San Diego State University, Department of Political Science

Political Science 567: Political Systems in Latin America
Spring 2013

Thursdays, 4:00-6:40 pm
Adams Humanities 2107
Schedule #22379

Instructor: Dr. James Samstad
jsamstad@mail.sdsu.edu

Office Hours: TuTh 10:00-10:50 am
AH 4234

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Since the 1980s, most countries in Latin America have become relatively stable democracies, in contrast to the widespread authoritarianism of previous decades. Nonetheless, many of these countries have faced a series of problems, including economic instability, ongoing inequality, excessive presidentialism, and limited popular participation. The course will then review a number of these current issues affecting Latin America, focusing in particular on eight nations: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

This course is conceptualized as the second of a two part series, with POLS 566 focusing on the region’s political and economic history from the time of Spanish conquest through the 1980s debt crisis. Each of the two courses may be taken alone, however.

Students enrolling in this course are expected to have taken Political Science 103 and 366, or equivalent classes (having passed 566 is also acceptable). Those not having completed these prerequisites should talk to the instructor before enrolling in the course. Masters-level graduate students may also take the course for credit, but must complete a graduate-level research paper, in addition to all of the other regular requirements for the class.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should:

1) Understand the shift towards the neoliberal “Washington Consensus,” and its long-term impact;
2) Be able to discuss the distinct processes of democratization in the region and the implication of these for subsequent political arraignments in each country;
3) Be able to identify some key issues and problems of democracy in Latin America, including issues of presidentialism, neo-populism, delegative democracy, corruption, clientelism and uncertain civilian control;
4) Have a clear understanding of the role of civil society groups, including women, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, and the labor movement;
5) Have the capacity to discuss reactions and alternatives to neo-liberal economic strategies;
6) Be familiar with the recent and current state of Latin American relations with the United States;

7) Be able to identify the key leaders, political party systems, and political structures of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Students are required to attend class regularly, participate actively in discussions, take two in-class quizzes on the course readings, make a research presentation to class, and write an extensive research paper. Grades are based on a 1,000 point scale, weighed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz #1</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Quiz #2</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Paper Topic</td>
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<td>Research Presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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Final grades will be given in accordance with the number of points received:

- 930–1,000 points: A
- 900–929 points: A–
- 870–899 points: B+
- 830–869 points: B
- 800–829 points: B–
- 770–799 points: C+
- 730–769 points: C
- 700–729 points: C–
- 670–699 points: D+
- 630–669 points: D
- 600–629 points: D–
- Below 600 points: F

**Attendance:** An attendance sheet will be distributed for each regular class session (excluding the days of the midterm and final). Those not attending will need to have a valid and documented excuse to not be docked for missing that day. At the instructor’s discretion, those arriving after roll has been taken may be given half credit for attendance if they talk to the instructor immediately after class.

Up to fifty points for attendance will be allocated in proportion to the number of sessions attended. For example, an 80% attendance rate will earn 40 points for attendance. Excused absences will neither be counted as present nor absent in calculating this percentage (that is, as if there had been no class session that day in that student’s case).
Note that any student caught signing in for a fellow student not in attendance will be considered to be cheating on an assignment and will be disciplined accordingly.

**Participation:** Since this is a seminar-style course, students will be graded not only according to the degree to which they attended class, but also have participated actively in discussions in manner that makes clear that they have read the material for that session and have considered its implications. For average levels of participation, this portion of the grade will roughly match that for attendance, but it will be adjusted upwards or downwards for greater and lesser participation levels.

**Quizzes:** Two quizzes will be given during regular class sessions on the dates listed below in the course schedule. The exams will test your ability to answer an essay question while citing (by author’s name) the readings of the previous weeks and their central arguments. Students will be allowed one single-sided page of notes (with certain restrictions, to be discussed later in the term) for the first test, and two single-sided pages of notes on the second. Also be sure to bring a bluebook and pen (not pencil).

At least one week prior to each quiz, a brief study guide will be distributed giving more details as to the topics to be covered.

**Research Topic:** Each student must submit a one-paragraph summary of his or her proposed topic for the instructor’s approval on at the beginning of class on the date listed below. Along with this summary, an initial bibliography of five relevant academic sources must be attached.

While there will be a degree of flexibility as to what topic you may choose, all papers must touch upon the central themes of this course and of its readings. Specifically, the topic should (1) discuss in some manner or another the political, economic, and/or institutional issues in Latin America, (2) compare and contrast the experiences of at least two Latin American countries, and (3) focus on a topic that covers the contemporary period, since roughly the 1980s (since the historical development of Latin America was the focus of Political Science 566).

If deemed necessary by the instructor, the student may be asked to revise and resubmit the topic proposal soon afterwards. Once approved, the topic of the paper may not be changed without prior consent of the instructor.

