Your final assignment is a review essay on a topic pertinent to Latin American Studies. A review essay is an essay in which you organize and critique a body of work on a particular topic or issue. Like a research paper, you need to define a specific topic upon which you will focus. Just about any topic that would be appropriate for a research paper will also be appropriate for this essay. For example: peasant movements in a globalized economy; the politics of memory; Brazilian cinema novo; understanding early Colonial encounters, etc. However, unlike a research paper, a review essay is not aimed at supporting a specific thesis or argument. Rather, your aim is to critically reflect upon the state of scholarly (or artistic) work related to your topic. As such, your paper should cover issues such as the following.

- Summarize main themes in the literature on your topic and key questions addressed.
- Identify key theoretical or interpretive approaches (paradigms) employed in this literature, core questions addressed by the literature, and major methodological approaches used.
- Analyze how these perspectives and works relate to each other. (Do they derive from similar disciplinary or ideological backgrounds? Are there deep cleavages between paradigms? Is there a shift over time in the paradigms used or questions asked?)
- Identify the major conclusion(s) or interpretations presented in these works. (Do they arrive at the same or differing conclusions? Can you explain different conclusions based on disciplinary, paradigmatic, or methodological differences?)
- Are there important gaps in the literature, or questions that it does not address but that are important to your topic?
- Can you suggest directions for further work on this topic, based on the literature you have reviewed?

Generally, it is most effective to organize a review essay by themes or issues, but it can also be very useful to discuss key pieces of work individually. Your topic and the materials you are reviewing should be your guide. You will find it helpful to look at the Review Essays section of recent issues of the journal *Latin American Research Review* for examples. Or, refer to recent essays in one of the Annual Review volumes (e.g., *Annual Review of Anthropology, Annual Review of Political Science*, etc.).

Your paper should be about 10-14 pages long; you will have approximately 20 minutes for your class presentation.