

POSC 221: Latin American Politics / Spring 2020

Professor: Eric Mosinger

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to Latin American Politics! The politics of Latin America confront students with stark contrasts. The region has suffered from several persistent social miseries: poverty and vast inequalities of wealth, recurrent authoritarian episodes, civil war and criminal violence, and economic instability. Yet Latin American nations have also established one of the world's most enduring—if frequently broken—democratic traditions, forged multi-ethnic and mass-based—if not always inclusive—political systems, and embarked on transformative—if often unsuccessful—experiments in governance and social justice.

We will begin by briefly considering Latin America's colonial heritage. Turning to the 20th century, we will examine the development of democracy, the incorporation of different social sectors, and the pursuit of economic growth through interventionist measures. We will examine the puzzles of the latter 20th century: why did many Latin American democracies break down in the 1960s and 1970s? How did authoritarian governments organize and justify their regimes? And critically, what explains the "third wave" (Huntington 1991) of democratization in the 1980s, during which most Latin American countries transitioned—in most cases durably so—to democracy once more?

The second half of the course tackles crucial contemporary questions. Democratization has not cured Latin America's social ills, including rampant inequality, a vast informal sector, and weak rule of law. Facing challenges from entrenched interests, countries across the region embraced neoliberal market reforms. What explains the successes, the failures, and the reversals of these reforms? What new manifestations of protest and mechanisms of incorporation emerged in response? How has globalization—and the ever-present specter of the United States' economic and military strength—affected Latin American polities? How durable are Latin America's "third wave" democracies, and how authoritarian are its recent Left and Right "turns"? This course exposes students not only to the main conceptual and theoretical approaches used by scholars to understand Latin American politics, but should also help them understand political change over time in the Global South and—increasingly—the Global North as well. Students will also develop their research, analytic, and writing skills

Class Slack

You can use the link below to join our Slack workspace — it only takes a minute to create an account!

https://join.slack.com/t/carletonlatin-tvg5440/shared_invite/zt-dd8ab5s1-RtDaJWev0aYaHvu7yLhkDA

Student drop-in hours (optional)

Monday & Wednesday, 11-12:30 CDT or by appointment

Eric Mosinger's Personal Meeting Room (on Zoom): *Details available on class Moodle*

News from Latin America

Your daily assignment: read the news from Latin America at <https://latindispatch.com/>. Make sure to read the **Feature** story and the **Today in Latin America** news roundup every weekday.

What This Course Will Look Like

I'm very sad that I won't get to meet most of you in person until this fall, but I've been working hard to design a course that transports you to different times and places in Latin America.

Let me start off with a quick note about my expectations of you for spring trimester: Your first priority is to stay home and to not get sick. Your second priority is, don't get other people sick. Your third priority is to make sure your family and friends are ok. **This class, and all your classes at Carleton, are at most your fourth priority.**

From me you can expect a course designed to put as little unnecessary stress on you as possible. In contrast to many political science courses, we will be focusing less on abstract theory and more on lived experiences of politics, on memoirs (the celebrated Latin American *testimonio*), and even on aesthetics. You will write three short response papers (no more than 3 pages each), and put together a creative group project. There will be no nerve-racking final exam or long, high stakes research papers. I will not be giving you letter grades on any assignment. If you complete the assignments, you will pass the class. You can assume maximum flexibility from me in terms of deadlines and in accommodating whatever challenges you face.

This means that you will get out of this course whatever you can afford to put into it. I hope that is a lot, but I understand if it is only a little.

Each week will be organized around a **film or documentary** about Latin American politics. These films can be rented through Amazon Prime or streamed through Netflix or one of Carleton's streaming services like Kanopy. If you can't access any of these films for any reason, please send me an email and I'll find a way to get the film to you.

This will be an **asynchronous** course. We won't try to hold a thirty student Zoom session (sorry, not sorry). I'll post two or three short lectures per week. These will generally last between 10 to 25 minutes. The Moodle contains your readings and presents the order in which you should read articles, view lectures, and watch the films.

