

HISL 6910  
Latin American Commodities in Chains

Fall 2013  
Tulane University

Instruction: Prof. Kris Lane, Office Hours: 10:30-11:30 a.m., T/Th (and by appt.)  
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This course serves as an introduction to the history of Latin American commodities and their links to the rest of the world. The idea or model of 'commodity chains,' first articulated by Immanuel Wallerstein and Terence Hopkins in 1977, allows us to examine not only production of raw and manufactured materials but also to trace their linkages through transport and consumption abroad. The chains do not only 'link up' one-way, nor has Latin America only produced raw materials. We will take a close look at commodities as material goods to be traded in the world market, but our main interest is in the people involved in and affected by their production, circulation, and consumption. The point is to examine and compare Latin America's longstanding and ever-shifting global commodity connections or 'en-chainments,' with an eye toward consequences (including the unintended) and opportunities: social, political, environmental, or economic. How, for example, have Latin American commodities sparked human chain migrations, both forced and free? How have they helped to prop or topple states? How have they served to challenge borders?

Learning Outcomes: You will not be trained in commodity trading, as this would require off-site work in Chicago and New York, but you will leave this course able to identify the main features and contours of commodity history in the Western Hemisphere; to calculate the costs and benefits of commodity exchanges across the centuries; to compare and contrast the several commodity boom and bust cycles that have affected Latin American nations or regions; to analyze primary and secondary sources; to differentiate between reliable and spurious claims; to write clearly and succinctly about commodities, and to read critically several types of texts. These outcomes will be assessed through written assignments, including response papers, reviews, and a research essay, plus a map. They will also be assessed by in-class discussions each week. You will simply have to talk.

### Assignments

In addition to participating in class discussion of readings, you will write three assigned book reports beyond the core list (15% combined), draw three maps (15% combined), write two formal book reviews (10% combined), and compose an original, ca.15pp. research paper (60%). Good work will be generously rewarded. Late work will be promptly recycled. Plagiarized work will be used for public shaming and subsequently handed over to the Inquisition - and the NSA.

Sample Paper Themes in need of a compelling research question:

Argentine Beef  
Amazon Rubber

Paraguayan Yerba Mate  
Mexican Marijuana

Copper  
Mahogany

Brazilian Coffee	Ecuadorian Cacao	Quinine
Central American Indigo	Brazilian Iron	Cotton
Dominican Gold	Cuban Tobacco	UFCO
Bolivian Natural Gas	Peruvian Guano	Bauxite
Puerto Rican Rum	The Panama Canal	Antimony
Genetically Modified Corn	Oaxacan Cochineal	Fish Meal

### Course Books

Gootenberg, Paul. *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Grandin, Greg. *Fordlandia*. New York: Picador, 2010.

Jaffee, Daniel. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Lane, Kris. *Colour of Paradise: The Emerald in the Age of Gunpowder Empires*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Pilcher, Jeff. *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Smith, Frederick. *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008.

Soluri, Jon. *Banana Cultures*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006.

Striffler, Steve. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. Yale University Press, 2007.

Tinker Salas, Miguel. *The Enduring Legacy: Oil, Culture, and Society in Venezuela*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Topik, Steven, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds. *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

### Discussion Topics

Week 1: Basic Concepts & the Quest for Pre-Columbian Commodity Chains

Readings: Selections on Blackboard + Topik et al, introduction

Week 2: A Few of Christopher Columbus's - and Marx's - Favorite Things

Readings: Topik et al to p.117 + Blackboard selections

Week 3: Precious Metals, Precious Stones, Precious Dyes

Map 1: "Top Ten Export Commodities of the Colonial Americas"

Readings: Lane, all

Week 4: The Age of Sugar

Readings: Mintz, all

Week 5: The Coming of Rum

Readings: Smith, all

Week 6: 'Down on the Ground': Cocaine

Map 2: "Pan-American Drug Production and Export Routes, 1945-2013"

