

LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

Georgia Southern University, Fall 2017

POLS 3133 (A) CRN: 81246

Mondays & Wednesdays: 4:00 pm – 5:15 pm

2226 Carroll Building

Instructor: Dr. Courtney Burns

Office: 2205 Carroll Building

Email: cburns@georgiasouthern.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm, Wednesdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, and by appointment

Office phone: 912-681-0838

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Latin America is a region that has great diversity in both geography and people. It is steeped in a history of colonialism, violence, and social movements. Moreover, the political life of Latin America is one of extreme variation. The purpose of this class is to acquaint you with the political, economic, and sociological issues confronting governments of Latin America. The major theme of the course relates broad theoretical perspectives of Latin American politics, institutions, economic development and democracy, with an eye toward contemporary developments in the region. Organization proceeds in two sections: first, we will address foundations and history of Latin American political development, followed by a discussion of the structures and institutions established in the region. Then we devote several weeks to looking at specific countries and regions in Latin America. This course is based heavily in examining the institutional context of Latin America and how those institutions affect modern politics.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students can demonstrate an understanding of the defining concepts, theories, and methods of the study of Latin American politics.
2. Students will explore the complex interrelationships between political, economic, social, cultural, and historical forces in Latin American politics.
3. Students will develop a mastery of critical thinking skills by evaluating political developments from an observational and theoretical standpoint of Latin American politics.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are two required texts for this course. You are also responsible for attendance and participation, reading guides, movie reaction questions, and two exams.

The required texts for this course are:

Smith, Peter H. and Cameron J. Sells. 2017. *Democracy in Latin America, 3rd Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-061134-7

Skidmore, Thomas E., Peter H. Smith, and James N. Green. 2014. *Modern Latin America, 8TH Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-992923-8



COURSE GRADING

There will be no extra credit offered in this class. If you want to do well, you will need to perform adequately on the given assignments and exams. The breakdown for the points is as follows:

Attendance and Participation (14 x 10 points per week)	140 points
Reading guides (10 x 10 points each)	100 points
Exams (2 x 70 points each)	140 points
Movie reactions (4 x 30 each)	120 points
Total	500 points

Grades will not be rounded. You must receive the following amount of points to earn a(n):

A (excellent)	450 points – 500 points
B (superior)	400 points – 449 points
C (average)	350 points – 399 points
D (below average)	300 points – 349 points
F (failing)	299 points and below



COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Part 1: Historical Perspectives and LA in the World

Week 1 – August 14, 16

Topic 1: Introduction

Topic 2: Colonialism and Latin America

Chapters 1, 2 in Skidmore et al

Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson. 2001. “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation.” *The American Economic Review* 91 (5); 1369-1401.

Add/Drop deadline Friday August 18

Week 2 – August 21, 23

Topic 1: Solar eclipse! No class!

Topic 2: History of Latin America, 1900-now

Chapters 15, 16 Skidmore et al

Week 3 – August 28, 30

Topic 1: Historical International Influences in LA

Chapter 4 Smith & Sells

Topic 2: History of Institutions in LA

Chapters 1 & 2 Smith & Sells

Week 4 – September 4, 6

Topic 1: Labor Day, no class

Topic 2: The Military in LA

Chapter 3 Smith & Sells

Week 5 – September 11, 13

Topic 1: *When the Mountains Tremble*

Topic 2: Finish documentary, discussion, fill out questions & turn in

Part 2: Institutions and Politics in LA

Week 6 - September 18, 20

Topic 1: Presidential v Parliamentary

Chapter 5 Smith & Sells

Topic 2: Institutions
Chapter 6 Smith & Sells

Week 7 – September 25, 27

Topic 1: Elections & Parties
Chapter 7 Smith & Sells

*Coppedge, Michael. 2001. "Political Darwinism in Latin America's Lost Decade" in *Political Parties and Democracy* ed Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Topic 2: *Our Brand is Crisis*

Week 8 – October 2, 4

Topic 1: Finish documentary, fill out questions, discussion
Midterm exam prompt handed out in class, must be present to receive it

Topic 2: Women in Politics in Latin America

Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2011. "Women Who Win: Social Backgrounds, Paths to Power, and Political Ambition in Latin American Legislatures." *Politics & Gender* 7 (1): 1-33.