That doesn't mean there won't be lots of opportunities for **classroom engagement** (note: opportunities, not requirements)! First, I'm setting up a Slack page for the course. I've never used Slack before, so this might be a bit bumpy. I hope you use it for discussing the readings and films, and for asking questions that I will answer in the recorded lectures (like a Reddit AMA). I'll also put you together for small group projects, and I'll help facilitate video chats for your groups.

I'll also host **student drop-in hours** on Zoom twice a week. I'm currently homeschooling my very rambunctious four-year old twins, Rose and Lucía, so you are likely to hear shouts, temper-tantrums, and the thunderous pitter-patter of little feet during drop-in hours.

Finally, you can expect this course to change and adapt to changing circumstances. I've never given an online course before and many of you have never taken an online course before. While I've nailed down the first four weeks of the syllabus, my plans for the latter half are more fluid. Let me know what works and what doesn't, and my course plan will adapt accordingly.

Required Book

Harry Vanden, and Gary Prevost (eds.). 2018. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 6th edition. New York: Oxford.

Assignments

For this course you will write **three short response papers** and conduct a **final group project**.

The response papers should be three pages double-spaced and thesis-driven. All three response papers are due by Thursday, June 4. I recommend spreading these out: turn one in on week 2 or 3, another on week 6, and a third on week 9.

Your final project will be a creative group project. Start thinking about what sorts of interesting creative skills you have. Do you write poetry, sing, dance, sew, film, meme, do improv or stand-up, paint, sculpt, code, quilt, or anything else under the sun? I'll put you into groups of four, and it'll be up to you to decide what kind of project you'd like to create together and share with the rest of the class on week 9. It could be a poetry anthology, a comic book, or a TikTok opera.

Course Schedule

[5 April - 11 April: Introduction to Latin American Politics](#)

Introduction to the Course video

Robert Pastor. 2001. "The Lessons and Legacy of Omar Torrijos." Chapter 1 of *Exiting the Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Laura Weiss, "US Myths of Latin America Often Ignorant, Inaccurate," Huffington Post (LatinoVoices Blog, 2014) (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lauraweiss/us-myths-of-latinamerica_b_4813150.html).

Lecture 1: Stereotypes and Agency

Eduardo Galeano. 1973. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York: Monthly Review (pp. 1-8). Or read in Spanish: Eduardo Galeano. 1971. *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI (pp. 15-23).

Harry Vanden, and Gary Prevost (eds.). 2018. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 6th edition. New York: Oxford. Skim pp. 1-11; read pp. 11-16, skim pp. 43-55.

Film: The Motorcycle Diaries (<https://www.amazon.com/Motorcycle-Diaries-English-Subtitled/dp/B005KGPHZC>)

Lecture 2: Dependency Theory and Postcolonial Development

[12 April - 18 April: Democratic Breakdown in Chile](#)

Vanden & Prevost, read on democracy and dictators, pp. 55-75; skim timeline on pp. 76-82, and read background on Chile, pp. 413-419.

Lecture 3: Domestic Explanations of Chile's Coup

Patricia Verdugo. 2001. *Chile, Pinochet, and the Caravan of Death*. Coral Gables, FL: North-South Center Press. Selections.

Film: La batalla de Chile Part 1 (<https://www.amazon.com/Battle-Chile-Part-English-Subtitled/dp/B013QOJ8RM>) and Part 2 (<https://www.amazon.com/Battle-Chile-Part-English-Subtitled/dp/B013QMCB8C>)

Christopher Hitchens. 2002. *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*. London; New York: Verso, pp. 55–76.

Peter Kornbluh. 2003. "Opening up the Files Chile Declassified." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 37, no. 1: 25–31.

Lecture 4: External Causes of Chile's Coup

Lecture 5: 1973 Coup Wrap-up

[19 April - 25 April: Overcoming Bueaucratic Authoritarianism](#)

Jacobo Timerman. 1989. *Chile: Death in the South*. London: Picador. Chs. 4–5.

