

# Latin American Politics (POL 247)

Fall 2022

TR 11:45 am - 1:15 pm, CGL 211

Dr. Zoila Ponce de Leon

[zponcedeleon@wlu.edu](mailto:zponcedeleon@wlu.edu)

Huntley Hall 210

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30 pm & Wednesday 10:30-11:30 am

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the study of Latin American politics. It is aimed at students with no prior knowledge of the area or the study of comparative politics, but a desire to understand how Latin American governments are organized and the major problems faced by these societies. This makes it important to go beyond the stereotypes that have traditionally shaped the perceptions of the region's history, culture, and economic, political, and social structures. There is enormous diversity within the region in terms of histories of colonization, ethnic composition, levels of economic development and human welfare, and systems of government. This course will provide an overview of this diversity and a deeper examination of several cases, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

## Course Objectives

- Demonstrate understanding of the most important political, socioeconomic, and cultural trends in historic and contemporary Latin America.
- Develop a strong understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches used to study Latin American politics.
- Critically examine the course material presented, including academic readings, news articles, and lectures. Critical thought does not necessarily imply criticism, but careful and creative consideration of the subject matter and awareness of multiple viewpoints.
- Employ the comparative method, analyzing several country cases in greater detail and identifying commonalities and contrasts across cases.
- Improve writing skills and creative thinking through the research paper assignment, advancing logical arguments supported with evidence.
- Develop public speaking skills through class presentations, communicating thoughts clearly and concisely.

## Course 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.

**Attendance** is mandatory. Classes missed immediately before and after holidays are particularly noticed and are not excused. If you need to miss class, please send me a quick note *ahead of* the class session you must miss. I expect everyone to **arrive on time**. Late arrivals are disruptive and distracting. I appreciate your cooperation.

Contact me if you have questions or concerns. If you have any kind of problem with the course or with life, please **communicate** with me (no need to give me any specific details regarding the situation you are going through). Let me know if my office hours are not at a convenient time for you and we will set an appointment. Do not let missed classes and assignments get out of hand. I am willing to work with you to help you succeed, but I cannot do so retroactively at the end of the semester.

Students are **required** to have all course-related files saved on an **online drive** of their preference (i.e., Dropbox, Google Drive, or others).

Students are expected to come to each session **ready for a lively discussion** that will help us all better understand historic and contemporary trends in Latin America. The following are some guidelines to help you get started:

- **Speak up!** Ask the second you have a question or a comment. Others may have the same queries you do.
- **Respect** one another. Differences of opinion are likely and desirable. **Listen** to your peers' questions and comments and express your disagreements with respect.
- **No cell phones in class.**
- **Stick to pen and paper** to take notes. In exceptional cases, tablets or laptops may be employed only for valid educational reasons related to the course. Violations will affect your grade and preclude further use of the device in class.

## Course Evaluation

Participation	25%
Midterm Exam	15%
Research Paper	30%
Final Project	10%
Final Exam	20%

## Grade Assessment

**I do not discuss grades via email.** Please take 24 hours to review the initial feedback. Then, bring to my office a *written note* explaining the error that you think I have made.

If you have concerns about your grade in the course, please come talk to me as soon as possible about strategies to improve your performance. Grades reflect the following assessment of your work in this course:

**A: Excellent performance (90-100).** Exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytic understanding of the subject.

**B: Good performance (80-89).** Mastering the material, understanding the subject well, and showing some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.

*C: Fair performance (70-79).* Acceptable understanding of the material, but failing in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.

*D: Poor performance (60-69).* Some understanding of the material but exhibiting significant deficiency in comprehension and/or effort.

*F: Fail (59 and below).* Failing to complete assignments or comprehend the basics of the material.

Minus grades at each increment are below 63, 73, 83, and 93, and plus grades above 67.9, 77.9, and 87.9. I do not round up .5 grades. In other words, 87.5 is not a B+, and 89.5 is not an A-.

### **Participation**

Participation is key for this course. Forget about the percentage of your overall grade it counts towards, the actual value of participation is much greater than this because it will help you to do better on all the assignments and exams in this course.

