How did Getúlio Vargas (1882-1954), a member of a large ranching family from southern Brazil, end up playing such a significant role in Brazil’s history during the twentieth century? This seminar will examine the conditions in the 1920s that brought Vargas to presidential power for fifteen years; the influence he had on economic development and cultural nationalism; the nature of the Estado Novo [New State] from 1937-45; Brazil’s role in World War II, and how Vargas shaped the ways Brazilians understand their country. We will then consider his return to power in 1950 as a democratic and populist figure, his political challenges, and his dramatic suicide in 1954. Finally, we will evaluate his legacy and lasting influence on politics, economics, notions of the nation, music, and culture.

This course will simultaneously examine the history of Brazil in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s in two different ways. First, we will engage in a chronological study of the period from 1930-1954 that follows Brazil’s economic, political, and social transformations. At the same time, we will be reading historical monographs about different aspects of Brazil during the “Vargas era” that will cut across this chronology, in order to examine how different scholars have studied specific topics within the context of Vargas’s influence on them. In this regard, we will be looping back in time throughout the semester in order to gain ever deeper and more complex understandings of Vargas’s policies and their influences on Brazil. In addition, each of you will also be inventing a personality that lived during this period, and creating a life story that will follow the period that Vargas was in power and beyond. (See Brazilian Biographies)

This is going to be a fun and an extremely challenging seminar, perhaps the most demanding course that you will take at Brown. You must to do all of the readings prior to the seminar sessions. The reading requirements entail a close reading each week of a two-hundred-page monograph and a primary document. You will also be expected to view three films outside of the classroom and write short reflections essays on them, lead seminar discussions, write a research paper or develop a research project for the Vargas website, attend three history lectures sponsored by the Brazil Initiative by scholars who have worked on the Vargas era, and attend all seminar sessions. Because this seminar will include undergraduate and graduate students of all levels, I will take into consideration your different educational backgrounds and previous knowledge when assessing your final grade. Nonetheless, you still cannot get an A unless you excel in all aspects of the seminar.
Course Assessment:
1. 20% Class and lecture attendance, active participation in the discussion, seminar discussion leadership.
2. 0% “Who was Getúlio Vargas?” essay. Due prior to first class by January 20th at 8:00 p.m.
3. 10% Brazilian biographies entries (six postings on the Canvas website).
4. 20% Reflections on three films seen outside of the classroom and three guest lectures of historians of Brazil (total of twelve pages).
5. 40% Final paper/project (Undergraduate students: 15-20 pages; Graduate students: 25-30 pages; or equivalent work for the website project).
6. 10% Five-page reflection essay on the seminar component in Brazil due by June 30, 2015.

Details of Seminar Assignments

1. Active Engagement in the Seminar:
You must attend all seminar sessions and actively participate in the discussion, reflecting your thoughtful and critical reading of all of the assigned reading. You will be expected to co-lead two seminar discussions during the semester.

2. “Who Was Getúlio Vargas?” Essay:
Note: This first assignment is due prior to the first seminar meeting. Using any sources that you wish, write a two-page assessment of the life and times of Getúlio Vargas. You may shape this essay in any way you choose, but the point of this exercise is to develop an initial understanding for yourself of the life and times of Getúlio Vargas. Among the questions you might decide to answer are: Who was Getúlio Vargas? How did he come to power? Why did he stay in power so long? What were his legacies? How did he shape Brazilian society, politics, economics, and culture? After your visit to Brazil in June, you will finish the course with a second five-page assessment of Vargas and his times. The two exercises will be an interesting measure of how the seminar and the trip to Brazil have influenced your understanding of mid-twentieth-century Brazilian history. This first assignment is due by Tuesday, January 20 at 8:00 p.m. Please email it to me. (Please note for all assignments: Original title for the essay, double-spaced, 12-pt. font, pages numbered, proper citation of sources, your name at the top of the page, and your name on the Word file).

3. Brazilian Biographies:
Between the first and second class, you will create a character and give her/him a name, identity, profession, and political perspectives. You will then follow that person throughout the period that Vargas was in power (1930-45; 50-54). (You should post your first biography on the Canvas website by Monday, January 27 by 9:00 p.m.) We will then divide the class into two groups. Every other week you will post a brief account on the Canvas website about how that character interacted with the social, economic, political, and cultural changes that took place over the period from 1930 to 1954. Please post your biography for the week that it is due by Monday evening. You may be as creative as you wish, as long as your character’s actions, life story, changes, etc. have some logic to them, and are plausible within the context of Brazilian culture and society. You will produce a total of six entries during the semester related to your character. Brazilian Biographies is designed to be a fun exercise that will allow you, through your
character, to imagine yourself in Brazil during time covered in this seminar. The entries do not have to be too long, as we want people in the class to have time to read and follow them. When it is your week to post an entry, you will also give a one-minute oral summary of the posting to the other members of the seminar.

