

Syllabus Political Science 056
Contemporary Latin American Politics
Fall 2005
T & Th 12:30-1:45 pm
Phillips Building 247

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Office Hours: T & Th 11-12:15 pm (other times by appointment)

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1 Goals of this course

1.1 To assess the continuities and changes in the political development of Latin American countries. For the various historical periods that we study you should be able to:

- Define the main development strategies of Latin American countries, and relate them to the prevailing international conditions.
- Relate the political developments occurring in Latin American countries to the broader economic changes.
- Compare Latin American countries in terms of their social, economic, and political trajectories.
- Identify the main challenges (social, political, and economic) that these societies face today and the often competing pressures that these challenges produce.

1.2 To acquire basic skills used by political scientists in general and particularly those who study countries in comparative perspective (comparativists). By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Identify and critique theories of development that underlie academic writing in political science.
- Relate political trends to changes in economic and development strategies.
- Become an informed and critical reader of non-academic accounts of contemporary Latin American politics.
- Build a logical and coherent argument of your own.

2 Organization and requirements

The course will meet twice a week. The requirements for the course are first and foremost regular class attendance, reading of the assigned materials, and active participation in class discussions. There will be unannounced pop quizzes, with questions about the reading assigned for that day. I will also take attendance. Grades on the pop quizzes will partially depend on the average grade for all course members. Missing three or more pop quizzes without **prior** and **valid** excuse will mean that you **fail** the course, **regardless** of the grades you get for the rest of your work. Other course requirements include three analytic papers, a midterm on October 18 and a final exam on December 13, at 12 pm.

2.1 Papers

Students are required to write three analytic papers commenting on broad topics covered in class, and related to a country of their choice. The papers will build on each other, in a way such that the third paper will be a long paper that provides a coherent whole that historically assesses the trajectory of a country in terms of its economic and political development. For all course work, the Honor Code applies; the students signature on her/his work confirms that the Code rules were respected. The first two analytic papers should have **between 1200 and 1500 words** and theyll be worth 10% of the final grade each; the third one should have **between 3800 and 4500 words**, and it will amount to 15% of the grade for the course. The papers will be due in class in the dates specified in the schedule below.

The **first** of these papers will examine the strategy of Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI) theoretically and the political consequences of such a development plan. In addition to that, it should briefly examine a countrys experience with ISI.

The **second paper** will examine the Lost Decade in the same country that was chosen in the first paper. Issues to be covered include the stagnation of the ISI effort, and the crisis of authoritarian regimes, as well as the Oil and Debt crises as triggers of the deep economic decline that Latin American countries suffered during the 1980s.

The **third paper** will integrate the first two, adding a discussion of the period of neoliberal reforms. This discussion should include a conceptual definition of the main policies of the Washington Consensus, coupled with the analysis of the chosen country and the discussion of the main criticisms that have emerged in recent years. This paper will also include an integrating introduction and conclusion. This paper should not exceed 3800 words.

The format of the paper assignments will allow you to improve on the weaknesses of your earlier papers by following my comments on your work, as well as to re-write portions of them as you progress and—as a consequence—refine your interpretation of the facts and arguments that composed your first and second papers.

At least **six outside references** (that is, in addition to the books by Skidmore and Smith (2005), Green (2003), and Guillermprieto (1995)) will be required in total (that is, for the integrated paper). An excellent list of additional bibliography by topic and country is provided by Skidmore and Smith (2005) in the Appendix and by Green (2003) in the section Further Reading in page 272. Green also provides a very useful Appendix A with macroeconomic indicators for several Latin American countries. Additionally, I will make available a list of general literature, as well as country specific studies that might be pertinent.

Excellent guidance about academic writing is available at the UNC writing center. Their URL is <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>

2.2 Participation

Our regular class will include between 15 and 30 minutes of lecture and will devote the rest of the time to talk about the Reading and think through issues together. As such, participation is not voluntary, but rather a central part of the learning process. In order to create a good climate for everyone to participate, please follow these discussion guidelines:

- Be ready to share and explain your opinions. Feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and back them with evidence.
- Listen carefully and respond to other members of the group. Be willing to change your mind when someone demonstrates an error in your logic or use of facts.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification of any point or term you do not understand.
- Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

2.2.1 Participation preparation

To get the most out of discussions, we must **prepare** for them. In other words, you'll be expected to have read all the assigned material, and have thought about the topics that are listed below each week heading, as well as additional questions that will be posted at the beginning of each week. You will also be expected to bring to class each Thursday a brief **written reaction** (one or two paragraphs) to one of these topics or questions. These comments will be collected on random weeks and evaluated on a check, check plus, or check minus basis.

