POLI 375 - Latin American Politics
Fall 2018
Mondays, 5:00-7:30 PM, CCC 234

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Office Hours: Tues. 10-11 am & Weds. noon-1pm
and by appointment

Course Description
Latin America, historically characterized by patterns of authoritarianism, inequality, racism, and machismo, and long subject to domination by foreign powers, experienced dramatic changes in the twentieth century that continue to unfold in the new millennium. Beginning at the end of the 1970s, a wave of democratization swept out dictatorships and military governments and simultaneously ushered in a major economic shift to more free market policies. Today every country in the region, except socialist Cuba, claims to be a democracy, although the quality and degree of consolidation varies considerably. Hugo Chávez’s election in 1998 marked the start of another important wave: the resurgence of the left in the form of the election of “new left” presidents in numerous countries who pushed back against the neoliberal economic model. Leftist political resurgence brought to power a new generation of leaders, many of whom had participated in the struggles against dictatorship and authoritarianism, and some of whom represented historically underrepresented groups, including women and indigenous peoples. The context of democracy and the efforts of organized civil society have done much to expand rights and bring new groups into the political process: LGBTQ people have won new rights in several countries, indigenous and African descendant peoples have become important political actors, and women have made significant strides towards greater equality across the region. Favorable economic conditions during the 2000s combined with new state commitments in many countries to redistributive social policies helped to lift many millions out of poverty. However, the last few years have been characterized by less favorable economic conditions at the international level. Politically the region has shifted to the right. Both these recent changes are threatening many of the significant advances made in poverty reduction during the previous decade. Many challenges remain as countries struggle to deal with the legacies of their past and to position themselves in a globalized world.

Contemporary political struggles and debates in Latin America offer a wealth of important, controversial, and cutting-edge ideas with which to grapple that have relevance not just for the region, but globally for the twenty-first century. These include debates about democracy, populism, and socialism; globalization; the role of the state in the economy; human rights and accountability; the media and politics; environmentalism and development; among others. In this course we will study current issues and debates and endeavor to understand the historical processes that helped to shape the present. The course begins with an overview of the region’s history and patterns of politics and then moves on to study political development and contemporary political issues and struggles in the following four countries: Cuba, Brazil, Guatemala, and Ecuador, which represent a sampling from across the diverse region known as Latin America.

Required Texts
2) All other readings will be accessible via D2L e-Reserves.
Course Objectives
1) Students will gain knowledge about major patterns in Latin American political and economic development during the twentieth century and into the present.
2) Students will develop in-depth knowledge about countries in four distinct regions of Latin America: Caribbean, Southern Cone, Central America, and the Andes. We will highlight distinctive features of each country and discuss the ways in which each one exemplifies common patterns in their sub-region.
3) Increased knowledge about contemporary political issues will increase student interest in and ability to follow current events in the region and to think critically about developments there.
4) Students will hone their critical thinking skills by engaging in debate and reflecting on controversial contemporary issues in Latin American politics.
5) Students will hone their research, analysis, writing, and oral presentation skills through the process of developing a research topic, producing a research paper, and sharing their work with the class.
6) Students will gain an appreciation for the struggles, contributions, and perspectives of Latin Americans.

Course Requirements and Grading
Your grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper Project (See breakdown below)</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper (25%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Presentation (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Attendance and Participation
Class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion, with the emphasis on discussion. Attendance and participation in class discussions is a crucial part of this course and will count towards 15% of your grade. You are expected to attend all class sessions and film screenings and to come prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your attendance grade and if you miss more than 6 classes during the semester (3 weeks) you will forfeit any points for attendance. In addition to regular attendance, active participation in class discussions is vitally important. I will keep a record of student participation and will refer to it when I calculate this portion of your grade.

Research Paper Project
The major writing project will be a 12-15 page research paper. The project will involve four steps that together will count for 50% of your grade: a brief topic proposal (ungraded), an annotated bibliography (4-6 single-spaced pages), the research paper itself (12-15 pages), and your research presentation (10 minutes). See above for what each component is worth in relation to your final grade. Detailed instructions, guidelines, and topic suggestions will be provided early in the semester. Topic proposals will be due on Wednesday, Sept. 26. The Annotated Bibliography will be due on Wednesday, October 24. A first draft of the research paper will be due on Sunday, Nov. 25, and the final draft will be due on Friday, Dec. 7. Two class sessions (Dec. 3 & 10) are set aside for student research presentations.

Exams
There will be a midterm exam that students will take online and an in-class final exam during finals week. Study guides will be provided.
Current Events
We will begin each class by discussing current events in Latin America. Each student will be assigned one day during the semester to make a brief presentation on an article of interest related to Latin American politics. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the beginning of the semester. Current event presentations will not be graded; so long as you complete a presentation, you will earn full credit. This presentation counts for 2% of the final grade. Recommended newspapers with good coverage of Latin America include: *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Guardian* (London), for a non-US perspective. If you read Spanish, *Pagina 12* (Argentina) and *La Jornada* (Mexico) are also excellent sources. All of these and most other major newspapers can be accessed for free on the web.

