

Global Experiential Learning and Teaching (GELT) Grant Proposal Phase One

HIST 1970E: "Brazil Under Vargas: Shaping a Nation," Spring 2015

A. Narrative Description

Background Information

In the last two years, Latin American history and Brazilian Studies have undergone an amazing expansion at Brown University. From three historians we have grown to eight scholars working on Latin America and the Caribbean. Although I am a specialist in twentieth-century Brazilian history, I have traditionally taught two main survey courses: "Modern Latin American History," which covers 25 nations and 200 years, and "History of Brazil," which examines the country from 1500 to the present. I have also taught first-year and topical seminars, ranging from "Gender and Sexuality in Latin America and the Caribbean" to an extremely popular capstone seminar, "Politics and Culture during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964-85)." With the addition of new faculty members working on the Caribbean, the Andes, and colonial/nineteenth-century Brazil, I am now able to reshape my teaching portfolio to focus exclusively on twentieth-century Brazilian history.

Thus, beginning in the fall of 2014, I will offer a new survey course entitled "Brazil: From Abolition to Emerging World Power" that will examine the period from 1888 to the present and offer a more in-depth analysis of the country's recent history than the previous five-hundred-year survey course could ever provide. My colleague, Roquinaldo Ferreira, will teach another new survey course, "Brazil: From Conquest to the End of Slavery" in the spring of 2015 that will cover the period from 1500 to 1888.

The series of new and varied courses on twentieth-century Brazilian history that I plan to develop over the coming years will match the growing interest about Brazil at Brown as reflected in the creation of the Brazil Initiative. A robust set of lectures, seminars, film series, and conferences organized by the Brown Brazil Initiative, which focus on the country's recent history and its people, society, and culture, will provide an important intellectual supplement to courses offered by History, Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, and other departments.

Why the Course "Brazil Under Vargas: Shaping a Nation"?

Getúlio Vargas (1882-1954) is arguably the most influential Brazilian political figure of the twentieth century. (Understanding the life and times of Getúlio Vargas is equivalent to a seminar on Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Great Depression and World War II for comprehending twentieth-century U.S. history.) From a wealthy landholding family in the south, Vargas became interim president in 1930 and then ruled the country until 1945. In 1937, he created the *Estado Novo* [New State], an authoritarian regime that relied on nationalism to garner support and legitimacy. Although Vargas flirted with an alliance with Germany in the late 1930s and considered remaining neutral in World War II, Brazil ultimately became an active participant in the war on the side of the Allies. During this period of tremendous political and social change, Vargas reconfigured politics and significantly strengthened the role of the State in developing economic

and social policies. He also encouraged new notions of nationalism, promoted ideas of racial democracy, and expanded the State's presence in the cultural arena.

Ousted from power in 1945, Vargas returned through a democratic election in 1950 with a populist program that relied on working-class and urban middle-class support as he nationalized oil production and other essential industries and carried out social programs that benefitted the lower classes. Pressured by the military and other opponents to leave office in 1954 before the end of his mandate, Vargas responded to that ultimatum by dramatically committing suicide in his bedroom at the presidential palace. A million people mourned his death on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Many historians have argued that the nationalist, anti-imperialist, and pro-working-class policies that his anointed successor President João Goulart promoted in the early 1960s were among the reasons that the military carried out a coup d'état in 1964 and remained in the control of the State for twenty-one years.

This capstone seminar will simultaneously examine the history of the Vargas era on two different tracks. First we will follow a chronological study of the period from 1930-1954 that analyzes Brazil's economic, political, and social transformations to study the ways Brazil experienced rapid industrialization, substantial migration to urban areas, and the development of a mass culture. We will rely on primary documents and secondary sources to look at the period from multiple angles. We will also follow the debates among Brazilian and international scholars about the nature of the Vargas period and its legacies. At the same time, we will be reading monographs about different aspects of Brazil during the Vargas era that will cut across this chronology, in order to consider how different historians have studied specific topics, such as educational, cultural, indigenous, and labor policy, within the context of Vargas's influence in shaping them. In this regard, we will be looping back in time throughout the semester in order to gain an ever deeper and more complex comprehension of the effect of Vargas's rule on Brazil.

