

PS 326B: Latin American Politics

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T-Th 10-11.20, Seigle 204

Description

This course provides students with a basic understanding of Latin America's quandaries in the road towards political and economic development. In particular, we explore why Latin American societies have undergone cycles of democracy and dictatorship, why they have failed to find paths toward sustainable development, and why they have been unable to correct dramatic economic disparities. In the course of this overview, we will look at structural, cultural, and institutional theories that purport to explain Latin America's endemic political and economic malaise.

No survey of Latin America can claim to cover the ample diversity of historical experiences and contemporary political systems that coexist throughout the region. In order to impose some structure on the vast amount of information potentially available to students of Latin American politics, we will focus mainly on the political development of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. However, we will devote time to the analysis of circumscribed historical episodes in other countries. These episodes shed broader light upon political phenomena of paramount importance throughout the region, such as revolution, democratic breakdown, the rise of neoliberalism and the populist reaction it provoked. In addition, we will devote a substantial amount of time to understanding institutions of democracy in Latin America, especially the interplay between political parties, electoral systems, and rules that pattern the relationship between presidents and congresses.

Course organization

The course is divided into two parts:

- Part One is a historic overview of Colonial political and economic institutions, the nineteenth-century liberal order, and the political mobilization of disenfranchised sectors that accompanied industrialization during the twentieth century, followed by a glimpse into the causes of democratic breakdown in the 1960s and 1970s, the policy-making record of military dictatorships, the dual transition to democracy and markets in the 1980s, and the rise of a new Left in the first decade of the 21st century.
- Part Two adopts an institutional view to further our knowledge of how Latin American democratic systems have worked in the recent past, starting from an analysis of the varied ways in which democratic regimes were eventually rebuilt. We will then look into the main features of presidential regimes, electoral laws, and party systems throughout the region in order to account for differences in the inner workings of Latin American democracies.

Requirements and grading

Please read this section carefully: Registration in this course implies that you agree with *all* elements of evaluation.

One partial exam (October 17) and one final exam (December 17, 6pm) provide the main basis for evaluation (25% each). The exams will test your recollection of historical facts, but seek mainly to assess your ability to "make sense" of Latin American politics. Consequently, you should expect to write (very short) essays and define important concepts and ideas in these exams, aside from replying to shorter "multiple choice" items. A second important component of your grade will be a series of short assignments to be completed at home and delivered through Canvas (40%). I do not know how many of these assignments we will have, and I will advertise in class and through Canvas when they are due. The remainder of the grade (10%) will be based on my assessment of your participation in class, *including attendance and informed participation in class discussions*. Since the amount of reading for this class is not trivial and since I will on occasion ask questions in class that are related to the readings, the optimal strategy is to keep up with the reading schedule.

I will make every effort to grade your exams fairly and in a timely manner. If you consider that I have made a gross mistake in grading any exam, you should address your concerns to me within three days of receiving your grade by e-mail. I expect you to substantiate any claim you make, to be respectful, and to avoid the frivolous pursuit of extra points. Finally, note that I adhere to the following number-to-letter grade conversion chart:

97-100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+
93-96=A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-

Students who take this class under the Pass/Fail option must receive a grade of B- or better in order to obtain a Pass on their final grade. Students who take the Pass/Fail option should be aware that only courses taken for a letter grade may be used toward their major or minor. The College of Arts and Sciences will handle issues pertaining to academic integrity. The academic integrity policy is available [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Note that there are *no extra credit* opportunities in this course.

Textbook

Daniel C. Hellinger, *Comparative Politics of Latin America. Democracy at Last?* Routledge, 2014.

Office Hours

Rosas, Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm, Seigle 288

Silva, Thursdays, 1-3 pm, Seigle 255

Schedule of Topics

<i>Week 1</i>	Studying Latin America
<i>Week 2</i>	Colonial Origins of Economic and Political Development
<i>Week 3</i>	Construction of the Liberal Order
<i>Week 4</i>	Populism or Revolution
<i>Week 5</i>	Democratic Breakdown
<i>Week 6</i>	Transition to Democracy and Markets
<i>Week 7</i>	The Rise and Fall of the Pink Tide in the XXIst Century
<i>Week 8</i>	Midterm exam
<i>Week 9</i>	Electoral Systems and Representation
<i>Week 10</i>	Political Parties and Accountability
<i>Week 11</i>	Presidents and Legislatures
<i>Week 12</i>	Governors and Courts
<i>Week 13</i>	Social Policy and Distributive Politics
<i>Week 14</i>	Social Inclusion and Violence

Reading schedule

Week 2. Colonial Origins of Economic and Political Development

Sept 3: Hellinger Chapter 3

Bret Stephens, "America the Beautiful", op-ed NYT Aug 23 2019 [Link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Sept 5: Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau, "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies", *American Journal of Sociology* 111

(5), 2006. [mahoneyASR.pdf](#) download

Week 3. Construction of the Liberal Order

Sept 10: Hellinger, Chapter 4, "Political without Economic Independence"

Sept 12: John Coatsworth. 2008. "Inequality, Institutions, and Economic Growth in Latin America", *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40: 545-569. [Coatsworth2008.pdf](#) download

Week 4. Populism or Revolution

Sept 17: Hellinger, "Corporatism: A Latin American Way of Politics?" in Chapter 2, and Chapter 5.