4. Film and Lecture Reflections:
(1) You will need to view three documentary films outside of the classroom about the Vargas era directed by Eduardo Escorel, who will be visiting Brown in March. The series is entitled *Era Vargas, 1930-35* and has English subtitles. The three films are *1930: Tempo de revolução*, *1932: A Guerra civil*, and *1935: O assalto ao poder*. Their due dates are mentioned in the syllabus, and the films will be on the Canvas website. You will write brief two-page analyses of each one. Please send me electronic copies of your essays. In addition, I want to encourage you to attend the two-day Brazil Initiative film series where we will view two other documentary films by Escorel on March 11th and 12th and have the chance to dialogue with him after the screenings.

(2) You are also required to attend the lectures by Jeffrey Lesser, Bryan McCann, and Seth Garfield, three leading historians of twentieth-century Brazil, who will be at Brown this spring, sponsored by the Brazil Initiative. We will be reading earlier works of these scholars in our seminar. This will be an opportunity to learn about their current academic production. You will also write short two-page reflections on their lectures that are due a week after the lecture.

5. Final Paper or Project:
You will have two options for a final paper/project:
(1) **Website Project.** You may choose to prepare a significant new contribution to the course website: Brazil Under Vargas:  [http://library.brown.edu/brazilundervargas/](http://library.brown.edu/brazilundervargas/) This site was developed by Dan McDonald under my direction. Your contribution could be to translate and prepare introductions to key documents or sources about the Vargas era, prepare a videography of films and documentaries on the period, develop an annotated essay of novels and other literature related to Vargas and his times, create a photo essay, or come up with another idea that will expand the website’s content. This work must be relatively equivalent to the effort required to write a research paper. A project proposal is due on *Monday, February 16*; an outline or plan is due on *Monday, March 9*; and the final project is due on *Monday, May 11*.

(2) **Research Paper.** You will choose a topic for a fifteen to twenty-page research paper for undergraduates (depending on your year) and a twenty-five to thirty-page research paper for graduate students that relies on primary and secondary sources. Your theme must have a clear argument and situate the subject within the historiography of the Vargas era. The proposed topic is due on *Monday, February 16*; a bibliography of primary and secondary sources is due on *Monday, March 9*; and the final paper is due on *Monday, May 11*. *(Original title, 12 pt. font, double-spaced, Chicago Manual of Style citation, unless indicate otherwise, etc.) This research paper can fulfill the requirement for the Latin American Studies concentration final project/paper should you choose not to write a thesis for the LAS concentration. This project could be the beginning of an Honors Thesis in History as well.

6. Brazilian Constructions of the History and Legacy of Getúlio Vargas Essay
All students will be required to complete a five-page reflection paper on their visit to Rio de Janeiro that will be due on *June 30, 2015*. *(Graduating seniors who need to have their grades into the Registrar’s Office by mid-May in order to graduate will receive their course grade in a timely manner, but they will have a moral obligation to complete the essay). Your paper should serve as
a final opportunity to analyze the ways Brazilian archivists, museum directors, scholars, and others have shaped Vargas’s image and legacy in different venues.

**Course Readings** (In alphabetical order):


**Seminar Schedule**

January 20: Who Was Getúlio Vargas? Essay due Tuesday January 20 at 8:00 p.m. Read Vargas’s suicide letter, Doc. No. 1, prior to class.

**Week #1:**

January 21: Introduction to the Course: Who Was Getúlio Vargas?

*Historiographic questions:* What is biography? How do biographies of leading figures relate to social, economic, cultural, and political history? Who was Getúlio Vargas? What is the meaning of his suicide note?

*Required reading:*

**Document #1:** “Vargas’s Suicide Letter” (1954)

What is notable about the language in his letter? Why does he state that he has decided to take his life? What is the legacy he hopes to leave behind?
Week #2

January 28:

Vargas: An Overview, No. 1

**Historiographic questions:** What are the main arguments that Skidmore presents about the Vargas regime at different moments between 1930 and 1954? How does he explain the person, the period, the context of his rule, and his twofold rise and fall from power? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this political narrative?

**Required reading:**

**Document #2:** “Program of the Liberal Alliance” (1929)

To what extent is the program of the Liberal Alliance a break from the past? What are the criticisms toward the ruling powers? What alternatives does the program present for the nation? Is it reformist or revolutionary?

