Introduction to Latin American Politics
POLS 257 / HR 275

Spring 2012
M/W/F 12:00-12:50
McGannon Hall #121

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

Office hours- Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-2:15 or by appointment

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.

This course satisfies the “Global Citizenship” diversity requirement.

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:

The required books for the course are:


We will also be reading several journal articles, most of which are available on the library’s e-journal website. For those that are not, I will email them to you in .pdf format.

**Course requirements and grading:**

*Mid-term exam: 30% of final grade*
This exam will be given in class on March 2nd 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 (Friday, May 11th @ 12:00pm). Alternatively, students can select a research paper in lieu of the final exam. Research papers should be approximately 15 pages in length. Research papers are due at the time of the final exam.
*Students planning to complete a research paper should consult with the professor to have their topic approved by April 2nd.*
*Students taking this course for honors credit are required to select the research paper option, and your paper should be 20-25 pages in length.*

*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 January 25th.

*4 short quizzes- 5% each (20% of final grade)*
These quizzes are designed to make sure everyone is keeping up with the assigned readings. Quizzes will be given in class, and make-ups will be given only under the most extraordinary circumstances. Quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions.

*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>Numeric Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.
**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](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*
*Journal of Politics in Latin America*
*Latin American Politics and Society*
*Latin American Research Review*
*NACLA Report on the Americas* (Left-leaning news magazine with short articles on contemporary Latin American issues)

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

[www.lanic.utexas.edu](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu)
[http://pdba.georgetown.edu/](http://pdba.georgetown.edu/)

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

More journals and policy-relevant magazines that frequently deal with topics related to Latin America:

Comparative Politics
Foreign Affairs
Foreign Policy
Journal of Democracy
World Politics

Course schedule:

Jan
18- Introduction and syllabus
20- The roots of Latin America’s political traditions
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 1-2
23- From Spanish colonies to independent nation-states
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 3
25- Race and colonialism
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 4
   **MAP QUIZ AT BEGINNING OF CLASS- PLEASE BE ON TIME!**
27- Legacies of colonialism- Guatemala
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 12
30- Religion, family, and gender in Latin American politics
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 5-6

Feb
1- Political economy
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 7
3- Political economy- Mexico
   *Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 13
   **QUIZ #1**
6- Democracy and authoritarianism
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 8

8- Democracy and authoritarianism- Argentina
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 16

10- Political institutions
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 9

13- Political institutions- Brazil
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 15

15- Revolution and social movements
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 10

17- Revolution and social movements- Cuba
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 14

20- Revolution and social movements- Nicaragua
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 20

22- Revolution and social movements- El Salvador

24- Revolution and social movements- Bolivia
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 21

27- US-Latin America Relations
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 11

29- US-Latin America Relations- Colombia
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 19
5-9- NO CLASS THIS WEEK

19- Democracy: Transitions and consolidation

21- Contemporary political economy- Washington Consensus

23- Contemporary political economy- Post-neoliberalism

26- New and old forms of political instability

28- The new instability- Ecuador
*Bowen, J.D. “Ruling Amidst Crisis: Elites and Political (In)stability in Ecuador.”
*I will email this to you before class.
*NOTE: This class will be held in conjunction with Atlas Week, and may be held outside our normal classroom. I will let you know as soon as I have those details.

30- Politics of sustainability- Ecuador
*No readings.
*NOTE: This class will be held in conjunction with Atlas Week, and may be held outside our normal classroom. I will let you know as soon as I have those details.
Apr

2- Contemporary Cuba

4- Populism - Venezuela
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 18

11- The “new left” - Brazil under Lula

13- NO CLASS

16- The new left reconsidered
**QUIZ #3**

18- China, Latin America, and the new regionalism
*Readings TBA.

20- The roots of authoritarianism - Chile and the “Other 9/11”
*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 16 (skim)
*Muñoz, Ch. 1-2

23- Consolidating authoritarian rule
*Muñoz, Ch. 3-4

25- Political economy of authoritarian Chile
*Muñoz, Ch.5
27- Resistance and transition from dictatorship to…..?
*Muñoz, Ch. 6-7

30- Political economy of Chile’s democratic transition

May 2- Searching for “justice”: The authoritarian legacy
*Muñoz, Ch. 8-9

4- The long shadow and the road ahead
*Muñoz, Ch. 10

7- Wrap-up and review
**QUIZ #4**

11- FINAL EXAM (Research papers due): 12:00-1:50pm.