Latin America After World War II

- First world nations: capitalist industrialized nations
- Second world nations: communist industrialized nations
- Third world nations: developing nations, usually less economically powerful
- Latin America fit the third world definition closely because of its earlier political independence and more Western social and political structures.

- From the 1940’s to 2000, Mexico was controlled by the Party of Institutionalized Revolution (PRI).
- 1994- The Zapatistas emerged as a guerrilla movement but were put down by the Mexican government.
- Mexico also joined the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- Vicente Fox, leader of the National Action Party, was elected in 2000.
Radical Options in the 1950’s

- Juan Jose Arevalo used a series of programs that conflicted with foreign companies working in Guatemala, such as the United Fruit Company.
- Jacobo Arbenz was elected President in 1951.
- The US Central Intelligence Agency invaded Guatemala to overthrow Arbenz and installed a US-supported government.
- Reforms were minimal.

Radical Options in the 1950’s

- Cuba had a large middle class but was dependent on American imports and the export of sugar.
- From 1934-1944, Fulgencio Batista ruled Cuba as an authoritarian reformer.
- Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara joined to create a small military force to overthrow Batista.
- The “26th of July Movement” had support from students, labor organizations and rural workers.

Radical Options in the 1950’s

- Castro and Guevara’s movement were able to drive Batista from power.
- Castro changed the way Cuba had been run by implementing a socialist economy.
- The United States cut off relations with Cuba in 1961.
- Cuba then dependent on the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War.
- Achievements of socialism are accompanied with restrictions on freedoms.
Many militaries in Latin America seized power after World War II and imposed new types of bureaucratic and authoritarian regimes. Government economic policies fell heaviest on the working class. All military governments were nationalistic.

South American governments returned to civilian governments in the mid 1980's. Large foreign loans taken in the 1970's threatened economic stability in Brazil, Peru and Mexico. International commerce in drug trafficking stimulates criminal activity in many Latin American countries. Latin American continues to have economic and political problems.

Private investment by American companies were the chief means of influence in Latin America. The United States intervened periodically in Latin America to protect investments. Direct interventions were usually followed by the creation or support of conservative governments that would be friendly to the United States.
The US launched a program called the Alliance for Progress in 1961, which aimed to develop regions and eliminate ideas of radical political solutions.

After 2000, US concerns with Latin America continued to focus on issues of commerce, immigration, the drug trade, and political stability.

Over 30% of the population of Latin America falls under the poverty line, which contributes to legal and illegal immigration to the US.

Women slowly gained suffrage in Latin America, but were even more slowly integrated into national political programs.

Migration among Latin American countries is common because of job opportunities and politics.

Movement in Latin American from rural to urban areas is extremely high.
Latin American popular culture combines crafts, music, dance.

The struggle for social justice, economic security and political formulas still exists.

Economics of Latin America have expanded but problems of distribution of wealth are prevalent.