Why an International Educational Component?

One of the main questions that we will focus on during the spring 2015 capstone seminar is the ways in which the Vargas era has been portrayed in scholarly literature. GELT funding will allow up to twelve students to travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's capital until 1960, to consider how Brazilian public historians and the State have chosen to remember Vargas and his legacy. We will visit different sites where the records and memories of Vargas are preserved: the Gétúlio Vargas Memorial and Museum, the Municipal Archive of Rio de Janeiro, the National Archive, the National Museum, and the Museum of the Republic, which was formally the presidential palace and the site where Vargas committed suicide. (His bloodstained blue silk pajamas with a bullet hole piercing the left-hand breast pocket remain there on permanent public display). We will also meet with Brazilian scholars at the Center for Research and Documentation (CPDOC) at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, a private educational institution that has an extensive archive and carries out a research agenda that focuses on the Vargas era.

In addition, students will attend the three-day VI International Symposium, "Brazil-USA: New Generations, New Perspectives" [Novas Gerações, Novas Visões], co-organized by Isabel Lustosa and me, at the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, a federally funded research institute in Rio de Janeiro. Brown has co-sponsored three previous international symposia that bring together U.S. and Brazilian scholars to debate and discuss modern Brazilian history. (See

attached posters of the III and V symposia). Given the focus of this GELT proposal, Isabel Lustosa, an historian who has published on the Vargas era, has agreed to include several panels on topics related to Vargas and his legacy. We will be inviting the most important scholars working on Vargas and his times from six major universities in the Rio de Janeiro to present their work: the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Fluminense Federal University, the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, the State University of Rio de Janeiro, and the Rural University of Rio de Janeiro. They will be paired with eight U.S. scholars who will be invited to the symposium and will be traveling to Brazil with their own funding. Additional panels on the early twentieth-century history of Brazil will offer Brown students more depth and context for their understanding of the period from 1930 to 1954.

Experience in Brazil and Rio de Janeiro

As my attached *curriculum vitae* indicates, I have an extensive publication record that reflects twenty years of research in Rio de Janeiro. My first monograph, *Beyond Carnival*, focuses largely on the social history of male homosexuality in twentieth-century Rio de Janeiro. One of the chapters looks closely at the Vargas era. I conducted thirty-five oral histories in that city for another book, *We Cannot Remain Silent*. I have completed another forty interviews there for a forthcoming biography on Herbert Daniel, a Brazilian political figure of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, who lived in Rio before and after his political exile. In 2002, I taught a graduate course, "History of Gender and Sexuality," at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro as a Fulbright fellow. Over the years I have offered dozens of urban tours of Rio's most important historical sites and museums to friends, relatives, and colleagues on their first visit to the city. I know Rio de Janeiro extremely well.

My intimate familiarity with Rio de Janeiro is also a part of a broader comprehensive knowledge of Brazilian history and culture. I am the lead co-editor for the entirely revised second edition of *The Brazil Reader: Politics, History, and Culture* (Duke University Press, forthcoming 2015), and I have been asked to revise extensively a third edition of Thomas E. Skidmore's history textbook, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*, for Oxford University Press.

As President of the Brazilian Studies Association (2002-04), I presided over its VII International Congress, held at the Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro in 2004, and I have co-organized three international symposia in that city. In addition, I have nurtured close collaborative relations with Brazilian colleagues at all of the important universities and research institutions. I serve as the only non-Brazilian member of the Advanced Studies Commission of the Brazilian National Archive. I am also a consultant to the Brazilian National Truth Commission, the presidentially appointed body examining state-sponsored human rights violations committed during the military regime.

Educational Content, Significance, and Benefit to Students

The spring 2015 seminar and the international component will be open to history concentrators and students from other disciplines interested in twentieth-century Brazil. It will provide multifaceted opportunities for students to understand how scholars in the United States and their counterparts in Brazil, as well as public historians, state officials, and others, have constructed different narratives about mid-twentieth-century Brazilian history. We will interrogate how

historical accounts about individuals, political movements, and time periods are created, and how interpretations change over time and can be quite different depending on when and where they are produced and who produces them.