In addition to the hard copy, students must email a copy of their paper topic in Word (DOC or DOCX), Rich Text Format (RTF), or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) to the instructor <jsamstad@mail.sdsu.edu> by 11:59 p.m. that same evening. Please begin the file or archive’s name with your last name (the rest of the filename may be anything you wish).

**Research Presentation:** During the last couple of sessions of the course, students will each give a 10-15 minute oral presentation of their work so far to the class. Time permitting, class members are encouraged to provide constructive criticism and feedback regarding each presentation. A sign-up sheet for the specific days for the presentations will be distributed in class early on during the semester on the date listed below.
At the time of their presentation, students will be required to submit to the instructor a one- to two-page outline of their paper, along with an updated bibliography of eight relevant academic sources. An electronic copy of the outline should also be sent to the instructor by midnight of the date of the presentation. Make sure the filename begins with your last name.

**Research Paper:** Each student will be expected to write a final paper of approximately 15 double-spaced pages in length (25 pages for graduate students), to be turned no later than the time of the scheduled final exam (listed below) to the instructor’s box at the Political Science Department office (103 Nasatir Hall).

Each paper must include a reference page including at least ten academic sources. The preferred formatting for references will be Chicago (CMS) Endnote style, which will be discussed further during the semester. For more information, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* at the library’s reference desk.

The arguments presented in the paper must empirical and analytical in nature—that is, based on documented facts and careful analysis of existing research—rather than purely subjective opinions. If the topic chosen is controversial, students are free to argue one side, but should be fair in presenting other sides of the controversy (rather than using “straw men” type argumentation). Students are also expected to write it from an objective, third person, and gender-neutral perspective (no personal pronouns allowed).

In addition to the hard copy, students must submit an exact copy in Word (DOC or DOCX), Rich Text Format (RTF), or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) to SafeAssign via Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. that same evening. Please begin the file or archive’s name with your last name (the rest of the filename may be anything you wish).

### REQUIRED READINGS

The book listed below is required and may be purchased from the campus bookstore.


The majority of class sessions will center around intensive seminar discussions of the assigned articles in the above volume as well as additional articles listed below under “Required Readings” for each session. These articles are all available online through JSTOR or Project MUSE. When possible, they will be posted as PDFs on Blackboard. Students are expected to complete the required readings for each topic by the date of that seminar, and be prepared to discuss and ask questions about them.

### RECOMMENDED READINGS

For those less familiar with Latin America history and politics (such as students who have not previously taken Political Science 366 or 566), the book listed below is recommended and may be purchased from the campus bookstore:

In addition, the course schedule below lists “Recommended Readings” on each topic. Students looking for ideas as to what topic to write about or who want more information on the particular topic (such as for the research paper they are writing) are encouraged to look at these readings, which are mostly available through JSTOR or Project MUSE.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Cheating on papers and exams will result in an automatic failing grade for the course and the reporting of the student to university authorities for disciplinary action, including possible expulsion.

In writing, remember that credit by means of a footnote or endnote must be given for every direct quotation, for paraphrased or summarized text, and for information that is not common knowledge. *Ignorance as to what constitutes plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse.* Students who have questions about the definition of plagiarism should consult the university’s official statement on Academic Dishonesty <http://csrr.sdsu.edu/academics1.html>, or ask the instructor.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

In accordance with federal law, individualized accommodations, such as additional time for test taking, will be made for students with disabilities. However, requests for such accommodations must be made by the end of the second full week of instruction and may require approval and certification from Student Disability Services (SDS), Calpulli Center, Suite 3101 <dsstest@mail.sdsu.edu> [619-594-6473].

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Subject to change)*

**INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF SYLLABUS (JANUARY 17)**

**THE TRANSITION FROM POPULISM TO NEOLIBERALISM (JANUARY 24)**

*Required*


Recommended


ARGENTINA (JANUARY 31)

Required


**Recommended**


**Brazil (February 7)**

**Required**


**Recommended**


Thursday, February 7: RESEARCH TOPIC DUE

**CHILE (FEBRUARY 14)**

*Required*


*Recommended*


→ *Thursday, February 14: RESEARCH PRESENTATION SIGN-UPS*

**PERU (FEBRUARY 21)**

*Required*


*Recommended*


Thursday, February 28: READING QUIZ #1 (IN-CLASS)

PROBLEMATIC DEMOCRATIZATION (MARCH 7)

Required


Recommended


COLOMBIA (MARCH 14)

Required


Recommended


**VENEZUELA (MARCH 21)**

Required


Recommended


**CUBA (MARCH 28)**

*Required*


*Recommended*


**April 1–5: Spring Break**
MEXICO (APRIL 11)

Required


Recommended


→ Thursday, April 18: READING QUIZ #2 (IN-CLASS)

ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPERS (APRIL 25–MAY 2)

→ Thursday, May 9, 4 pm: RESEARCH PAPER DUE