**Discussion Leaders:** __________________ and __________________.

**6:00 p.m. Lecture by Jeffrey Lesser, “Militant Ethnics and Ethnic Military in Brazil, 1940-1980,” Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute**

**Reception to follow**

**Brazilian Biography #1 by all students should be posted on Canvas by Monday, January 26**

Week #3

February 4:

Vargas: An Overview, No. 2

**Historiographic questions:** What are Levine’s main arguments in this book? How does he explain Vargas’s rise to power and his relationship to the population, different economic and political interests, and the state? To what extent is this book a revisionist interpretation of Skidmore?


**Document #3:** Prestes’s Declaration about the Liberal Alliance (1930)

What are Luís Carlos Prestes’s major criticisms of the Liberal Alliance? What does he propose as an alternative? What are the class forces that he wishes to unite? What is his economic vision for Brazil?

**Discussion Leaders:** __________________ and __________________.

**Brazilian Biography #2, Group No. 1 due on Monday, February 2**

**Film Essay No. 1, Eduardo Escorel, 1930: Tempo de revolução due on Tuesday, February 3 at 8:00 p.m.**

Week #4

February 11:

**Race, Whiteness, and Social Policy in Brazil**

**Historiographic questions:** How and why do racial ideologies change under Vargas? What is the role of education in “racial uplifting?” To what extent
can we see Freyre’s arguments permeating educational policy? What are Vargas’s policies regarding race?

**Required reading:**

**Document #4:** Selections from *The Masters and the Slaves* by Gilberto Freyre (1933)
What is Freyre’s main argument about the nature of slavery and Portuguese colonization? Why does it become such a popular explanation of the country’s past under Vargas?

**Discussion Leaders:** ____________________ and ____________________.

6:00 p.m. Lecture by Bryan McCann, “Favela Politics and Democratization in Rio de Janeiro,” Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute

**Brazilian Biography #2, Group No. 2 due on Monday, February 9.**

February 16: Research Paper/Website Project topic due by 9:00 p.m.

**Week #5**

**Race and Immigration**

*Historiographic questions:* What do Vargas’s policies about Jewish immigration tell us about anti-Semitism and notions of whiteness? How does one explain the difference between policy and practice?

**Required reading:**

**Document #5:** “The Integralists Manifesto” (1932)
What are the basic tenets of the Integralist movement? In what ways do they mirror fascist ideas? How do they seem to be different?

**Discussion Leaders:** ____________________ and ____________________.

**Brazilian Biography #3, Group No. 1 due on Monday, February 16.**

**Film Essay No. 2,** Eduardo Escorel, *1932: A Guerra civil due on Tuesday, February 17 at 8:00 p.m.*

**Week #6**

**Cultural Policy**

*Historiographic questions:* How do the different cultural currents of the 1920s take on new form and expression in the 1930s under Vargas? How does Vargas incorporate some of these artists into the government? Why are others excluded? What is the relationship between notions of the nation and art during this period?

**Required reading:**
Document #6: Selections from *The Cordial Man* by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1936)
How do the ideas of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda about the innate nature of Brazilians fit into new expressions of nationalism of the 1930s and 40s?

Discussion Leaders: __________________ and ____________________.

Brazilian Biography #3, Group No. 2 due on Monday, February 23.

Week #7
March 4:
Music, Radio, and National Identity

*Historiographic questions:* Why does music become such an important form of nation building in the 1930s? Why is the radio at the core of McCann analysis? How do McCann’s approach to understanding this process different from those of Lesser, Levine, and Skidmore?

**Required reading:**

**Document #7:** Selections from samba songs of the 1930s.
How are race, nation, and gender expressed in these samba verses?

Discussion Leaders: __________________ and ____________________.

Brazilian Biography #4, Group No. 1 due on Monday, March 2.

March 9:
Research paper bibliography/Website Project Outline due at 9:00 p.m.

Week #8
March 11:
Race and Regional Identity

*Historiographic questions:* How does the Northeast fit into our understanding of the processes of nation building before and during the Vargas regime? What are the on-going tensions between regionalism and Vargas’s tendencies toward centralization? How are Vargas’s policies applied differently in the Northeast?

**Required reading:**

**Document #8:** “Brazil’s Vargas” *Time* Magazine, August 12, 1940
Discussion Leaders: __________________ and ____________________.

Brazilian Biography #4, Group No. 2 due on Monday, March 9.

Film essay No. 3, Eduardo Escorel, 1935: *O assalto ao poder* due on Tuesday, March 10 at 8:00 p.m.

March 11-12
Film showings (recommended): Eduardo Escorel, *O tempo e o lugar* (2008) and *A vocação do poder* (2005) with presence of director. Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Week #9
Labor and the Environment in the Northeast
March 18:  

*Historiographic questions:* What are Vargas’s rural labor policies? To what extent does he avoid changing the social and economic structures of the countryside? How do the Northeastern sugar interests adapt to the political changes of the 1930s?

