I. Course Description
Latin America has undergone profound changes over the course of the 20th and early 21st centuries, evolving from a region enmeshed in violent civil wars, authoritarian governments, and stagnating economies to a region of deepening political democracy and improved economic growth. We will explore both the changes and the continuity over time in Latin American countries, including past experiences with colonial and authoritarian rule, the ongoing process of democratization, the impact of US foreign policy, and changes in political economy. We will end the semester with an examination of the "left turn" in the region – the election of leftwing parties in multiple countries over the past two decades. The course will emphasize broad themes, trends, and concepts rather than focusing on Latin American countries one-by-one. However case studies of particular countries will enrich our understanding of the major political, economic, and social dynamics of the region. The course teaches and requires critical thinking skills, effective written arguments, and active class participation.

Please note that this is an advanced class, designed exclusively for graduate students and serious upper-division undergraduates. While there are no formal prerequisites, I assume some social science background in comparative politics (Political Science 103) or Latin American Politics (366).

Learning Objectives

- Understand the key historical legacies as well as the current political and economic trends in Latin American politics
- Understand and evaluate various perspectives on issues of political culture, democratization, and political economy in Latin America
- Think critically issues about in Latin American politics and form your own judgments
- Express your ideas clearly in writing and in class discussions

II. Course Readings
The following two books are required and may be purchased at the campus bookstore:


Additional required readings include articles and books chapters, all of which will be available in PDF format on Blackboard. Where a PDF is not available there will be a link to the website where students can access the reading. I advise students to print hard copies of these readings and bring them to class on the assigned days.

III. Course Policies

Communication: Check your registered campus email regularly as well as announcements made to the Blackboard site for the course. You are responsible for the material I send you electronically. I will respond to your email inquiries within 24 hours.

In Class Rules:

No computers. Laptops and tablets are not allowed in class. Please see me if you have a legitimate medical need for a classroom computer.

No cell phones: Cell phones must be turned off and not used during class.

Proper classroom behavior: Students are expected to be respectful of other students and other opinions expressed in class.

Grade appeals: If you want to appeal an assigned grade, you must schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss the grade dispute in person. Students must bring the original graded assignment and a brief typed summary of the reasons why they are requesting a second evaluation to the appointment. Note that appealing a grade does not guarantee a change in the original grade, and gives me license to adjust the questioned grade upward, downward or not at all.

Extra credit: There is no extra credit for this course.

Learning Accommodations. Please notify me immediately if you have a disability so that I can make the appropriate accommodations. Please see the University's policies on students with disabilities, available at the following website: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/.

Academic dishonesty. Plagiarism or cheating will result in failure and will be reported to the University. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism on written assignments and cheating on in-class exams or quizzes by bringing unauthorized materials to class. Plagiarism is the deliberate use of ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriately citing the author. See the SDSU Academic
Senate policy on plagiarism and cheating: [http://its.sdsu.edu/docs/TURN_Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf](http://its.sdsu.edu/docs/TURN_Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf).

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me or the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities in Student Services West, Room 1604.

**Make-up Exams:** There are no make-up exams unless the student has made arrangements with me prior to the exam based on a documented legal, family, or health-related issue.

**IV. Assignments and Grading**

**Attendance and Participation**

Regular attendance is mandatory. Absences, arriving late and/or leaving early will lower your participation grade. Please come to class having completed and reflected on the readings, and be ready to participate actively. You are unlikely to do well in this class if you do not keep up with the readings. Our class time will be a combination of lecture and classroom discussion. Your active and informed participation are crucial to both your grade and to creating an interesting class experience for everyone.

**Pop Quizzes**

There will be five unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of class, and will be on the assigned readings for the day. I will drop your lowest quiz score. There are no make-up quizzes, including for students who arrive late to class and miss the quiz. If you miss class or arrive late on the day of a pop quiz, you will receive a zero (unless you have a documented and acceptable excuse as described in the policy for make-up exams).

**Reflection Essays**

All students will write four 1-2 page Reflection Essays on the assigned readings for the day on the following dates:

Essay #1: February 4 - Valenzuela & Valenzuela and dos Santos  
Essay #2: February 27 - Pion-Berlin article and Sikkink chapter  
Essay #3: April 8 – Huber & Solt and Walton articles  
Essay #4: April 17 or April 24 – your choice

Each essay will focus on the readings for the day and address the following questions: What is the central argument of each article or chapter? What evidence does the authors provide to support their argument? How do these two readings differ in their findings and approach to the topic? The essay should also provide some of your own analysis and commentary, and pose at least one question about the readings for class discussion. Your analysis can also address how these readings shed light on your chosen country (for undergraduates), or how they relate to your research paper (graduate students).
Late papers will be docked 1/3 letter grade beginning at the end of class on the due date.