Class meetings will combine short lectures and group discussions. **Students are expected to read the assigned materials before each class** and **participate actively** during class meetings. For each reading, you should be able to answer at least the following questions: *What is the main argument? What is the evidence for it?* It's essential that you come to class prepared to engage in discussion and ask questions.

Participation performance is not based on the number of times you speak up during class but on the **quality** of your input. By no means, this should be understood as having to "be right" every time. Any comment or question that contributes to our analysis of course content and discussion is highly regarded. Questions are an excellent way to participate. They show your interest in the course and your ability for critical thought.

To achieve an **A** for participation, your engagement in class discussions must be exceptional, contributing to a lively conversation consistently and displaying that you master the material. You must be active in *both* class-wide and small group discussions on a regular basis.

We will integrate current events. Making a habit of the daily act of reading news from the region can be very helpful.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, I will send links to a news article to read before class.

### **Exams**

The **midterm** exam will be a self-timed written exam, consisting of short-answer questions. You will have 60 minutes to complete it. No books, notes, or sources may be used. The exam will be posted on Canvas on Thursday, **October 20<sup>th</sup>** at 2 pm and due by 10 am on Saturday, **October 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Extensions for the exam will only be offered in cases of emergencies and must be arranged *prior to* the exam date. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

The **final** exam will be a self-timed written exam and consist of multiple choice, short-answer, and essay questions. It will take place during finals week (December 10-16) and will be posted on Canvas.

---

<sup>1</sup> I regularly check [BBC Latin America](https://www.bbc.com/mundo/topics/c7zp57yyz25t). Make sure to follow the Latin America section in your news outlet of preference. If you read Spanish, <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/topics/c7zp57yyz25t>

## **Research Paper**

Each student must write a 5-page research paper due on Friday, **December 2<sup>nd</sup>** via Canvas. The papers must be double-spaced and in 12-point font. You will need to consult a minimum of **5 scholarly** sources *other than* the materials presented in class. I encourage you to seek the help of the [Writing Center](#) and use the [Library Research Help Chat](#).

The paper will be on a topic of your choice. I will post a list of suggested paper topics and instructions on Canvas. If you have an idea for a topic that would interest you more, **you must clear this topic with me** before you start working on it.

You may focus on a single country, compare two countries, or study a country at two periods in time. The paper should intend to answer a **why** question and explain a political phenomenon rather than just describe it. The paper should not be a literature review or summary of the readings. You will be evaluated based on the clarity of your question, the organization and clarity of your **argument**, the supporting evidence that you provide, and the quality of your writing. I will penalize **late papers** with one letter grade per day late.

An **abstract** (one or two paragraphs stating the research question you will pursue and your working argument), an **outline** of the paper, and a preliminary bibliography are due on Friday, **November 4<sup>th</sup>** via Canvas. I will return this assignment with comments, which you must incorporate into your paper.

## **Final Project**

On Tuesday, **December 6<sup>th</sup>**, you will upload (via Canvas) and present a final project in class. Your project must share the findings of your research in an alternative form (i.e., cartoon, poem, photo essay, or poster).

You will be required to comment (on Canvas) on at least one other project by Friday, **December 9<sup>th</sup>**. You should assess your peer's job on clarity, novelty, and ability to convey findings. If you fail to provide this feedback by the deadline, your own project grade will drop by one letter grade.

## **Honor System**

For all coursework, the [Honor System](#) applies. You need to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism to make sure that you avoid it. From the Catalog: *"Plagiarism describes the use of another's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment. The students of Washington and Lee University have considered plagiarism a violation of the Honor System; therefore, all forms of plagiarism including Internet plagiarism are taken very seriously."*

Ask me if you have any questions. Leyburn Library has helpful advice on [avoiding plagiarism](#).

## **Disability Accommodations**

Washington and Lee University makes reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of the Dean of the College. Students requesting accommodations for this course should present an official accommodation letter within the first two weeks of the term and schedule a meeting

outside of class time to discuss accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to present this paperwork in a timely fashion and to follow up about accommodation arrangements.

### **Diversity Statement**

Washington and Lee affirms that diverse perspectives and backgrounds enhance our community. We are committed to the recruitment, enrichment, and retention of students, faculty, and staff who embody many experiences, cultures, points of view, interests, and identities. As engaged citizens in a global and diverse society, we seek to advance a positive learning and working environment for all through open and substantive dialogue. Please read the [Politics Department Statement on Diversity and Inclusion](#).