Sept 19: Robert Dix, "Populism: Authoritarian and Democratic", *Latin American Research Review* 20 (2), 1985. [Dix1985.pdf](#) download

Sept 24: Hellinger "The Mexican Revolution" in Chapter 9, and Chapter 10

Week 5. Democratic Breakdown

Sept 26: Hellinger, Chapter 7

Michael Albertus and Victor Menaldo, "Chile: From Authoritarian Legacies to a New Dawn?", in *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*, 2018. [AlbertusMenaldo.pdf](#) download

Week 6. Transition to Democracy and Markets

Oct 1. Hellinger, "State and Market in Latin America Today" and "Adjusting to the Global Market: Three Variations" in Chapter 6, and Chapter 8

Oct 3. Susan Stokes, "What Do Policy Switches Tell Us about Democracy?", Chapter 3 in Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, Cambridge University Press, 1999 [stokes.pdf](#) download

Week 7. The Rise and Fall of the Pink Tide in the XXIst Century

Oct 8: Hellinger, "Venezuela's Transition from Pacted Democracy to Radical Populism" in Chapter 9

Oct 10: Andy Baker and Ken Greene. (2011). *The Latin American Left's Mandate. Free-market Policies and Issue Voting in New Democracies.* *World Politics*, 63(1):43–

77. [BakerGreene2011.pdf](#) download

Ma. Victoria Murillo, Virginia Oliveros and Milan Vaishnav, "Electoral Revolution or Democratic Alternation?", *Latin American Research Review* 45 (3), 2010. [MurilloEtAl2010.pdf](#) download

Week 9. Electoral Systems and Representation

Oct 22: Hellinger, Chapter 13

Scott Desposato, 2006, "The Impact of Electoral Rules on Legislative Parties: Lessons from the Brazilian Senate and Chamber of Deputies", *Journal of Politics* 58(4), 1018-

1030 [desposato2006.pdf](#) download

Oct 24: Brian F. Crisp and Patrick Cunha Silva, 2019, "Electoral Systems and System Reforms in Latin America." *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latin American Politics*. [Crisp and Cunha Silva.pdf](#) download

Week 10. Political Parties and Accountability

Oct 29: Hellinger, Chapter 12

Noam Lupu, "Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America", *World Politics* 66(4), 2014, 561-602. [lupu2014.pdf](#) download

Oct 31: Alisha Holland and Brian Palmer-Rubin (2015). *Beyond the Machine: Clientelist Brokers and Interest Organizations in Latin America*. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(9), 1186–1223. [HollandPalmer-Rubin2015.pdf](#) download

Week 11. Presidents and Legislatures

Nov 5: Scott Morgenstern, John Polga-Hecimovich, and Sarah Shair-Rosenfield, 2013, "Tall, Grande, or Venti: Presidential Powers in the United States and Latin America", *Journal of Politics*

in Latin America, 5(2), 37-70 [morgenstern2013.pdf](#) download

Nov 7: Eduardo Aleman and Thomas Schwartz, 2006, "Presidential Vetoes in Latin America", *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 18(1): 98-120. [AlemanSchwartz2006.pdf](#) download

Nov 14: Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, 2005, "Democratization and Constitutional Crises in Presidential Regimes. Toward Congressional Supremacy?", *Comparative Political Studies* 38(1), 51-74. [perezLinyan2005.pdf](#) download

Week 12. Governors and Courts

Nov 19: Hellinger, Chapter 11.

Carlos Gervasoni. "A Rentier Theory of Subnational Regimes - Fiscal Federalism, Democracy, and Authoritarianism in the Argentine Provinces." *World Politics* 62, 2 (April 2010): 302-

40. [Gervasoni2010.pdf](#) download

Nov 21: Alisha Holland and Jose Incio, 2019, "Imperfect Recall: The Politics of Subnational Office Removals", *Comparative Political Studies* 52(5), 777–805,

2019 [HollandIncio2019.pdf](#) download

Week 13. Social Policy and Distributive Politics

Nov 26: Tasha Fairfield and Candelaria Garay. "Redistribution Under the Right in Latin America: Electoral Competition and Organized Actors in Policymaking." *Comparative Political*

Studies 50.14 (December 2017): 1871-1906. [FairfieldCaray2017.pdf](#) download

Alberto Díaz-Cayeros and Beatriz Magaloni. "Aiding Latin America's Poor." *Journal of*

Democracy 20.4 (2009): 36-49. [Díaz-CayerosMagaloni2009.pdf](#) download

Week 14. Social Inclusion and Violence

Dec 3: Benjamin Lessing and Graham Denyer Willis "Legitimacy in Criminal Governance: Managing a Drug Empire From Behind Bars", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 113,

No. 2 (May 2019): 584-606. [LessingWillis2019.pdf](#) download

Dec 5: Luis F. Lopez-Calva, "Not Poor, but Not Middle Class Yet", *Americas Quarterly* (Fall 2012, 6/4).

The World Bank, "Economic Mobility and the Rise of the Latin American Middle Class", overview and chapter 1.