SYLLABUS

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"[Latin] America is ungovernable!"
- Simón Bolívar, on his deathbed in 1830.

Course Description

More than 150 years after the great liberator of Latin America, Simón Bolívar, uttered these immortal words, many scholars of the region opine that the caudillo's sentiments have proven prophetic. The 20th century history of Latin America has been plagued by some of the worst afflictions of the human condition: persistent poverty, authoritarianism, social violence, and economic chaos. The search for governability in this region is a struggle that has led many Latin American countries to an array of different economic and political "experiments." These experiments have evolved as pendulum swings between competing modes of governance. Latin American countries have tried democracy and authoritarianism; state interventionist development models and market-oriented programs; economic policies fostering income distribution and others deepening inequality; reformist and revolutionary change.

The purpose of this course is to train students to think critically about the Latin American reality. In general, the course serves as an introduction for those who are unfamiliar with the history, politics, and social structure of the region. Instruction in this class, however, will go beyond a mere introduction to Latin American political history. It will challenge students to analyze complex problems in Latin American politics and development and encourage them to provide informed arguments on these matters. In addition to reading and listening to lectures, this class will invite students to write and orally communicate their observations about the substantive questions in the course.

What is Expected of Students

Students will be expected to read, think, criticize, and form arguments. That will require keeping up on reading assignments and attending class regularly. Students must be fully prepared at all times to discuss the readings and concepts from previous lectures. The best students will be critical but balanced in their assessments, and will develop coherent arguments that they can defend in their writing and their in-class discussion.
Reading Materials

The **four required and one recommended book** for this course have been ordered and are presently on sale at the college bookstore. All are paperbacks. The texts are:


In addition to these texts, this course requires your study of a number of other readings from diverse sources. These readings are all available on e-reserves. Additionally, I will occasionally distribute electronic clippings from *The New York Times*, the *Economist*, *Financial Times*, *The Miami Herald*, Google, Wikipedia, and YouTube via email. Additional resources are available on the course’s web page and my resources page. Films and video materials will be available on closed reserve. Select films will be shown at 7 p.m. in Library 344.

Grading

Assessment of the students in this course will be based on their performance on two light research papers, periodic diagnostic examinations, a comprehensive final examination, and classroom participation. The grade breakdown follows:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostics (5% each)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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The Writing Assignments

Paper assignments in this course are of varying lengths. Yet they must all be typed, paginated, and double-spaced with Times New Roman font type, 12cpi font size, and one-inch margins.

These assignments must be turned in as PDF files unless otherwise indicated by 5 p.m. in the student’s hand-in folder on the Courses directory on the due date specified below. Late work will receive no credit. Technical problems involved in converting and uploading work onto Courses will not be accepted as reasons for late or improperly formatted work. Students are responsible for addressing all glitches unless they are systemic. Proper use of spelling, punctuation, and grammar is expected. Since ability to edit your own work and produce concise argument is a touchstone for assessing and developing your critical skills, students will not be allowed to surpass the required number of pages. A handout will be distributed with the particular parameters of each of these assignments well before the due date.

Paper #1: An Empirical Test of Macro Approaches to Latin American Politics

Students will choose one of the following eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia. In a light research paper of 7-8 pages, the author will assess the political and development history of the chosen country in light of the analytical frameworks set up by at least two major theoretical approaches (e.g., modernization, political culture, developmentalism, etc.).

Paper #2: A Policy-Position Paper from the Perspective of a Latin American Government

Students will choose any Latin American country (though not the same one used for Paper #1). Identifying a salient problem that calls for policy action, the student will compose an 8-10 page policy-position paper from the perspective of the chosen country’s government. This assignment will require prolonged study of the state structure, history, formal institutions, and society of the chosen Latin American country. Normally, work on this paper begins shortly before the first paper is completed. Periodic meetings with the professor are highly recommended.

Diagnostics and the Comprehensive Examination

Students are expected to prepare detailed notes on the readings and the class presentations (i.e., not just depend on parse jottings in the margins of their books). Such growing expertise will be systematically tested throughout the term with short, 5-10 minute diagnostic examinations and a final, comprehensive examination with no more than 20-25 questions.

Class Participation

Communicating your insight into the subjects analyzed in this course is an integral part of the
learning experience. In no way do I consider class participation a residual category for subjectively determining the final grade. In this course, I will evaluate your performance in both formal, scheduled presentations and informal class discussion. All oral arguments and presentations will be assessed on structure, relevance, insight, and style. The following are structured presentation formats that will be used in this course:

1. Debates on neoliberal reform.
2. Simulations on delegative democracy and U.S. intervention.
3. Small group discussions on numerous topics.

Attendance

Consistent attendance in the course is required. If you know you will be absent due to a scheduling conflict involving athletic events, Model U.N., forensics, job interviews, or any other activity, please communicate that to me as soon as possible. Keep in mind that given the unique aspects of a class, you cannot really "make up" an absence.

The Grading Scale

I will be using the following grading scale in this course:

98-100 A+
94-97 A
91-93 A-
88-90 B+
83-87 B
79-82 B-
76-78 C+
72-75 C
68-71 C-
67/below D/F

Academic Misconduct

Given the fact that academe relies upon the ethical conduct of scholars, students are held to the same standards in their own work. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see the useful handout on “Avoiding Academic Misconduct,” available on the course webpage.

Special Needs

Students requiring access to learning tools/special schedules approved by Student Support
Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

**NOTE:** Readings must be completed for the dates assigned below.

**PART ONE:**

**CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES**

Session 1: Breaking Stereotypes, Understanding Historical and Cultural Foundations of Latin American Politics

What are Americans’ stereotypes of Latin America and its people? (September 15, Monday)


“South of the Border,” written by Gene Autry, sung by Frank Sinatra.