Sally Webb Thornton. 2000. "Grief Transformed: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo." *Omega* 41(4).

Lecture 6: Explaining Chile's Transition to Democracy

Film: No (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.74a9f74f-6551-d132-f48e-10c6b5b4b285>)

Read: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/03/4-things-the-movie-noleft-out-about-real-life-chile/274491/>

Vanden & Prevost, pp. 166-177.

Tomás Undurraga (2015). "Neoliberalism in Argentina and Chile: Common antecedents, divergent paths." *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 23(55), 11–34. (<https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-987315235502>)

The recurring effects. Read: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-24014501>

Lecture 7: Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and Neoliberalism

[26 April - 2 May: The Aftershocks](#)

Vanden & Prevost, pp. 419-427.

Watch on your own: El Pepe: A Supreme Life (Netflix)

Peter Siavelis. 2016. "Crisis of Representation in Chile? The Institutional Connection." *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 8(3): 61–93.

Read: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/03/world/americas/chile-protests.html>

Nicolás M. Somma, Matías Bargsted, Rodolfo Disi Pavlic & Rodrigo M. Medel. (2020). No water in the oasis: The Chilean Spring of 2019–2020. *Social Movement Studies*, 0(0), 1–8.

(<https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1727737>)

Film: El abrazo de la serpiente

[3 May - 9 May: Indigenous Resistance in Bolivia and Beyond](#)

Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, Chapter 2.

Erica S. Simmons, *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 2.

Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, “Explaining the Rise of Ethnic Politics in Contemporary Latin America,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 56:1 (Spring 2014): 166-74.

Vanden & Prevost pp. 503-513.

Farthing, L. (2020). In Bolivia, the Right Returns with a Vengeance. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 52(1), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10/ggs2zx>

Film: También la lluvia

[10 May - 16 May: Clientalism and the Perfect Dictatorship](#)

Javier Auyero, “The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account,” *Latin American Research Review* 35:3 (2000): 55-81.

Lucy Taylor, “Client-ship and Citizenship in Latin America,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23:2 (2004): 213-227.

Vanden & Prevost pp. 521-530.

Film: La ley de Herodes

[17 May - 23 May: The Venezuelan Petro-State](#)

Vanden & Prevost pp. 468-482 and timeline, pp. 482-484 [5th ed: pp. 463-476 and timeline on pp. 476-478]

Guillermo O’Donnell, “Delegative Democracy,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, ed., *Counterpoints: Selected Essays on Authoritarianism and Democratization*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999.

Pascal Lupien, “Ignorant Mobs or Rational Actors? Understanding Support for Venezuela’s ‘Bolivarian Revolution’,” *Political Science Quarterly* 27:2 (June 2015): 319-40.

Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold, *Dragon in the Tropics: Hugo Chávez and the Political Economy of Revolution in Venezuela*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2011, Chapter 2.

Film: Once Upon a Time in Venezuela

[24 May - 30 May: Remembering the Sandinista Revolution](#)

Vanden & Prevost pp. 585-600, 601-2, and timeline on p. 610.

Eric Mosinger, "Balance of Loyalties: Explaining Rebel Factional Struggles in the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Security Studies*, 28(5), (October 2019): 935–975. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2019.1662481>

Karen Kampwirth, "Neither Left nor Right: *Sandinismo* in the Anti-Feminist Era," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 41:1, (2008): 30–34. <https://doi.org/10/gfkwxj>

Eric Mosinger, Kai Thaler, Diana Paz García, and Charlotte Fowler, "Civil Resistance in the Shadow of History: Historical Frames, Analogies, and the Generation of 'Spontaneous' Uprisings," (2020), Working Paper.

Film: ¡Las Sandinistas!

[31 May - 6 June: The Crucible of Brazilian Democracy](#)

No reading.

Creative Group Project presentations.

Film: The Edge of Democracy (Netflix)