Latin American Politics
Political Science 630
Fall 2013
MW 4:00pm – 5:15pm

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401 North Hall
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30 – 4:00, or by appt.

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Latin America features both enormous natural wealth and, at the same time, persistent poverty and some of the worst inequality in the world. It is a region that has endured colonialism, authoritarianism, and a variety of projects for economic development. Events in Latin America continue to raise broad questions about the effects of political institutions like democracy, presidentialism, and political parties; the role of the state in economic development; and how we think about democracy and its benefits.

This course introduces students to the major puzzles of Latin American politics, focusing on the central themes of democracy and development. We examine the political, economic, and social transformations that have characterized Latin American politics over the past five decades. We will focus on the effects of these transformations and swings on a host of important outcomes like poverty, development, accountability, and representation, as well as the broader theoretical debates that these developments provoke.

The course is divided into three parts. We begin with a broad discussion of the puzzles posed by the broad trends in Latin American politics since the mid-twentieth century. In the second part we turn to the experience of democracy in Latin America. Finally, the third part of the course will examine these puzzles in the context of four cases: Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru.

Requirements
This is an upper-level Political Science course. You must have sophomore standing to register. No prior knowledge of Latin America is required. Prior exposure to concepts in political science and comparative politics is recommended.

The requirements and assignments for the course are as follows:

Midterm exam (25% of final grade): The midterm exam will test your knowledge of the concepts covered in the first half of the course. The exam will consist of a series of short identification questions, followed by one essay question. This is a closed-book, in-class exam.
Two short papers (20% of final grade each): The topics for these short (6-8 pages) papers will be handed out in class. You will have a choice of responding to one of three paper questions and you will be asked to build an argument using the readings and lecture material. You will have two weeks to complete each paper. Once a graded paper is returned to you, you may choose to revise it within one week. I will then average the original and revised grade.

Final exam (35% of final grade): The cumulative final exam will consist of three essay questions. I will hold an optional review session prior to the exam.

Attendance: I highly recommend attending lectures as they will cover material not in the readings. If you have to miss a lecture, I recommend asking a classmate for their notes.

Readings
Assigned articles are available on the course website on Learn@UW. The books below are available for purchase online or at local bookstores and are also on reserve at the library.

Required:

Recommended for historical background:

Three films are also required for the course. They will be screened at dates and times to be announced.

During the course of the class, students are strongly encouraged to read the online version of the *Latin American Weekly Reports* as a way to supplement the readings with knowledge of current events in the region.
Course outline

PART I – GENERAL PUZZLES AND THEORIES

September 4: Introduction

September 9 and 11: Colonial Legacies and Inequality
  ▪ Guevara, The Motorcycle Diaries, all.

September 16 and 18: Theories of Economic Development

September 23 and 25: Populism, Labor, and Radicalism

September 30 and October 2: Authoritarianism

FILM: Missing (1982)

October 7 and 9: Democratization

**PAPER 1 DUE October 9**

**October 14 and 16: Review and Midterm Exam**

**PART II – DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA**

**October 21 and 23: Market Reforms – Causes and Effects**

**October 28 and 30: Presidents and Parties**

**November 4 and 6: Civil Society and Rule of Law**

**FILM: City of God (2002)**

**PART III – CASE STUDIES**

**November 11 and 13: Brazil**


**November 18 and 20: Chile**

- Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*, all.

**FILM: No (2013)**

**November 25 and 27: Mexico**


**PAPER 2 DUE November 25**

**December 2 and 4: Peru**


**December 9 and 11: Looking Forward**


**December 20: Final Exam**