Finally, participation will include **viewing and commenting on films about Latin America**. Four films will be shown on selected evenings (if you cannot make the screening, videos will be on reserve—when possible—for about ten days afterward). You will have to do a **300-word film review** on two of these films (one before Fall Break, and one after), relating what you saw with the material covered in class. In addition to that, we will devote the session immediately after the screening to discuss the film in class. Reading of the assigned material is central for generating a lively discussion. **Quizzes** will test your knowledge on the Reading scheduled for each day.

Quizzes will be administered randomly during the semester. As a lively discussion depends on **most** of you having read the material, **half of your grade** will depend on the **class average** for the quiz.

Please note that 25% of your overall grade will be based on the measurable elements that help you prepare for participating in the discussion, including: quizzes, written comments, and film evaluations.

2.3 Midterm and final exams

There will be a midterm on October 18 and a final exam on Tuesday, December 13 at 12 pm. The midterm will contain (1) short-answer questions on the lectures, readings, and discussions until that date, and (2) essay questions. The final exam will consist of (1) short-answer questions on the lectures, readings, and discussions since the midterm, and (2) essay questions on the whole of the course.

No make-up tests will be given unless **prior** arrangements are made with the instructor, or **proof of a medical visit or excuse from the Dean of Students** is given to the instructor.

2.4 Grades

Grades for the course will be based on the following weights for each of the requirements:

Requirement	Weight	Test/submission date
Midterm	15% of the grade	October 18
Papers [†]	35% of the grade	October 4, November 1, and December 8
Final exam	25% of the grade	December 13
Participation	25% of the grade	
Pop quizzes [‡]	8.33% out of 25	Random
Film reviews [§]	8.33% out of 25	A week after film showing
Written reactions	8.33% out of 25	Every Thursday

[†] Late papers will be penalized with one point (out of ten) per day late.

[‡] Half of each quiz grade will depend on the class average.

[§] You may write two such reviews, one of a film shown before Fall break and one about a film shown after Fall break.

3 Course Books

We will use the following three books, which are available in the Textbook Department of the UNC Students Stores, all other readings will be available for download in Blackboard:

Green, Duncan. 2003. *Silent Revolution. The Rise and Crisis of Market Economics in Latin America*. 1st ed. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Guillermoprieto, Alma. 1995. *The Heart that Bleeds. Latin America Now*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage.

Skidmore, Thomas E. and Peter H. Smith. 2005. *Modern Latin America*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

4 How to succeed in this course

- Consistently attend class.

- Keep up with the Reading.
- Engage actively in discussions by sharing your doubts, questions, and comments in every meeting..
- If something is not clear, do not hesitate to ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the Instructor.

5 Course schedule

5.1 Week 1 Foundations

- Identify the subjective evaluations and biases that we bring to the study of any foreign society and—in particular—Third World societies.
- Identify the general methods used to study politics. Understand *how* we study politics.

August 30 Introductory discussion about the class and Latin America.

September 1 Introduction to Comparative Politics. Why do political scientists compare and how do they study foreign societies?

Reading:

Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. 2003. “Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas,” in Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1997. “Eurocentrism and its Avatars: The Dilemmas of Social Science,” in *New Left Review*, I/226.

5.2 Week 2 Where do we stand? Colonial times and the early history of Latin America

- Understand the main social, political, and economic features of colonial societies and identify its legacies in contemporary Latin American societies.
- Identify the model of development based on import-export growth, as well as its limitations and eventual decline following the Great Depression.

September 6 Introduction to Latin America and brief historical account.

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 1-41

September 8 Politics of development: import-export growth and oligarchic democracy

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 43-55

***** September 12 last day to reduce course load *****

5.3 Week 3 Politics of development

- Understand the competing theories that have been used to explain development and underdevelopment.
- Understand the transition from oligarchic democracies to populist regimes in Latin America.
- Identify the socio-economic consequences of industrialization and link these processes to the political transformations of the era.

September 13 Modernization theory and the Dependencista response.

Reading:

Cardoso, Fernando Henrique and Enzo Faletto. 1979. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Berkeley: California University Press, Chapter 2

September 15 Politics of development: Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI) and popular/populist leaders.

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 55-68

Green, pages 19-38.

***** Choose a country to focus on the set of papers, report it by email *****

5.4 Week 4 Politics of development (cont.)

- Understand the sources of stagnation of the development model based on import substitution.
- Identify the links between economic crisis and the emergence of new types of authoritarianism.

September 20 Politics of development: external crisis and the stagnation of ISI.

Reading:

Collier, David. 1979. "Overview of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model," in David Collier (ed.) *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

September 22 Bureaucratic authoritarianism.

