

POSC 461: Governments and Politics of Latin America

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9-9:50 am
Whitt Hall, Room 204

Instructor: Dr. Theresa Schroeder

Office Location: Russell Hall, Room 248

Office Hours: Monday 11-12am; 2-4pm, and by appointment

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Course Description

In the last three decades, Latin America has experienced great political transformations. By the mid-1970s, there were only three democracies in the region: Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. By 2000, the overwhelming majority of Latin Americans were living under electoral democracies. Since the rise of democracy, old and new problems have challenged political stability in the region, but opportunities for political development have also emerged. This course focuses on the study of contemporary Latin American political institutions and the dynamics of the Latin American political process. Specifically, the course has two main objectives: 1) identify the main actors and factors that facilitated what is known as the “Third Wave” of democratization, and 2) evaluate the current state of democracy in the region and prospects for democratic consolidation.

We will study how economic factors, political institutions, and domestic and international actors have influenced democracy in Latin America. In addition, we will analyze the effects on democracy of social and political dynamics that characterize Latin America today, such as increased citizen insecurity, economic crisis, interrupted presidencies, and the ascend of populist governments. Besides studying regional patterns, students will also have the opportunity to analyze in more detail the history and quality of democracy in a Latin American country of their interest.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the political history of Latin America and current political events.
2. Define and apply terms relevant to the study of Latin American politics.
3. Critically assess the validity of major theories in Comparative Politics in explaining the democratization process in the region.
4. Critically assess the main challenges and opportunities for the continuity of democracy in various Latin American countries.
5. Identify scholarly sources of data and literature on Latin American politics..
6. Develop policy to address pressing issue in a Latin American country.
7. Effectively communicate in both written and oral form. Write a policy briefing report.

Required Materials

Smith, Peter H. 2012. *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Earning Grades:

Participation:

Class discussion and engagement----10%

Country Group presentation----10% (*Apr. 18-25*)

Papers:

Paper 1: Democratization of case study state--15% *Due Feb. 29 by 11:59pm*

Paper 2: Most pressing issue of case study state---15% *Due Apr 11 by 11:59pm*

Exams:

Exam 1: 15 %---*February 19*

Exam 2: 15%----*April 6*

Comprehensive Final Exam: 20%---*May 2 at 8am*

Course Policies

E-mail Policy:

Students should ask their questions directly to the professor in person, before class or during office hours. I have ample office hours and am willing to set up an appointment with the student if they are unable to meet during normal office hours. However, when e-mailing me, students must adhere to the follow netiquette rules explained at the following website: "How to E-mail a Professor" <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>. Please check the syllabus prior to e-mailing a question. I stop checking e-mails at 5pm but will respond to all e-mails within 24hrs during the week and within 48 hrs on the weekend.

Technology in the Classroom:

Laptop computers and tablets may be used to take notes during lecture. Students should refrain from using facebook or checking e-mail during lecture. The use of cell phones is strictly forbidden. Students seen texting during class will have their cell phones taken away for the rest of the class period.

Submission of Assignments:

All written assignments are to be uploaded on Desire2Learn by 11:59pm the date the assignment is due. There are no exceptions. Papers will not be accepted more than 1 day late and will receive a 10% deduction in the grade. All written assignments must be turned in as a Word document with a cover page that has the Title of the paper, student's name, and date. The document must be double spaced, with Times New Roman 12 pt. font and 1inch margins. Citations must be in APA formatting.

Grading Policy

Final course grades will be assigned using the following scale:

A 100% - 90% B 89.9% - 80%

C 79.9% - 70% D 69.9% - 60%

E 59.9% - 0%

Appealing Grades

If a student wishes to appeal a grade on an assignment, they must first provide a written statement explaining why additional points should be given. This statement must be typed and does not mean a simple request for more points. The student must tell why s/he believes some specific aspect of his/her answer is correct or of more value. The instructor reserves the right to subtract points as well as to add points during the review process and to re-grade the entire exam, not just the portion under appeal.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Students are advised to retain all notes and drafts for all work until after they receive their final grade. Students should also be aware that the instructor takes matters of plagiarism and cheating very seriously and is prone to imposing the most severe penalty allowed by university rules, which includes, but is not limited to, issuing an automatic grade of 0.0 for the entire course. Plagiarism also includes turning in a paper for POSC 241 that has already been submitted to fulfill the requirements for a different class. Students will be held to the Radford University Honor Code: <http://www.radford.edu/content/student-conduct/home.html>)

