

Study Sociology in Cuba

SOC 386.3: Selected Topics in Caribbean Sociology: Cuba, Revolution and Social Change

Overview:

SOC 386.3 provides an intensive introduction to Cuba and its unique social, economic and political revolution. What were the roots of the 1959 revolution? How has it affected the lives of ordinary Cubans? What are the prospects for the Cuban revolution?

The emphasis in this course is on *hearing* the perspective of Cubans (professors, students and others), and *seeing/ experiencing* contemporary Cuba and its revolution through varied field trips to museums and historical sites, community-based organizations, organic urban farms, etc. You'll get to experience Havana, a fascinating city with a unique architectural heritage recognized by UNESCO, also known for its vibrant social and cultural life.

SOC 386.3 provides a sociological overview of the Cuban Revolution as defined, described, and analyzed from comparative perspectives in Sociology. This course will give you unique insights into Cuba before, during, and after the revolution. All of the lectures are delivered by Cuban professors, most of them senior scholars from the University of Havana. The lecturers provide a Cuban, insider perspective, and there are plenty of opportunities in each class for discussion and questions. Field trips take place almost every afternoon, and provide concrete illustrations of the topics discussed in the lectures,

Examples of lecture topics include:

- Cuban history and revolution
- Jose Martí: humanism and values
- Rural life and agriculture
- Women in Cuban society
- Afro-Cuban traditions
- Cuba today: contemporary social, political and economic transformations

Field trips take place almost every afternoon, and provide opportunities to connect lectures to various museums and other sites of interest to the day's topic of interest. Examples of field trips:

- old and modern Havana
- Museum of the Revolution
- Museum of Afro-Cuban religion
- urban farms and markets
- Higher Institute of the Arts
- plantations and cooperatives in Pinar del Rio province

The prerequisite for SOC 386.3 is 12 c.u. in Sociology; students with fewer than 12 credits may be admitted with departmental permission. Knowledge of Spanish is helpful, but not required (most participants have no Spanish)

SOC 386.3 will be of interest not only to Sociology majors, but also to students in International Studies, Political Studies, History, and other disciplines.

Program Details for 2010:

Dates: *May 1 – 16 2010*

Cost:

(a) U of S tuition: \$451.14 (individual registration and payment)

(b) Program fee: \$2990

This program fee includes the following:

- return air fare from Saskatoon to Havana
- double-occupancy accommodation (single rooms are available at extra cost)
- daily breakfast
- academic program, including lectures, field trips, entry fees
- Cuban tourist card

The program fee *does not* cover the following costs of participation:

- your U of S tuition
- travel and medical insurance
- meals, apart from daily breakfast
- Cuban departure tax (\$25)
- personal costs and tips

Payment Schedule:

A **deposit of \$500**, payable by money order only, will be due upon acceptance into the program. This deposit will be *non-refundable* after applications for the program have closed.

Balance of the Program Fee: \$2490 payable in full by **March 1 2010**.

Cancellation penalty:

- \$500 deposit will be *non-refundable* after applications for the program have closed
- For the remainder of program fee, cancellation penalty March 16 – 24 2010 will be deposit plus 50% of the balance paid
- After March 24 2010, the program fee will be 100% non-refundable

Please Note:

All participants in this program are required to purchase the full package as advertised, including travel on the specified dates. Students wishing to remain in Cuba after the completion of the program must make all of their post-program arrangements independently and at their own cost (including the cost of their return flight to Canada).

Financial Assistance:

Eligible students may apply for a travel study award from the Global Commons. Arts & Science students may apply for College study abroad awards; access application forms via the Arts & Science Study Abroad website: <http://artsandscience.usask.ca/studyabroad>. The application deadline is April 1 2010.

For further information, contact the Coordinator:

Rodolfo Pino
r.pino@usask.ca

Information may also be obtained from Bob Stock at bob.stock@usask.ca

Applications:

The **application form** may be downloaded from the Arts & Science Study Abroad website:
<http://artsandscience.usask.ca/studyabroad>

Submit completed applications (or obtain an application):

Department of Sociology office,
Arts Room 1019

Contact: Kristen Harms

Email: kristen.harms@usask.ca Phone: 966-6947

Application Deadline: January 20 2010

Early applications will be accepted and are strongly encouraged



Program Coordinator:

Rodolfo Pino has taken students to Cuba six times in recent years. In his role as Cuba Program Coordinator, Rodolfo draws upon his diverse background in Latin American studies, and his experience as an instructor in courses in several disciplines at the University of Saskatchewan (Sociology, Native Studies, Religious Studies, and Anthropology). With a background as a professional musician, Rodolfo is able to provide insights into Cuba's vibrant musical and cultural life. He has worked over the years with the same core group of Cuban lecturers, and provides easy-to-follow translation for lectures and other situations.