Readings: Gootenberg, all

Week 7: Bouncing Back: Amazon Rubber

Readings: Grandin, all + Topik et al, ch.10

Week 8: Petroleum and Society in Venezuela

Readings: Tinker Salas, all

Week 9: Bananas is my Business

Readings: Soluri, all + Topik et al, ch.8

Week 10: Wartime Commodities: Prospecting & Bio-prospecting

Readings: Topik, et al, chaps. 7, 9, 11 + Blackboard items

Week 11: All-American Chicken

Readings: Striffler, all

Week 12: Where's my Coffee?

Readings: Jaffee, all + Topik et al, ch.5

Week 13: Montezuma's Revenge: Mexican Food Conquers the World

Map 3: "Planet Taco"

Readings: Pilcher, all

Week 14: Latin American Commodity Chains after the Cold War

Readings: Topik et al, conclusion + Blackboard items

final papers due last day of regular classes

Some Other Books for Weekly Reports

Alvarez, Robert R. *Mangos, Chiles, and Truckers: The Business of Transnationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Bauer, Arnold. *Goods, Power, History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Bergquist, Charles. *Labor in Latin America: Comparative Essays on Chile, Venezuela, Argentina, and Colombia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.

Bleichmar, Daniela. *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Bucheli, Marcelo. *Bananas and Business: The United Fruit Company in Colombia, 1899-2000*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Campos, Isaac. *Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Chomsky, Aviva. *Linked Labor Histories: New England, Colombia, and the Making of a Global Working Class*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

Coe, Sophie, and Michael Coe. *The True History of Chocolate*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1996.

Curto, José. *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and its Hinterland, c.1550-1830*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

- del Pozo, José. *Historia del vino chileno desde 1850 hasta hoy*. 2d. ed. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1998.
- Earle, Rebecca. *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492-1700*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Fitting, Elizabeth. *The Struggle for Maize: Campesinos, Workers, and Transgenic Corn in the Mexican Countryside*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Freidberg, Susanne. *Fresh: A Perishable History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard/Belknap, 2009.
- Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973.
- Garavaglia, Juan Carlos. *Mercado interno y economía colonial*. Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1983.
- García Fuentes, Lutgardo. *Sevilla, los vascos y América (Las exportaciones de hierro y manufacturas metálicas en los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII)*. Bilbao: Fundación BBV, 1991.
- Glave, Luis Miguel. *Trajinantes: Caminos indígenas en la sociedad colonial, siglos XVI/XVII*. Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1989.
- Glendinning, Chellis. *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 2005.
- Grafe, Regina. *Distant Tyranny: Markets, Power, and Backwardness in Spain, 1650-1800*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Greenfield, Amy Butler. *Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.
- Lyon, Sarah. *Coffee and Community: Maya Farmers and Fair-trade Markets*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011.
- Mitchell, Tim. *Intoxicated Identities: Alcohol's Power in Mexican History and Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Moreno Fraginals, Manuel. *The Sugar Mill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976.
- Norton, Marcy. *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

- Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco & Sugar*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Pilcher, Jeffrey M. *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.
- Posey, Darrell Addison. *Indigenous Knowledge and Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Rice, Prudence M. *Vintage Moquegua: History, Wine, and Archaeology on a Colonial Peruvian Periphery*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.
- Rogers, Thomas D. *The Deepest Wounds: A Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Rothstein, Frances. *Globalization in Rural Mexico: Three Decades of Change*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Schwartz, Stuart B., ed. *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Smale, Robert L. *'I Sweat the Flavor of Tin': Labor Activism in Early Twentieth-Century Bolivia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.
- Stein, Stanley. *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900*. 2d. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Striffler, Steve. *In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900-1995*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Taussig, Michael. *My Cocaine Museum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Taussig, Michael. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Tutino, John. *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Weis, Robert. *Bakers and Basques: A Social History of Bread in Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012.