**Historical Causes and Culturalist Approaches (September 17, Wednesday)**


Skidmore and Smith, Prologue (*Recommended*).

**The Path Dependency Approach (September 19, Friday)**


Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 1 (*Recommended*).
Unpacking Historical Patterns and Geographical/Cultural Diversity (September 22, Monday)


Film: “Nine Queens (Nueve Reinas)” (Argentina). (Showing Thursday 9/18 and Sunday 9/21).


Session 2: Patterns of Development and Structural Causes in Latin American Politics

Dependency and Development in Latin American History (September 24, Wednesday)


Montero, chapters 1-3.

Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 2. (Recommended).

Import-Substitution and Populism (September 26, Friday)


Neoliberalism: A Development Model? (September 29, Monday)

Javier Corrales, “Market Reforms,” in Domínguez and Shifter.


The Arguments For and Against the “Washington Consensus” (October 1, Wednesday)


Debate #1: Neoliberalism.

PART TWO:

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

Session 3: Democratic Transitions and Consolidation: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile

The Collapse of Populist Democracy during the 1960's and 1970's (October 3, Friday)


Dirty Hands, Dirty Wars: The Organization of Authoritarianism (October 6, Monday)


**Film:** “Missing” (Showing Thursday 10/2 and Sunday 10/5).

**PAPER #1 DUE (October 7, Tuesday)**

**Transitions to Democracy and the Quality of Democracy (October 8, Wednesday)**

Scott Mainwaring and Frances Hagopian, “The Third Wave of Democratization,” in Hagopian and Mainwaring.

Scott Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, “Latin American Democratization since 1978: Democratic Transitions, Breakdowns, and Erosions.” In Hagopian and Mainwaring.

**Case #1: Argentina (October 10, Friday)**

Steven Levitsky, “Democratic Survival amidst Economic Failure,” in Hagopian and Mainwaring.

Steven Levitsky, “Argentina: From Crisis to Consolidation (and Back),” in Domínguez and Shifter.

**Case #2: Brazil (October 13, Monday)**

Montero, chapters 4-6.

**Case #3: Chile (October 15, Wednesday)**

Felipe Agüero, “Chile: Unfinished Transition and Increased Political Competition,” in Domínguez and Shifter.


**Film:** “Pinochet’s Last Stand” (Showing Sunday 10/12 and Monday 10/13).

**Recommended:** Video #5: The Annenberg/CPB Americas Collection: “In Women’s Hands.”

**Assessing the Quality of Democracy (October 17, Friday)**


**MID-TERM BREAK (October 20, Monday)**

**Session 4: Neoliberal Reform and Its Discontents: The Case of Mexico**

*The Hegemonic Party System and Its Decline (October 22, Wednesday)*


**Technocrats and their Policy Toys: Neoliberalism and the Mexican State (October 24, Friday)**


**Film**: Frontline: “Murder, Money, and Mexico.” (Showing Sunday 10/19 and Thursday 10/23).

**Social Effects of Neoliberal Reform: Poverty, Inequality, and Immigration (October 27, Monday)**


**Debating NAFTA and Its Effects (October 29, Wednesday)**


**Debate #2: NAFTA**

**Session 5: Delegative Democracy or Petro-Populism Redux? Venezuela under Hugo Chávez**

*Understanding the Bolivarian Revolution under Chávez (October 31, Friday)*


**Guest Speaker:** Javier Corrales, Professor of Political Science, Amherst College.

*Petro-Politics or Institutional Crisis? (November 3, Monday)*


**Recommended:** Javier Corrales, “Explaining Chavismo: the Unexpected Alliance of Radical Leftists and the Military in Venezuela since the late 1990s.” Mimeo.

*Testing the Delegative Democracy Hypothesis (November 5, Wednesday)*

**Simulation #1: Delegative Democracy**

**Session 6: The Problem of Governability: Colombia and The Central Andean Countries (Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador)**

*Colombia: Country on the Edge? (November 7, Friday)*


Ana María Bejarano and Eduardo Pizarro, “From ‘Restricted’ to ‘Besieged’: The Changing
Nature of the Limits to Democracy in Colombia,” in Hagopian and Mainwaring.

**The Drug Wars: The Transnationalization of the Governability Problem (November 10, Monday)**


*Film:* “Frontline: The Drug War.” (Showing Thursday 11/6 and Sunday 11/9).

*Film (Recommended):* “Killing Pablo” (History Channel) (On closed reserve).

**Decaying Democratic Institutions or Resurgent Popular Movements? The Puzzles of Bolivia and Ecuador (November 12, Wednesday)**

René Antonio Mayorga, “Bolivia’s Democracy at the Crossroads,” in Hagopian and Mainwaring.


**Peru and the Permanent Governability Crisis (November 14, Friday)**


Carlos Iván Degregori, “Peru: The Vanishing of a Regime and the Challenge of Democratic Rebuilding,” in Domínguez and Shifter.
Session 7: Dealing with the United States: Foreign Policy-making and Latin America

The Position of the Latin American States in the Global System (November 17, Monday)

Montero, chapter 7.


Skidmore and Smith, Chapters 8, 9, or 10. (Recommended).

PAPER #2 DUE (November 18, Tuesday)

Can the U.S. Play a Productive Role in Latin America? (November 19, Wednesday)


Simulation #2: U.S. Intervention in Latin American Revolutions

COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM (scheduled exam period)