### **Policy on Prohibited Discrimination**

The University prohibits and this policy addresses discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran's status, and genetic information in its educational programs and activities and with regard to employment. Additionally, the University prohibits retaliation against any individual who brings a good faith complaint under this policy or is involved in the complaint process. Students, faculty, and staff found to have violated this policy will be disciplined appropriately, up to and including termination from employment or dismissal from the University.

### **Sexual Discrimination & Misconduct Policy**

W&L prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct-which includes sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, domestic and dating violence, and stalking-and retaliation. This policy provides guidance to assist those who have experienced or been affected by sexual misconduct, whether as a complainant, a respondent, or a third party. It includes detailed information about what conduct is prohibited, confidential and reporting resources, and resolution procedures.

### **Important dates**

October 20-22	Midterm Exam
November 4	Paper Abstract & Outline
December 2	Final Paper
December 6	Final Project
December 10-16	Final Exam

### **Course Book**

Gerardo L. Munck, and Juan Pablo Luna. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society: A Comparative and Historical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. E-book (<https://tinyurl.com/3r665mzs>) or print edition (new or used from the W&L Store). I will post the remaining required readings on Canvas.

## Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule, including assignments due dates and test dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur.

September 8: Course Overview & Introduction to Latin America

September 13: Latin America's Diversity & From Conquest to Independence I

- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Introduction (1-13) & Ch1 (17-26).

**September 15: No class (APSA Conference)**

- Lange, Matthew, et al. 2006. "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies." *American Journal of Sociology* 111(5): 1412-35.

September 20: From Conquest to Independence II

- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch1 (26-44).

September 22: Politics of Development I: Import-export growth, ISI and populism

- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch3 (82-93) & Ch4 (123-46).

*Recommended: Mahon Jr, James E. 1992. "Was Latin America too rich to prosper? Structural and political obstacles to export-led industrial growth." The Journal of Development Studies, 28.2: 241-63.*

September 27: Politics of Development II: Crisis and the stagnation of ISI, and B-A

- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch3 (95-108).
- Collier, David. 1979. "Overview of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

*Recommended: Collier, David. 2001. "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism," in The Oxford Companion to Politics in the World, Second Edition, Joel Krieger, ed. Oxford University Press, 93-95.*

September 29: Neoliberalism & Economic Reform

- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch4 (147-59).
- Weyland, Kurt. 1998. "Swallowing the Bitter Pill: Sources of Popular Support for Neoliberal Reform in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 31(5): 539-63.

October 4: Consequences of Neoliberalism

- Huber, Evelyne and Fred Solt. 2004. "Success and Failures of Neoliberalism," *Latin American Research Review* 39(3): 150-64.
- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch3 (112-17).

*Recommended: Hoffman, Kelly and Miguel A. Centeno. 2003. "The Lopsided Continent: Inequality in Latin America," Annual Review of Sociology 29: 363-90.*

October 6: Democracy in Latin America

- Smith, Peter. 2012. "Cycles of Electoral Democracy" in *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, Ch1 (19-42).
- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch5 (165-82).

*Recommended: Mainwaring, Scott and Frances Hagopian. 2005. "The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America," in The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.*

October 11: Case Study: Argentina

- Vacs, Aldo C. 2018. "Argentina" in *Politics of Latin America*, 345-380.
- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch9 (310-18)

*Recommended: Roht Arriaza, Naomi. 2014. "From Amnesty to Accountability: Transitional Justice in South America." World Politics Review (December 23), 1-6; CONADEP. 1984. Nunca Más: A Report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People. Prologue.*

October 18: Case Study: Brazil

- Chaffee, Wilber A. 2018. "Brazil" in *Politics of Latin America*, 385-409.
- **Watch** *The Edge of Democracy*, a Netflix documentary by Petra Costa.

