This course will survey the history of Latin America over the last 200 years, a time dominated by the making of independent nations and the evolution of capitalist economies. Certainly we will pay politics and government their due, but our emphasis will be on social and cultural history, on the forces that shape everyday life and the way people make sense of their lives. One way we can get at these issues will be to investigate how social movements and revolutions have reacted to, reflected, and in many cases driven changes in race, class, gender, sex, and the family. Allowing us to see these dynamics at work will be close readings of primary documents: writings produced at the time by individuals as first-hand accounts of their lives and the events around them. Memoir, letters, speeches, and journalistic accounts make up the core of our readings, along with an abundance of film. The general thematic approach of the course will draw specific examples from various Latin American countries, including Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Central America, and Cuba.