

Latin America in the 21st Century: from the left-turn to the return of the right

Since the beginning of the XXI century, Latin America experienced significant transformations in several aspects of its reality. In the political dimension, left wing parties and candidates rose to power in different countries, winning elections at more or less the same time. This trend did not have a precedent in the region and was described by some scholars as a “pink tide” or a “left turn”. In the economic aspect, the emergence of China as a global power and the commodity boom that resulted from it had a direct impact on most Latin American economies. South American countries, in particular, experienced a continuous growth in their exports of primary goods and GDPs during the first decade of the century. This economic bonanza generated resources to fund active social policies that spread across the continent; as a result, many formerly poor Latin-Americans became part of the middle class.

During this course, students will study in detail these transformations, their reasons and connections as well as their consequences in relation to the functioning of democracy, the sustainability of the economic model and the deepness of social re-configurations. We will also explore to which extend some recent events, such as the victory of conservative candidates in countries like Argentina, Chile, Peru, the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and the crisis in Venezuela can be considered (or not) as a sign that the cycle is over. Finally, we will discuss about some of the challenges that the region still faces (violence, drug trafficking, migration, corruption) and about the prospects for the near future.