Introduction to Latin American Politics
POLS 2570

Fall 2015
Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45
McGannon Hall #121

Professor- J.D. Bowen
Office- McGannon #149
Email- jbowen5@slu.edu
Phone- 314.977.4239

Office hours- Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-2:00 or by appointment.
*I am in my office quite a bit, so it shouldn’t be difficult to find me outside of my office hours. The easiest way to make an appointment is via email.

Course Description and Objectives:

Welcome! This course is designed to introduce students the political systems of Latin America. We will focus both on theoretical explanations for general political and economic phenomenon such as economic growth, democratization (and the breakdown of democracy), social movements and revolutions, and US involvement in Latin America as well as on specific case studies that highlight the diverse experiences of different Latin American countries.

My goals for the course are the following:
1) Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of the historical roots of contemporary Latin American politics.
2) Students will master the major theoretical perspectives used to explain political and economic outcomes in Latin America.
3) Students will acquire specific knowledge about different countries and political systems.
4) Students will hone their critical reasoning skills through careful reading and discussion of competing arguments.
5) Students will develop their abilities to write short, focused analytical essays.
6) Students will leave the course with the ability to make informed and reasoned judgements about a wide variety of issues facing contemporary Latin America.

Welcome!

Required texts:

All required texts are available for purchase at the Saint Louis University Bookstore in the Busch Student Center. Readings that are NOT in the required books will be send to students via email. The required textbook for the course is:

Course requirements and grading:

Mid-term exam: 30% of final grade
This exam will be given in class on October 15th and will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Final exam or research project: 30% of final grade
The final exam will be comprehensive (but focusing mainly on material covered after the midterm) and similar in format to the mid-term exam. It will be given during the assigned final exam period for our class (December 15th at 12:00pm). Alternatively students can select a research paper in lieu of the final exam. Research papers should be approximately 15-20 pages in length and are due at the time of the final exam.
*Students planning to complete a research paper or creative project should consult with me to have their topic approved by October 29th.

Two analytical essays: 20% (10% each)
Each student will submit TWO analytical essays over the course of the semester. Each essay should be approximately 2 to 3 pages in length. These essays give you the opportunity to explore in greater depth a particular theme that we discuss in class. Essays should involve additional research (at least 2 non-internet sources in addition to any readings from class). So that you don’t wait until the end of the semester to write both essays, you should turn in one essay BEFORE the mid-term exam, and the second AFTER the mid-term.

Map quiz: 10% of final grade
Geography is important. You will have a hard time understanding Peruvian or Argentine politics if you cannot locate those countries on a map. We will have a short quiz on the map of Latin America (identifying countries and capitals) in class on September 9th.

Class participation: 10% of final grade
Your attendance and active participation are vital to the success of this course. Different students participate in different ways. At a minimum, students should come to class on time having read and thought about the assigned readings for that class. I expect that all students will make a contribution to class discussions through comments, questions, criticisms, and analysis of the assigned readings. In assigning grades, quality of participation will take precedence over quantity of participation (hence, students who participate frequently but without giving much thought to their comments/questions are not at an advantage compared to the student who offers occasional but insightful analysis and questions).
Final letter grades will be assigned that correspond to the following numeric scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-70</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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**Attendance and participation:**

I do not consider class time to be a time simply to review the assigned readings. We will cover materials during class that are not in the readings (and we will not cover every single point from the readings in class). Class attendance is, therefore, imperative. If you must miss class for an approved reason (e.g.; illness, death or medical emergency in the immediate family, University-sponsored activities), please let me know via email as soon as possible. You are responsible for all materials covered in class, whether you are physically present or not. Make-up exams will be given only under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day.

**Classroom courtesy:**

Out of respect for all of those in class, all cell phones, pagers, and any other noisemaking devices must be turned OFF during the entire class period and during exams. Laptop computers may be used in class provided they do not make noise that disturbs those around you. I reserve the right to ask you to turn off and put away your computer if it is creating a disruption.

**Students with disabilities:**

Students with disabilities that may impact their classroom performance should contact the Disabilities Coordinator, 977-8885, DuBourg, Room 36. I am happy to make accommodations for students with disabilities, consistent with all laws and University policies.

**Academic integrity:**

I expect all students to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations will be reported and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts & Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.
from the University. I encourage you to view official University policy on matters of academic integrity at: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml

Additional resources:

In addition to the required readings, there is a wealth of additional material that you may wish to consult throughout the semester or in the future. Below is a partial list of resources that you may find useful. All of the journals and news magazines can be accessed through the libraries e-journals website.

Academic journals dealing specifically with Latin American issues:

Bulletin of Latin American Research  
Journal of Latin American Studies  
Latin American Politics and Society  
Latin American Research Review  
NACLA Report on the Americas

Websites with plentiful information on various aspects of Latin American politics, economics, culture, etc.

www.lanic.utexas.edu  
http://pdba.georgetown.edu/

Links to most major Latin American newspapers (mostly in the local language of each country) can be found here:

http://www1.lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/news/

Course schedule:

Aug.  25- Introduction and syllabus

27- The roots of Latin America’s political traditions  
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 1-2

Sep.  1- From Spanish colonies to independent nation-states  
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 3

3- Contemporary legacies of colonialism  
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 4  
**MAP QUIZ AT BEGINNING OF CLASS- PLEASE BE ON TIME!**
8- Legacies of colonialism (Guatemala)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 20

10- Religion, family, and gender in Latin American politics
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 5-6

15- Political economy
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 7

17- NO CLASS

22- Contemporary issues in political economy

24- Politics and culture
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 8

29- Political institutions: Democracy and/or authoritarianism
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 9

Oct. 1- Politics with weak institutions (Argentina)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 13

6- Authoritarian legacies for democratic institutions (Chile)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 15

8- NO CLASS

13- Review for midterm

15- MIDTERM EXAM

22- NO CLASS

27- Revolutionary legacies (Bolivia)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 10, 18

29- Cuban revolution and its aftermath (Cuba)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 19
Nov.
3- The Cuban Revolution today (Cuba)

5- Revolution and reaction (Nicaragua)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 21

10- US policy in Latin America
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 11

12- A rising power or another missed opportunity? (Brazil)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 14

17- From failed state to regional leader? (Colombia)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 16

19- Populism, authoritarianism, and the resource curse (Venezuela)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 17 (skim)

24- Imperfect neighbors (Mexico)
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 12

Dec.
1- New and old issues in Latin American politics

3- The long shadow and the road ahead
*Reading TBA

**FINAL EXAM**: December 15th, 12:00pm-1:50pm