For the purposes of keeping up with the news and developments in the region, I highly recommend that all students subscribe (its free!) to receive the Center for Economic and Policy Research’s (CEPR) “Latin America News Round-up”, which is delivered to your e-mail inbox a couple of times a week. This service collects current stories from a wide variety of news sources and covers important news from around the region. This is a good source to find interesting and timely articles to present in class. To subscribe to this service, go to their website: [http://www.cepr.net/](http://www.cepr.net/) and look for the link on the right that says “Subscribe Today”, then check the box for “Latin America News Roundup”.

I encourage all students to get into the habit of following the news. A wonderful way to do this, even when you do not have much time, is to listen to the daily news programs on National Public Radio (NPR). Their news programs are excellent and will keep you up-to-date on current events and important issues, both domestic and international. You can hear NPR news on Wisconsin Public Radio, which has two local radio stations: the Ideas Network at 89.1 FM and News and Classical at 90.9 FM. You can also listen live and access podcasts of previous shows at [www.wpr.org](http://www.wpr.org). Along these same lines, I also recommend the daily news program, Democracy Now! for excellent and critical coverage of national and world events from a progressive, non-mainstream perspective. This television news program is broadcast weekday mornings and can be heard anytime online at: [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)

Movies
In an effort to bring to life the issues, countries, and people we will be studying, I will show a couple of documentaries during the semester. Depending on the length of the film, I may show all or part of it outside of our regular class time. *These movies are an important part of the curriculum and viewing them is mandatory.* If you cannot make an out-of-class screening please let me know so that we can make other arrangements for you to view the film.

Academic Integrity and Turnitin.com
All students are expected to abide by the guidelines for academic integrity contained in the UW System Administrative Code. As a student it behooves you to be well acquainted with these guidelines and to understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism, as violations can result in severe consequences.

We will use the plagiarism detection program, Turnitin.com via D2L. You will upload all your written work to the appropriate D2L dropbox, which is connected to the Turnitin.com database. **Please note that if you fail to upload a paper to D2L you will not receive credit for the assignment.**

Classroom Etiquette
- Please turn off your cell phones before coming to class. You may use your laptop to take notes, but please do not text or surf the web in class.
- Refrain from eating in class. Bringing a drink is fine.
- Arriving late or leaving during class is disruptive. Please make every effort to be on time and plan to stay for the entire class period. If you know in advance that you will have to leave early, I would appreciate it if you could let me know before class begins.
Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 2 – ¡Bienvenidos! – Welcome! & Historical Legacies
9/10 – Introductions & Latin American Historical Development

Week 3 – Latin American Political Development
9/17 – Political Actors, the State, and Democracy in Latin America
Readings:
1) W&K, Chs. 3-5, “Interest Groups and Political Parties”, “Government Machinery, the Role of the State, and Public Policy” and “The Struggle for Democracy in Latin America”

Week 4 – Politics in Revolutionary Cuba
9/24 – Readings:
1) W&K, Ch. 17, pp. 335-354, ending at “The International Arena”

9/26 – DUE: RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL – Upload to D2L dropbox by midnight

Week 5 – Cuba’s Political Economy & Foreign Relations
10/1 – Readings:
Political Economy & Society
2) A Contemporary Cuba Reader, Second Edition, Economics, pp. 117-123. (D2L e-Reserves)
Foreign Relations
Week 6 – Lecture on Migration & Midterm
10/8 – In lieu of regular class meeting, we will attend the guest lecture, “The Impact of Migration on Germany and the EU” by German Consulate General Herbert Quelle. 6-8pm, NFAC. Attendance is mandatory.

10/10 – DUE: ONLINE MIDTERM EXAM – Submit on D2L by midnight

Week 7 – Guatemalan Political Development
10/15 – Readings:

Week 8 – Democracy & Justice in Post-War Guatemala & Migration from the Northern Triangle
10/22 - Readings:

Justice & Impunity in Guatemala

Screening: “Granito: How to Nail a Dictator” (Running time: 103 minutes)

Migration

10/24 – DUE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY - Upload to D2L Dropbox by midnight

Week 9 – Brazilian Political Development: From Oligarchy to Democracy
10/29 – Readings:
2) Other readings TBA
Week 10 – From Progressive Country of the Future to Political Chaos: What happened to Brazil?
11/5 – Readings:

Week 11 – New Left Populism in the Andes
11/12 – Readings:

Week 12 – Indigenous and Environmental Movements in Ecuador
11/19 – Readings:
   3) Lindsay Ofrias. “Fighting Chevron in Ecuador.” NACLA, November 3, 2017. (D2L e-Reserves)

11/22-25 – Break - HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

Week 13 – Peer-Editing Workshops
11/25 – FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE – Upload to D2L Dropbox by 5PM

11/26 – Peer-editing workshops – regular class meeting cancelled

Week 14 – Conclusions & Student Presentations
12/3 – Conclusions & Student Presentations
   Readings: TBA

12/7 – DUE: FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPERS - Upload to D2L Dropbox by 5pm

Week 15 – Student Paper Presentations
12/10 – Student Paper Presentations

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20th, 5:00-7:00 PM, CCC 234