

Current Topic Assignment

You are to choose a topic (a country or an issue) to keep track of during the course of the course. Some possible topics include:

- Immigration issues: mass mobilizations and current policy debates
- Latino political empowerment, including shifts in the last election
- The new politics in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and beyond
- “Drug war” in the Americas and U.S. policy
- New indigenous cross-border movements
- Women in the *maquila* industry: is their role changing?
- The emergence of new Latino media (web, 'zines, magazines)
- Latin Music: Evolutions and Revolutions
- Latinos in unexpected place: Arkansas, Georgia, and beyond
- Latinas and the labor movement: women at the lead
- Education, English, and Empowerment
- Is Cuba at the Cusp? Cuban reform and change?
- Mexico under Calderón: What are the possibilities?
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You are expected to keep up to date on the topic, including methods such as following the news, utilizing Web sources, and any other strategies you think of. You may also be expected to report to your section at least once during the term on what’s going on in your topic area.

You will also prepare a short (4-5 page) paper on the topic to be turned in before the end of the term, mostly likely on the last day of class; this is not a research paper but rather a sort of news summary. Both the presentation and the news summary can be done with another student – and that might be an especially good way to do this particular assignment. An adequate paper would track the events and report on their evolution; an excellent paper would tie in these events and analyze them using some of the tools from the course.

To garner the news on any of these issues, you can check the various news sources in both hard print and the web. For Latin American questions, one excellent source is *Latin America Weekly Reports* which are kept in the reference section of the library; also see the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) reports.

A general starting point for resources is the course Web page. It is mounted at:

<http://lals.ucsc.edu/classes/LALS01/LALS001WebPage.htm>

You can start there and if you have any additional resources you run into, please share them with the instructor or T.A.’s and we’ll include them in the Web page for others.

Please decide on your topic, and let your TA know (with a short written note or e-mail) by **Thursday, January 25, 2007 (or before if possible)**. The TA will provide feedback with regard to whether the topic is doable and/or too broad or narrow.