Excused Absences & Make-up Exams

Attendance is not mandatory however students are expected to attend every lecture. Students will not do well in the course if they routinely miss class. If a student misses class for any reason, they are expected to obtain notes from a classmate. I do not give out my notes. Tardiness and absences will negatively impact the student's participation grade. Make up exams for either an exam or final will be permitted only under the gravest of circumstances and with appropriate documentation such as illness or 3 or more final exams on the same day. Students will be allowed to make-up an exam due to sickness if the student can provide a doctor's note stating the dates the student should be excused from classes within the note. This does not include regularly scheduled doctor's appointments, but is only for acute illness when the student has been instructed by the medical provider to NOT go to class. Students are required to notify their instructor one month before the exam takes place if they wish to change the exam date or time due to non-medical reasons. The student must submit the "Change in Final Exam Schedule" form found on the Registrar's website to the professor:

<https://www.radford.edu/content/registrar/home/students.html>

Note: personal travel plans are not a legitimate reason for requesting to take an exam at a different time.

Academic Accommodations

If you are seeking academic accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you must register with the Disability Resource Office (DRO). Submit disability documentation to the DRO in the lower level of Tyler Hall Suites 54-69, by fax to 540-831-6525, or by email to dro@radford.edu. Once documentation is received and reviewed, a Disability Services Specialist (DSS) will contact you for an interview. You will be notified via RU email when your accommodation package is complete. Meet with **each** course professor, during his or her office hours, to discuss the accommodations and

return signed documents to the DRO. For additional information and disability documentation guidelines, visit www.radford.edu/dro or call 540-831-6350.

Description of Assignments:

Participation: Students will earn participation points through a variety of means. These means include but are not limited to the following activities: actively participating in the class discussion each week and completing miscellaneous written assignments given out in class. Simply showing up to lecture does not earn participation points. If students come unprepared to discuss assigned non-textbook readings, the professor reserves the right to proctor a pop-quiz over the readings. Points from the quiz will go towards participation.

Country Group Presentation: Students will individually write papers on a particular case country throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students writing on the same country will present the information on the country and the main challenges they believe the state faces. The papers are individual projects but the presentation is a group effort. More information on the requirements and expectations of the presentation can be found on D2L.

Papers: Students will write 2 original papers throughout the semester. Both papers will be on the same Latin American state and will build off the other. Paper 1 will investigate the factors that lead the case country to democratize. More in-depth instructions are on D2L. Paper 2 will critically assess the main challenges in the student's case country. Further instructions are on D2L.

For each paper, the paper must include a title page, in-text citations, and a complete bibliography. The paper must use Times New Roman, 12 point font, be double spaced, and have standard margins. All sources must be formatted in proper APA style.

Exams: There will be 2 exams during the semester plus a comprehensive final exam. Exams 1 and 2 will be a mix of definitions, matching, and short answer questions. Material on the exam will be from lecture as well as the assigned readings. The final exam will also be a mix of definitions, matching, and short answer questions with addition of multiple-choice questions over the group presentations. The Final exam will be comprehensive and students will be tested over all content covered over the semester in lecture and in the assigned readings. This includes information presented in the group presentations. Students will be allowed to bring a one page of notes, front and back, for the final exam.

Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make alterations to the syllabus and course schedule as needed. Any alternations will be announced **in class**. All non-textbook readings are to be completed prior to lecture. If students come unprepared to discuss the readings, a pop quiz will be given. Non-textbook readings will be available on D2L a week prior to the date assigned and will be removed from D2L a week after they assigned.