**Country Expert Paper - **For undergraduates only**
All undergraduate students will write a 5-7 page Country Expert Paper. This paper will focus on one Latin American country of your choosing, and it will analyze a contemporary problem in that country in the context of the major themes we are discussing in class, such as historical legacies, US relations, political economy, etc. A prompt for the essay will be distributed in class. Students will submit a one-paragraph summary of the proposed paper topic at the beginning of class on April 10th.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper topic</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Country Expert Paper</td>
<td>April 10</td>
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**Graduate Research Paper**
Graduate students do not write a Country Expert Paper and they do not take the final exam. Instead, all graduate students will write a major research paper (approximately 15 pages). Because you will be conducting outside research, you must select a topic for your research paper early in the semester, in consultation with me. Note the deadlines for your research proposal, and preliminary outline with bibliography:

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<tr>
<th>Proposal/Abstract</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary outline and bibliography</td>
<td>April 15</td>
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**Exams**
**Midterm Exam.** There will be an in-class midterm on March 11th. The Midterm exam will consist of short answer questions and essay. Students must bring a blue book to class for the exam.

**Final Exam.** The final exam will be a comprehensive exam consisting of short answer and essay questions. Graduate students do not take the final exam.

**Undergraduate Grading**

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<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes (4)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Essays (4)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Expert Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Undergraduate research option:** Undergraduates with research interests may adopt the graduate student grading formula, with a major research paper in lieu of the Country Expert Paper and final exam. If you are interested in this option, please come see me for approval by February 20th.

**Graduate Grading**
Graduate students are required to take the midterm, write the four Reflection Essays. In lieu of the Country Expert paper and final, graduate students will write a research paper.

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<td>Proposal/Abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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**V. Reading Schedule**

**January 23: Introduction to course**
- V&P Chapter 1

  **Colonial Heritage; Indigenous People; Independence and Early Statehood**

**January 28**
- V&P Chapter 2 – Early History
- Excerpt from *In Defense of the Indians* by Bartolomé de Las Casas: pp. 25-30 and pp. 41-49
- V&P: Chapter 4 – The Other Americans, pp. 79-91

**January 30:**
- V&P Chapter 3 – Democracy and Dictators pp. 42-54

  **Explaining Poverty and Underdevelopment; Approaches to Development**

**February 4 – ESSAY #1 DUE**
- Valenzuela & Valenzuela, “Modernization and Dependency” (1978)
February 6
- Skidmore, Smith and Green - “Strategies for Economic Development” p. 351-top 368

Political Culture and Political Institutions

February 11
- V&P: Chapter 8 – Democracy and Authoritarianism

February 13
- V&P Chapter 9 – Politics, Power, Institutions and Actors, pp. 202-223
- V&P Chapter 15 – Argentina, pp. 425-433
- “Bolivia’s New Constitution” in NACLA (van Schaick 2009)
- “Bolivians Ratify New Constitution” (Romero 2009)
- “Report Card: 12 Years of Hugo Chavez” (Otis 2011)
- “An Empty Revolution: The Unfulfilled Promises of Hugo Chavez” in Foreign Affairs (Rodríguez 2008)

Authoritarianism; Military Governments

February 18
- V&P – pp. 223-224; pp. 56-64; Argentina Chapter 16, pp. 433-439
- Smith, Peter. Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Latin America. Chapter 3 “The Military”

February 20

Human Rights Violations; Transitional Justice

February 25
- Cardenas, Sonia – Chapter 1 “A Regional Survey” in Human Rights in Latin America
- Listen to NPR Story “Argentina’s Dirty War Still Haunts Youngest Victims” (Link on blackboard)
- “Condor Legacy Haunts South America” (Link on blackboard)
February 27 – ESSAY #2 DUE
- Sikkink, K. Excerpt from The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions are Changing World Politics. Chapter 3: Argentina – From Pariah State to Global Protagonist”

Revolutions and Uprisings

March 4
Cuba
- V&P – Chapter 14, pp. 369-387
- Guevara, Che. Excerpt from Socialism and Man in Cuba
- Kingstone, Readings in Latin American Politics: Challenges to Democratization: Chapter 10.1 “The Secret of Castro’s Staying Power” by Jorge Domínguez

March 6
Nicaragua
- V&P – Chapter 20, pp. 537-551
- Zapatistas

March 11: MIDTERM EXAM

Democratization

March 13

March 18
- Smith, Peter. Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Latin America. Chapter 2 “Transitions and Continuities”

US Foreign Policy; Latin America and the Cold War

March 20

March 25

March 27 – NO CLASS

SPRING BREAK – April 1, 3
- V&P: Chapter 7, pp. 169-180

    **Neoliberal Reforms**

April 8 – ESSAY #3 DUE

April 10

    **Latin America’s Left Turn**

April 15

April 17 – ESSAY #4 DUE
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 3, 4

April 22
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 5, 6

April 24 – ESSAY #4 DUE
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 7, 8

April 29
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 9, 10

May 1
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 11, 12
May 6
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapters 13,14

May 8: Course Conclusion and Wrap-up
- Levitsky & Roberts, Chapter 15 and Conclusion

FINAL EXAM: May 13th 10:30-12:30