What students have said about the Cuba program:

- I have never experienced any thing like this before: every one should be given this opportunity to examine their culture form the perspective of another. This whole experience was absolutely invaluable. It changes your life.
- ... thoroughly enjoyable. I appreciated the enthusiasm and passion of the Cuban professors.
- I can't say enough how amazing this course was – it really turned me on to Sociology classes in a way I never expected. ... the topics grab you and demand your attention and thought. Loved it!

Cuba and the revolution:

Less than a hundred miles south of Florida, a unique social, economic and political revolution has been in progress for 50 years. In January 1959 a revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro defeated the country's American-backed government. The sweeping reforms initiated by Castro's new government challenged the status quo and deeply-entrenched U.S. interests.

Among the changes the new regime worked to initiate:

- broad economic reorganization, emphasizing state direction of the economy
- priority to education and health care as fundamental rights for all Cubans
- social reforms, benefitting formerly disadvantaged groups such as Afro-Cubans and emphasizing gender equality
- an internationalist perspective, initially focussed on the idea of exporting the revolution and later on humanitarian support in areas of greatest need

American hostility to the revolution has not waned. The effect of the American economic and political embargo has been particularly serious since the collapse of Cuba's former economic partner, the Soviet Union. The 1990s were tough times for Cubans, with shortages of food, fuel, and other necessities. Canadian investment and cooperation has played a very important role in Cuba's survival, as have Canadian and other tourists. With the decline of the old sugar-based economy, Cuba counts heavily on tourism as an economic engine of growth.

Fifty years after the revolution, Cuba has experienced many successes – not least the survival of the revolution – but also significant challenges. These range from continuing shortfalls in food production to questions about human rights and political freedom. SOC 386.3 explores these issues on the spot; you'll learn through your encounters with Cuban professors and students, from field trips, and from your own observations and interactions with Cubans.

Havana:

Havana, Cuba's capital, was founded in 1515. The Old City of Havana is a unique treasure-trove of historical architecture, ranging from grand structures such as the Cathedral to neighbourhoods where colonial-era homes and shops line narrow streets. Much has been done in recent years to restore this colonial architecture – the world's richest assemblage of its kind. Not far from the old city are newer neighbourhoods that reflect 20th century influences – the old capital building which is modelled on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, and post-revolutionary developments. The many old (1940s and 1950s) American cars contribute to the city's unique feel.

The city bustles as its two million inhabitants work and play. Havana is a centre of learning; the University of Havana is the largest, oldest and most famous of several institutions. As the capital city, it is also the site of most major political rallies, such as the annual May 1 gathering in the Plaza of the Revolution. In Havana, one is never far from the ocean. There are many places of interest along the Malecón, a boulevard built along the edge of the harbour. Residents of the city gather along the Malecón to socialize, and relax at beaches located east and west of the city.

You'll certainly get acquainted with Havana not only through field trips to various destinations in the city, but also through your own free-time activities. Take advantage of opportunities to explore Old Havana, meet students at the University, shop for souvenirs in the markets, attend a concert, enjoy the many varieties of Cuban music played in restaurants and clubs. The opportunity to explore and appreciate Havana and to interact with its people is a rich 'hidden curriculum' attached to this course.

Course Requirements:

Text: Chomsky, Aviva, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff. Eds. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Expectations:

The following are requirements for students taking this course:

- attend all required pre-departure orientation sessions and satisfactorily meet all University risk and responsibility requirements prior to departure
- attend all lectures, field trips, and tutorial discussions
- complete the assigned reading program for the course
- maintain a daily reflective journal
- complete two short assignments while in Cuba
- submit a course essay that meets stated expectations

Assessment:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Course Essay	40%	2 Weeks after return
Reflective Journal	30%	2 Weeks after return
Short Essay	15%	
Short Essay	15%	

