Future and Final Review

Class Policies

Attendance policy: Since class meets once a week, it is highly recommended that students strive to attend all classes.
Late work will not be accepted.

Make-up exams will only be allowed under the most extreme conditions.

University Policy on Religious Holidays: Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

Support for Students Outside the Classroom:

- Disability Support Services: Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

- University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300. The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

  - crisis and emergency mental health consultations
  - confidential assessment, counselling services (individual and small group), and referrals http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

Security: In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.