

CENTRAL AMERICA

A NEW SERIES

WITH

JIM BUXTON

Register for one class or all 3!
URI.EDU/OLLI or 401-874-4197



Guatemala - Monday, February 17, 11:30AM-1:00PM Max: 30 \$15

This course delves into the migration patterns of Guatemalans to Rhode Island, where they represent the largest Central American community with 28,062 residents. We will examine the historical and socio-political factors that prompted significant waves of Guatemalan emigration during the 1950s through the 1990s. Key topics include the impact of military rule, U.S. involvement, and the tragic loss of 200,000 lives during this period. Additionally, we will discuss President Clinton's decision to grant blanket refugee status and evaluate President Arevalo's current efforts to implement reforms amidst ongoing challenges such as corruption, poverty, and gang violence, which continue to drive many Guatemalans to seek better opportunities in the United States.

El Salvador - Friday, February 28, 1:00PM-2:30PM Max: 30 \$15

This class delves into the rich history and current affairs of El Salvador, focusing on the Salvadoran community in Rhode Island, the civil war, and contemporary issues. The class will investigate the causes of the Salvadoran Civil War, which spanned from the 1960s to the 1990s, examining socio-economic disparities and political tensions. We will also look at the influence of the 14 families, who dominated El Salvador's economy, politics, military, and the traditional church. Key figures such as Archbishop Óscar Romero and other Liberation Theology priests, who bravely stood against oppression, will be highlighted. Additionally, we will analyze the current Salvadoran President's efforts in cracking down on drug cartels and the impact of these measures on society. Finally, the class will briefly explore the ongoing socio-political issues in Panama.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua - Monday, March 3, 10:00AM-11:30AM Max: 30 \$15

This class explores the factors contributing to the relatively low number of migrants from Costa Rica and Nicaragua to the United States. We will examine Costa Rica's unique socio-political landscape, including its decision to abolish the military in 1948, and its impressive life expectancy and literacy rates, which are among the highest in Latin America. The class will also highlight Costa Rica's recent female President, who earned her degree from Georgetown University, and the country's reputation for environmental tourism. We will also review Nicaragua's history, focusing on the 50-year-long Somoza dynasty, the revolution of 1979, and the subsequent Sandinista rule. We will also discuss the current state of poverty in Nicaragua and how these historical and socio-political factors have influenced migration patterns.