

Latin American Politics

Politics 247, Fall 2019

9:45-11:15 am Tuesday & Thursday
EarlyFl 205

Professor Zoila Ponce de Leon

Office Hours: Wednesday 9-10 am, Thursday 3:15-6:15 pm

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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 an 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 a careful and creative consideration of the subject matter and display of awareness of multiple viewpoints.
- Learn to 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 in plenary session. 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 obligatory. You have one unexcused absence and I will excuse your absence in reasonable cases. However, you need to contact me ahead of the class session that you miss. **If you miss more than 4 classes without prior and valid excuse, as assessed through random attendance sheets, you will fail this course.** I will let you know when you have accumulated 4 absences and will automatically give you a failing grade if you miss another one. Classes missed immediately before and after holidays are particularly noticed.

I expect everyone to **arrive on time**. I understand that life is complicated but late arrivals are disruptive and distracting. I appreciate your cooperation.

Please come to office hours or contact me by e-mail if you have questions or concerns. If you have any kind of problem with the course or with life, please **communicate** with me. 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 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. It is very possible that others may have the same concerns you do.
- **Respect** one another. Differences of opinion are likely and also desirable. **Listen** to other students' questions, express your disagreements with respect and value your colleagues' opinions as if they were your own.
- **No cell-phones in class.**
- **Stick to pen and paper** to take notes and forget about your laptop. In exceptional cases, laptops may be employed only for valid educational reasons related to the course. Violations may affect a student's grade and preclude further use of the laptop in class.

Course Evaluation

Participation	25%
Midterm exam	15%
Research paper	30%
Poster presentation	15%
Final exam	15%

Grade Assessment

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 not succeeding 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 to 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.

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.

Re-grading: 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. When I review the assignment again, your grade may go either up or down in order to more accurately assess your performance.

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 of the assignments and exams in this course.

Class meetings will combine short lectures and group discussion. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to each class and **participate actively** during class meetings. It is essential that you come to class prepared so that you can engage in discussion and ask questions. We will also integrate current events. Making a habit of the daily act of reading news from the region can be very helpful. Occasionally, I will send links to short news article to read before class.

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 contents 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.

In order to achieve an **A for participation**, your engagement in class discussions must be exceptional, fully contributing to a consistent lively conversation. This means you must be active in both small group discussions and class wide discussions and do so on a regular basis.

We will be dealing with interesting and controversial issues in class, and I hope that we will have lively debates. It is important that you respect one another and the instructor. Differences of opinion can provide an opportunity for intellectual growth.

Exams

The **midterm** exam will be a self-timed written exam, consisting mainly of short-answer questions. You will have 60 minutes to complete the exam. No books, notes, or sources may be used. The exam will be posted on Canvas on Tuesday, **October 15th** at 1 pm and due by 8 am on Thursday, **October 17th**. Extensions for the exam will only be offered in cases of medical or family 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 questions, and essay questions. It will take place during finals week (December 7-13) and will be posted on Canvas.

Research Paper

Each student must write a 10-page research paper due on Friday, **November 15th** via Canvas. The papers have to be double-spaced and 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 if this is your first or second research paper:

<https://www.wlu.edu/writing-program/writing-center>

If this is your first Politics class/paper, I strongly recommend you seek the advice of the Williams School Communication Center. At the CommCenter, professional consultants offer help on essays, case studies, reports, oral presentations, research papers, and more. Please visit them in Huntley Hall 118. You can schedule an appointment via:

www.wlu.edu/the-williams-school/commcenter

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 elaborate a single-country case study, a comparison of two or more countries, or a comparison of a country at two periods in time. 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 how you will do it) and an **outline** of the paper will be due on Friday, **October 25th** via Canvas. You will also send a **copy** to a classmate who will provide comments on your progress. I will return your abstract and outline with comments. You should incorporate this feedback into your paper.

Peer-review: You will give comments to a classmate on their abstract and outline by **October 31st** (you will provide me with a copy). You will bring your comments to class and will share them directly with that classmate. If you fail to provide this feedback by the deadline, your own paper grade will drop by one letter grade.

Poster Presentation

On Thursday, **December 5th**, you will share the findings of your research in a conference-style poster presentation. The details of this assignment will be provided at a later date.

Honor Code

For all course work, the Honor System applies. Familiarize yourself with the System at www.wlu.edu/executive-committee/the-honor-system/the-white-book#The_Honor_System

You also need to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism in order 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. Plagiarism takes many forms, including the wholesale copying of phrases or texts, or the use of ideas without indicating the source."

Ask me if you have any questions. Leyburn Library has helpful advice on avoiding plagiarism: <https://libguides.wlu.edu/c.php?g=99506&p=644455>

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.