Week 1:

Jan 20: Intro to the Class & Latin America

Jan 22: Latin America Today

No Class: Students will research current events in Latin America to gain some knowledge of the region. Further instructions can be found on D2L

Week 2:

Jan 25: Latin America Today

No Class: Students will research current events in Latin America to gain some knowledge of the region. Further instructions can be found on D2L

Jan 27: Defining Democracy

Reading: Schmitter, Philippe and Terry Karl. 1991. "What Democracy is and is Not." *Journal of Democracy*, 2: 75-88.

Jan 29: Defining Democracy (cont)

Reading: Textbook—*Democracy in Latin America* "Introduction"

Week 3:

Feb 1: Transitions to Democracy

Reading: Textbook: Chapters 1 & 2

Feb 3: Transitions to Democracy (cont)

Feb 5: Transitions to Democracy (cont)

Reading: Munck, Gerardo, and Carol Skalnik Leff. 1997. "Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 29 (3):343-62.

Week 4:

Feb 8: Legacies of Violence

Reading: Selected readings from *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*

Feb 10: Legacies of Violence (cont)

Reading: Thies, Cameron. 2005. "War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3):451-65.

Feb 12: Role of the Military
Reading: Textbook, Chapter 3

Week 5:
Feb 15: Role of the Military (cont)

Feb 17 : Catch-up/Review

Feb 19: Exam 1

Week 6:
Feb 22: Global Contexts
Reading: Textbook Chapter 4

Feb 24: Global Contexts (cont)
Reading: Lee, Brianna and Danielle Renwick. "The Organization of American States," *Council of Foreign Relations*,

Feb 26: Global Contexts (cont)
Reading: Selected readings on the Inter-American Court, see to D2L

Week 7:
Feb 29: Global Contexts (cont)
Paper 1 Due by 11:59pm

Mar 2: Transitions to Democracy cont. Case studies

Mar 4: Transitions to Democracy cont. Case studies

Spring Break: March 7-11

Week 8:
Mar 14: Electoral Institutions
Reading: Textbook, Chapters 5 & 6

Mar 16: Electoral Institutions (cont)
Reading: Horowitz, Donald, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan J. Linz. 1990. "Debate—Presidents vs. Parliaments." *Journal of Democracy* 1(4):73-91.

Mar 18: No Class. Attending International Studies Association Annual Conference. Students must read the following articles/chapters and write a paper summarizing the research and answering questions on the document found on D2L. Further instructions can found on D2L.

Readings:

Payne, J. Mark, Daniel Zovatto, and Mercedes Mateo Diaz. 2007. "The Effects of Presidential Electoral Systems on Democratic Governability" in *Democracies in Development: Politics and Reform in Latin America*. Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank.----Chp 2 in the pdf.

Week 9:

Mar 21: Women in Politics

Reading: Llanos, Beatriz, and Kristen Sample. 2008. "30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women's Political Participation in Latin America." International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Mar 23: Women in Politics (cont)

Readings: Selected news sources about Female Presidents on D2L.

Mar 25: Women in Politics (cont)

Readings: "The Quota System in Latin America: General Overview" in *The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences*

Week 10:

Mar 28: Elections and Participation

Readings: Textbook Chapter 7

Mar 30: Elections and Participation (cont)

Readings: Textbook Chapter 9

Apr 1: Elections and Participation (cont)

Reading: Cameron, Maxwell. 2008. "Latin America's Left Turns: Beyond Good and Bad." *Third World Quarterly* 30 (2):331-48.

Week 11:

Apr 4: Catch-up/Review

Apr 6: Exam 2

Apr 8: Opportunities and Challenges: Support for Democracy

Reading: Textbook Chapters 8 & 10

Week 12:

Apr 11: Opportunities and Challenges (cont)

Paper 2 due by 11:59 pm

Apr 13: Opportunities and Challenges: Dealing with Violence

Reading: Textbook Epilogue

Hiskey, Jonathan, Mary Malone, and Diana Orces. 2014. "Violence and Migration in Central America." AmericasBarometer Insights.

Apr 15: Opportunities and Challenges (cont)

Week 13:

Apr 18-22: Student Presentations

Week 14:

Apr 25: Student Presentations

Apr 27 & 29: Catch-up/Review

Comprehensive Final Exam: Wednesday, May 4 at 8am