Reading:

Valdez, Inés. 2005. "Financial Crises and the IMF," Handout.

5.5 Week 5 Debt crisis and transitional democracies

- Understand the long and short-term sources of the Debt crisis.
- Identify the lack of transition towards an export-led mode of development and its consequences.

September 27 The Debt crisis and stabilization programs.

Reading:

Green, pages 72-90.

September 28 Screening of documentary *The Crash*

September 29 Transition to democracy.

Reading:

Karl, Terry L. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," in *Comparative Politics*, 23 (1), 1-23

5.6 Week 6 Neoliberal reforms

- Understand the change in paradigm from state-led development towards market-coordinated growth.
- Identify new actors such as the World Bank and the IMF and their role in the spread of neoliberal reforms.

October 4 Structural Adjustment Programs

Reading:

Valdez, Inés. 2005. "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)," Handout.

Green, pages 39-71 and 151-171

***** First paper due in class *****

October 5 Screening of documentary *Commanding Heights*

October 6 Contemporary democracies

Reading:

Huber, Evelyne., Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, and Stephens, John D. 1997. "The Paradoxes of Contemporary Democracy: Formal, Participatory, and Social Democracy". *Comparative Politics*, 29 (3), 323-342

Green 172-192

***** Film review about *The Crash* due in class *****

5.7 Week 7 Argentina and Chile

- Understand the historical evolution of Argentina and Chile in the context of the general trends that we have seen so far.
- Identify the differences and similarities in the Argentine and Chilean political and economic trajectories.

October 11 Argentina

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 69-108 and 460-464 (only the first paragraph)

Guillermoprieto 119-150

October 13 Chile

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 109-138 and 464-465 (only the first two paragraphs)

***** Film review about *Commanding Heights* due in class *****

5.8 Week 8 Midterm and fall break

October 18 Midterm

October 20 Fall break

5.9 Week 9 Brazil and Mexico

- Understand the historical evolution of Brazil and Mexico in the context of the general trends we have seen so far.
- Identify the differences and similarities of these two countries—the most industrialized economies of Latin America—with respect to each other and to the cases of Argentina and Chile.

October 25 Return of the graded midterm, discussion. Brazil

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 139-180 and 465-466 (only the first paragraph)

Guillermoprieto 151-177 and 287-316

October 27 Mexico

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 254-295 and 467-468 (first paragraph only)

Green, pages 119-150

Guillermoprieto 47-67 and 237-258

5.10 Week 10 Cuba and revolutions

- Understand the general process through which unequal societies enter—or do not—the path of revolution.
- Recognize the interplay of internal and external political forces in the evolution of the Castro regime since its beginnings until the present.

November 1 Cuba I

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 296-315

***** Second paper due in class *****

November 3 Cuba II

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 315-327

5.11 Week 11 U.S.-Latin American relations and Central America

- Understand the historical evolution of U.S. policy towards Latin America.

- Identify the different patterns of intervention of the U.S. in the various sub-regions of Latin America.

November 8 U.S. Latin American relations, past and present

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 398-439

November 10

Reading:

Guillermoprieto 208-236

Shifter, Michael. 2004. "The US and Latin America Through the Lens of Empire," in *Current History* February.

5.12 Week 12 Revolutions in Central America

- Understand the socio-economic structures of the small economies in Central America and its dependence on the United States.
- Identify the differences between these countries that provided more or less leeway for reformist regimes to emerge and last.

November 15 Revolutions in Central America I

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 356-380

Guillermoprieto, pages 23-46

November 16 Screening of documentary *Fire in the Mind*

November 17 Revolutions in Central America II

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 380-395

5.13 Week 13 Jamaica: from democratic socialism to neoliberal adjustment

- Understand the vulnerabilities of small, dependent countries in the global economy.
- Identify the main consequences of trade opening and economic liberalization in small countries.

November 21 Screening of documentary *Life and Debt*

November 22 Jamaica in the context of the Caribbean

Reading:

Skidmore and Smith, pages 328-355

***** Film review about *Fire in the Mind* due in class*****

November 24 Thanksgiving

5.14 Week 14 Jamaica (cont.)... and time to work in the papers

November 29 Jamaica

Reading:

Stephens, John D. and Evelyne Huber Stephens. 1986. *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica: The Political Movement and Social Transformation in Dependent Capitalism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, chapters 1, 2, and 8

***** Film review about *Life and Debt* due in class *****

December 1 Paper presentations

5.15 Week 15 Paper presentations and review

December 6 Paper presentations

December 8 Review

***** Integrated paper due in class *****

5.16 Week 16 Final exam

December 13 Final exam – 12 pm