Important dates

October 15-17	Midterm Exam
October 25	Paper Abstract & Outline
October 31	Peer-review
November 15	Final Paper
December 5	Poster Presentation
December 7-13	Final Exam

Course Book

We will use *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, by Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, **6th edition**, 2018. Available in the W&L University Store.

I will post the remaining required readings on Canvas.

Course Schedule

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

September 5: Course Overview and Introduction to Latin America

September 10: Latin America's Diversity & Historical Foundations: From Conquest to Independence I

- Vanden and Prevost 1-16, 19-40 & 43-50.

September 12: Historical Foundations: From Conquest to Independence II

- Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau. 2006. "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies." *American Journal of Sociology* 111, No. 5.

September 17: Politics of Development I: Import-export growth, ISI and populism

- Vanden and Prevost 157-172 & 192-196.
- Duncan Green, "State versus Market: The Rise and Fall of Import Substitution," in Kingstone, Peter R. 2006. *Readings in Latin American Politics: Challenges to Democratization*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

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: 241-263.

September 19: Politics of Development II: Crisis and the stagnation of ISI, and B-A

- Vanden and Prevost 172-174 & 197-198.
- Collier, David. 2001. "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism," in *The Oxford Companion to Politics in the World*, Second Edition, Joel Krieger, ed. Oxford University Press, 93-95.
- 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 24: Neoliberalism & Economic Reform

- Vanden and Prevost 174-177.
- Weyland, Kurt. 1998. "Swallowing the Bitter Pill: Sources of Popular Support for Neoliberal Reform in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies*. 31.5: 539-563.

September 26: Consequences of Neoliberalism

- Huber, Evelyne and Fred Solt. 2004. "Success and Failures of Neoliberalism," *Latin American Research Review*. 39.3: 150-164.
- Hoffman, Kelly and Miguel A. Centeno. 2003. "The Lopsided Continent: Inequality in Latin America," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 363-90.

October 1: A Historical Look at Democracy in Latin America

- Vanden and Prevost 199-206.
- Smith, Peter. 2012. "Cycles of Electoral Democracy" in *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, 19-42.

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

October 3: Case Study: Argentina & Discussion of Paper Assignment

- Vanden and Prevost 345-366.
- CONADEP. 1984. *Nunca Más: A Report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People*. Prologue.

Recommended: Roht Arriaza, Naomi. 2014. "From Amnesty to Accountability: Transitional Justice in South America." *World Politics Review* (December 23), 1-6.

October 8: Case Study: Brazil

- Vanden and Prevost 385-398.

October 10: Reading Day – No Class

October 15: Midterm Review

Midterm Exam (Oct 15-17)

October 17: Transitions to Democracy

- Smith, Peter. 2012. "Transitions and Continuities" in *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, 43-70.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is... and Is Not." *Journal of Democracy*, 2(5): 2-15.

October 22: Case Study: Chile

- Vanden and Prevost 413-427.
- Peter Kornbluh. 2003. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. The New Press, Ch. 1.

October 24: Case Study: Mexico

- Vanden and Prevost 317-330.
- Langston, Joy. 2017. *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.

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.

October 25: Paper Abstract & Outline Due

October 29: Political Institutions I: Presidentialism in Latin America

- Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics* 29(4): 449-469.
- Juan Pablo Luna and Alberto Vergara. 2016. "Latin America's Problems of Success," *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3): 158-65.

October 31: Political Institutions II: Political Parties and Representation

- Mainwaring, Scott. 2006. The crisis of representation in the Andes. *Journal of democracy*, 17(3): 13-27.
- *Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas 2016/17*, LAPOP Report, pp. 19-26 (Political Trust in Parties, Partisanship).

Peer-review Due in Class

November 5: The Left Turn in Latin America

- Levitsky, Steven and Kenneth M. Roberts, ed. 2011. *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1-26 (Introduction) and 399-427 (Conclusion).
- Riggiozzi, Pia. 2018. "Democracy is at risk in Latin America and the far right is moving in – here's how it went wrong for the left," *The Conversation*, November 9.

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 7: Case Study: Venezuela

- Vanden and Prevost 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 12: The Importance of Programmatic Parties

- Kenneth M. Roberts. 2012. "Market Reform, Programmatic (De-)Alignment, and Party System Stability in Latin America," *Comparative Political Studies* 46, No. 11.
- Kitschelt, Herbert et al. 2010. *Latin American Party Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-13 (Introduction).

November 14: Case Study: Peru

- Vanden and Prevost 59-60.
- Levitsky, Steven. 2018. "Peru: The Institutionalization of Politics without Parties" in *Party Systems in Latin America*, 326-341.

November 15: Final Paper (upload to Canvas)

November 19: US-Latin American Relations

- Vanden and Prevost 392-314.
- 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.

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

November 21: Case Study: Cuba

- Vanden and Prevost 523-545.
- TBD

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

December 3: Final Review Session

December 5: Poster Presentation