In the seminar, we will be examining both U.S. scholars writing about this period and those Brazilian and other academics whose works will be readily available in English for most of the seminar participants, with additional recommended works in Portuguese for those students able to read that language. By first seeing how different scholars have approached the period through reading secondary sources (books and articles) on an array of topics, alongside documents from the period, and then comparing these sources to how state-sponsored institutions in Brazil and scholars at the International Symposium have chosen to remember or write about this period in Brazilian history, students will acquire a much more sophisticated understanding about the diverse constructions of Brazilian national narratives. Hopefully, the seminar and the international component will also provoke Brown students to consider the different ways U.S. history is produced and represented.

Course Development Plan

During the fall of 2014, I intend to work with an advanced undergraduate or a graduate student in developing a chronology of the Vargas era and a comprehensive bibliography on Gétúlio Vargas and his times that will be two component parts of a *public* website related to the course. It will be similar to four other open-access websites that I have developed in conjunction with the Brown University Library, which are designed for use at Brown and beyond:

- Latin American Travelogues*: <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/travelogues/>
- Modern Latin America*: <http://library.brown.edu/modernlatinamerica/>
- Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*: <http://library.brown.edu/fivecenturiesofchange/>
- We Cannot Remain Silent*: <http://library.brown.edu/wecannotremainsilent/>

The student and I will also identify films and other images in the U.S. National Archive, especially about Brazil's participation with the United States in World War II, for the website. In addition, the student will translate documents from Portuguese into English for the course and the site.

I plan to travel to Rio de Janeiro from November 21 to November 30, 2014 in order to meet with [REDACTED], the co-organizer of the VI International Symposium on Brazilian History at the Casa de Rui Barbosa. I will also meet with the directors of CPDOC, the Getúlio Vargas Museum, the Municipal Archive of Rio de Janeiro, the Museum of the Republic, the National Archive, and the National Museum. In addition, I plan to review museum exhibitions to see the latest displays that are being presented to the public. Although I can establish initial contacts with all of these institutions by email, appropriate Brazilian etiquette requires face-to-face interactions with directors of these institutions. These on-site conversations can also facilitate obtaining privileged access to sites, documents, and archives normally restricted to the regular public. I will also need to visit potential hotels to survey possible student accommodations in June 2015 to ensure a clean, convenient, and secure housing site.

B. Course Development Schedule

September 3-19 Development of extensive bibliography on Vargas and his era

	Identification of documents to be translated by student assistant Identification of public-access images and films
September 22-October 3	Development of Vargas era chronology
October 6-October 31	Editing of primary documents translated by student assistant Completion of the first website "draft"
November 3-20	Completion of second website "draft" with primary documents
November 21-30	Travel to Rio de Janeiro to meet with directors of the Casa de Rui Barbosa, the Center for Research and Documentation, the Getúlio Vargas Memorial and Museum, the Municipal Archive of Rio de Janeiro, the Museum of the Republic, the National Archive, and National Museum; Identify student housing for June 2015
January 14	Completion of the Library website
January 21-April 22	Wednesdays, 3:00-5:20, Capstone Seminar, "Brazil Under Vargas: Shaping a Nation"
June 3-14	International component travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
June 10-12	Student participation in VI International Symposium in Brazilian History, "Brazil-USA: New Generations, New Perspectives," Casa de Rui Barbosa, Rio de Janeiro

C. Letters of Support and C.V. (Separated Attachments)

1. Letter from [REDACTED], Acting Chair, History Department
2. Letter from [REDACTED] of the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, Rio de Janeiro
3. [REDACTED] *curriculum vitae*

D. Budget

Item	Cost
Course Material	\$500
Student Assistant	\$600
Round-trip Airfare non stop JFK to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	\$1,545
Ground transportation	\$260
Accommodations in Rio	0
Meals for 9 days @ \$75/day	\$675
Total:	\$3,580

I will have no accommodation expenses in Rio de Janeiro, as I will stay with a colleague.

Round-trip economy airfare is from New York.

Ground transportation includes transportation to and from airports in the United States and Brazil, plus taxis, Metro, and busses in Rio de Janeiro.