Week 9 – October 9, 11

Topic 1: State Capacity & Political and Social Equality
Chapters 8, 9 Smith & Sells

Midterm exam due at the start of class

Topic 2: Economic Development
Chapter 12 Skidmore

Week 10 – October 16, 18

Topic 1: *The Take*

Topic 2: finish film, answer questions, discussion

Part 3: Country and Region Case Studies

Week 11 – October 23, 25

Topic 1: No class

Topic 2: Illiberal Democracies
Chapter 10 Smith & Sells

Week 12 – October 30, November 1

Topic 1: The Andes
Chapter 6 Skidmore

Topic 2: Venezuela
Chapter 8 Skidmore

Week 13 – November 6, 8

Topic 1: Mexico
Chapter 3 Skidmore

Topic 2: Central America
Chapter 4 Skidmore

Week 14 – November 13, 15

Topic 1: Chile
Chapter 10 Skidmore
Nostalgia For the Light

Topic 2: Finish documentary, complete questions, discussion

Week 15 – November 20, 22

Thanksgiving Recess – No Class

Week 16 – November 27, 29

Topic 1: Argentina
Chapter 9 Skidmore

Topic 2: Course Conclusions

No new readings

Final exam prompts handed out in class, must be present to receive prompt

Final Exam: Due to my office by 5:30 pm on Wednesday December 6.

Attendance and Participation: You can receive up to 10 points per week for attendance and participation. In order to receive full points, you must come to class having read the material and participate in discussion and lecture. This does not mean that you have to talk all the time, but you must contribute at least once a week. This is meant to make class more interesting and engaging for all of us. If you attend both class sessions and participate at least once, you will receive the full 10 points. If you only attend class and do not participate, you can only receive 7 points. If you miss one class, you will receive 5 points.

Reading Guides: You will be required to fill out a reading guide for every reading assignment. I will provide several copies. When you run out, you can print it from Folio or write it out on a piece of paper. I will collect 10 of these at random throughout the semester as a check that you are doing the reading. These are worth a total of 100 points (10 points each).

Movie Reactions: We will watch four movies/documentaries throughout the course of the semester. You will be responsible for filling out a question guide while you are watching the documentary. The question guide will have questions aimed at ensuring you are paying attention and questions that will require you to apply concepts and ideas from course material. You will also be required to cite readings as appropriate.

Exams: There will be 2 exams in this class. They are not cumulative, but you may need to draw on past knowledge to be successful on all of the exams. They will be take home essay exams. Each exam is worth 70 points.

Course Etiquette

There is one core tenet of classroom etiquette that we must all agree upon for this course to be a success—respect. I will respect each and every one of you as an adult responsible for your own learning and I look forward to the opportunity to work with you as a class and individual students. I ask for the same degree of respect in return, both for me and the other students in the classroom. This requires that we all agree to abide by the following considerations:

- 1) Refrain from using cell phones during class.
- 2) Laptops, tablets, etc are not allowed in the classroom. They hinder the learning process for yourself and others around you. If you need to use a laptop or other device, please see me and we can discuss allowances.
- 3) Attend all class sessions, arrive on time, and stay until the class is over. If you must miss class or arrive late/leave early, please notify me before class. Please do not pack-up your materials until class has been dismissed. This is distracting to everyone and makes it impossible for us to finish.
- 4) Refrain from reading newspapers, sleeping, or working on material for other courses during class.
- 5) Notify me at the beginning of the semester if you have learning disabilities or other documented issues that we need to make exceptions for. I am happy to work with you to make appropriate arrangements to help you meet the course requirements.
- 6) Use email in a respectful manner. Emails to professors or classmates should be just as respectful as if you were writing them a letter or speaking with them in class. In other words, you should begin your email with a proper salutation, for example “Professor/Dr. Burns,” and it should end with your name. Do not use email as a forum to discuss important course-related issues that should be addressed in person.

Academic Integrity

All members of the community recognize the necessity of being honest with themselves and with others. The integrity of the educational experience is diminished by cheating in class, plagiarizing, lying, and employing other methods of deceit. None of these should be used as a strategy to obtain a false sense of success. The need for honest relations among all members of the community is essential.

ADA

This class complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), and provide a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating what your need may be for academic accommodation. This should be done within the first week of class. Cone Hall, Room 2010. Telephone 912-478-1566

Students may also find information online at <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/disability>.