*Recommended: Da Costa, Alexandre E. 2016. "Confounding anti-racism: Mixture, racial democracy, and post-racial politics in Brazil". Critical sociology, 42(4-5), 495-513; Layton, Matthew L., and Amy Erica Smith. 2017. "Is it race, class, or gender? The sources of perceived discrimination in Brazil." Latin American Politics and Society 59(1): 52-67.*

October 20: Midterm Review

### **Oct 20-22: Midterm Exam**

October 25: Transitions to Democracy & Discussion of Paper Assignment

- Smith, Peter. 2012. "Transitions and Continuities" in *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, Ch2 (43-70).

October 27 & November 1: Case Study: Chile

- Silva, Eduardo. 2018. "Chile" in *Politics of Latin America*, 413-434.
- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch12 (431-37)

*Recommended: Kornbluh, Peter. 2003. The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability. The New Press, Ch1; Castiglioni, Rossana. 2020. "Chile's New (Fragile) Social Truce." Americas Quarterly, April 8.*

November 3: Case Study: Mexico

- Hamilton, Nora. 2018. "Mexico" in *Politics of Latin America*, 317-340.
- Langston, Joy. 2017. *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Ch1.

*Recommended: Flores-Macías, Gustavo. 2013. "Mexico's 2012 Elections: The Return of the PRI." Journal of Democracy, 24.1: 128-141. & Schedler, Andreas. 2000. "Mexico's Victory: The Democratic Revelation." Journal of Democracy, 11.4: 5-19.*

### **November 4: Paper Abstract & Outline**

November 8: Political Institutions: Presidentialism, Political Parties & Representation

- Luna, Juan Pablo and Alberto Vergara. 2016. "Latin America's Problems of Success," *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3): 158-65.
- Luna & Munck. 2022. *Latin American Politics and Society*, Ch7 (238-46)
- LAPOP. 2021. *Pulse of Democracy (selected pages)*.

*Recommended: Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." Comparative Politics 29(4): 449-69; Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas 2016/17, LAPOP Report - Trust in Political Parties & Partisanship.*

November 10: The Swinging Pendulum in Latin America

- Levitsky, Steven and Kenneth M. Roberts, ed. 2011. *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1-26 and 399-427.
- Applebaum, Anne. 2021. "Democracy Is Surprisingly Easy to Undermine," [The Atlantic, June 17.](#)

*Recommended: Valenzuela, Arturo and Lucía Dammert. 2006. "A 'Left Turn' in Latin America? Problems of Success in Chile." Journal of Democracy, 17.4: 65-79.*

November 15: Case Study: Venezuela

- Hellinger, Daniel. 2018. "Venezuela" in *Politics of Latin America*, 465-482.
- Morgan, Jana. 2018. "Deterioration and Polarization of Party Politics in Venezuela," in *Party Systems in Latin America*, 291-314, 324-25.

*Recommended: Roberts, K., 2012. "Populism and democracy in Venezuela under Hugo Chávez." Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy, 136-59.*

November 17: The Importance of Programmatic Parties

- Roberts, Kenneth M. 2012. "Market Reform, Programmatic (De-)Alignment, and Party System Stability in Latin America," *Comparative Political Studies* 46(11):422-447.
- Kitschelt, Herbert et al. 2010. *Latin American Party Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Introduction (1-13).

November 29: Case Study: Peru

- Skidmore, Thomas E. et al. 2014. *Modern Latin America*, 155-166.
- Levitsky, Steven. 2018. "Peru: The Institutionalization of Politics without Parties" in *Party Systems in Latin America*, 326-341.

December 1: US-Latin American Relations

- Vanden & Prevost. 2018. *Politics of Latin America*, 292-314.
- Schenoni, Luis and Scott Mainwaring. 2018. "Democracy is in crisis in Latin America. Brazil may be the next trouble spot," *The Washington Post*, October 22 (1-3).

*Recommended: Schenoni, Luis and Scott Mainwaring. 2018. US hegemony and regime change in Latin America. Democratization, 26(2): 269-287.*

### **December 2: Final Paper**

**December 6: Final Project Presentation**

- ✓ Upload Final Project (Canvas)

December 8: Case Study: Cuba & Final Review

- Prevost, Gary. 2018. "Cuba" in *Politics of Latin America*, 523-545.

*Recommended: Guillermoprieto, Alma. 2016. "Cuba: The Big Change," May 12. & "The End of Fidel," November 30. The New York Review of Books.*

### **December 10-16: Final Exam**