**Required reading:**

**Document #9:** Letter of Manumission for the Brazilian Peasant by Francisco Julião (1961)

What is the legacy of peasant mobilizations and Vargas policies as reflected in the manifesto of Francisco Julião?

**Discussion Leaders:** _________________ and ________________.

**Brazilian Biography #5, Group No. 1 due on Monday, March 16**

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**Week #10**  
**Labor and Law**

April 1:  

*Historiographic questions:* To what extent do Vargas’s labor policies tie workers to the state and to what extent do they give workers new protections? How do we understand corporativism within the context of the loyalty that Vargas enjoyed among workers?

**Required reading:**

**Document #10:** The Life of a Factory Worker by Joana de Masi Zero (1950s)

What does this deposition tell us about the attitude of workers toward Vargas’s labor policies? What explains the loyalty to Vargas as a political leader?

**Discussion Leaders:** _________________ and ________________.

**Brazilian Biography #5, Group No. 2 due on Monday, March 30**

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**Week #11**  
**São Paulo in the Mix**

April 8:  

*Historiographic questions:* What is “modern” and what is traditional in Paulistas’ responses to Vargas in the 1930s? How do competing conceptions of race express themselves in the constitutionalist movement in São Paulo and in later commemorations of the events of 1932? How are Weinstein’s interpretations of the Vargas period different from previous historians’ understandings?

**Required reading:**
(Entire book).

**Document #11:** “A New Year’s Address” by Getúlio Vargas (1938)
In what ways is this declaration justifying the Estado Novo a reflection of Vargas’s consolidation of political power after the Constitutionalist Rebellion in São Paulo in 1932? What is the language of his speech in relationship to his vision of the nation?

**Discussion Leaders:** ____________________ and ____________________.

**Week #12**  
**April 15:**

**Brazil, the United States, the Amazon, and World War II**

_Historiographic questions:_ Can we affirm that the “special relationship” between Brazil and the United States was consolidated during World War II? How does Brazil’s approximation with the United States create contradictions in the legitimacy of the Estado Novo?

**Required reading:**  

**Document #12:** “Our Allies the Brazilians” by Katharine Brush (1942)
What role does Carmen Miranda and U.S. culture play in the relationship between Brazil and the United States?

**Discussion Leaders:** ____________________ and ____________________.

**Brazilian Biography #6, Group No. 1 due on Monday, April 13**

**Week #13:**  
**April 22**

**Vargas’s Legacy**

_Historiographic questions:_ Reflecting on the different scholars that we have read in this course, do they have significantly different assessments of Vargas and his impact on Brazil? If so, what are those differences?

**Document #13:** “The Oil is Ours” (1948).
Are the state-owned companies, such as Petrobras, the most important legacy of the Vargas era? Why? In not, what is?

**Discussion Leaders:** ____________________ and ____________________.

**6:00 p.m. Lecture by Seth Garfield,** “A Third-Rate Musical Comedy, Except in the Deadly Seriousness of It Implications: Brazil, the United States, and the Amazon Rubber Campaign of World War II.” Joukowsky Forum.

**Brazilian Biography #6, Group No. 2 due on Monday, April 20.**

**May 11**  
**Final Research Paper/Website Project due**

**June 30**  
**Reflection essay on Brazilian visit due**  
**Program in Rio de Janeiro**

**Wed. June 3**  
**Students depart from United States**

**Thurs. June 4**  
**Arrive in Rio de Janeiro**

9
Settle in apartment
Lunch next to the Museum of the Republic, former Presidential Palace
Museum tour of the Museum of the Republic
Orientation dinner near hotel

Friday, June 5  Visit Getúlio Vargas Memorial and Museum
Lunch at restaurant near National Historical Museum
Visit National Historical Museum

Saturday, June 6  Walking tour of downtown Rio de Janeiro
Trip to Niterói to visit Art Museum

Sunday, June 7  Free day

Monday, June 8  Session with Angela Castro Gomes of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas Center for Documentation about the Vargas archives
Evening opening session of the Brazil-France-United States International Symposium on Brazilian History: New Generations, New Perspectives at the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation

Tue. June 9  Conference sessions

Wed., June 10  Conference sessions
Dinner with Conference participants and Brown students

Thursday, June 11  Visit to the National Archive, Rio de Janeiro
Meeting with Carlos Fico at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Friday, June 12  Free day in Rio de Janeiro
Evening/nighttime return to the United States
Students may opt to stay on in Brazil after the end of the program with their own resources

June 30, 2015  Final five-page essay due on Brazilian constructions of the images and legacies of Getúlio Vargas