

PSC 355P -- POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICA (WRITING INTENSIVE VERSION)  
Tuesday & Thursday 11-12:15 a.m.  
237 Curry Building

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Introduction:

This course is an introduction to the government and politics of Latin America. It begins with an overview of this region's history and geography before turning to central issues in its political economy. This course involves lectures, discussions, videos, and readings about Latin America as a whole as well as more in depth examinations of Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Learning Objectives:

Students who complete this class will practice:

1. identifying evidence relevant for evaluating rival explanations of political outcomes;
2. interpreting events and trends from alternative national or cultural perspectives;
3. analyzing differences and similarities among nation-states;
4. writing effective arguments, ones whose conclusions are clear and well-defended.

Course Requirements:

The class requires students, first, to write two essays, each of which is worth 25 percent of the course grade (for a total of 50 percent of the final grade; the grade for each essay will be an average of its first and final drafts). Second, each outline and annotated bibliography is worth 15 percent of the class grade (or a total of 30 percent of the class grade). The first appendix provides some deadlines and discusses these assignments in more detail. Third, the final 20 percent of the class grade will consist of one or two essay exams, which I will announce in class at least 2 class sessions in advance.

Books for Purchase:

Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold, *Dragon in the Tropics: Hugo Chávez and the Political Economy of Revolution in Venezuela*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2011, 2015).

Gilbert Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

Fabrice Lehoucq, *The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Underdevelopment, and Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Andrés Solimano, *Chile and the Neoliberal Trap: The Post-Pinochet Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

### Course Policies:

This course combines lectures with class discussion. It assumes students have done the reading and regularly compare their notes on the texts and from class.

Please respect the following rules in class:

- Turn off your cell phones, both in the class and when you visit me during office hours;
- Use laptops only for note-taking;
- Be punctual and do not leave a class before it is over;
- Listen attentively while others speak in class;
- Avoid wearing baseball caps, flip-flops and other beachwear to class;
- Give me at least a couple of days to respond to e-mail messages.

Students who miss more than 3 classes will be withdrawn from this course. For every day a written assignment is past due, it will drop a letter grade. Documented excuses will only be accepted from students requiring emergency medical attention.

University policy requires that you obtain certification from the Office of Disability Services (EUC, Suite 215; 334-5440) if you have a disability that merits accommodation.

Class	Dates	Topic and Reading
<b>I. INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICA</b>		
1 & 2	Aug. 23 & 25.	A. Geography and History: An Overview Reading: Eric J. Hobsbawm, <i>Interesting Times</i> , chap. 21 ("Third World"). <b>On Reserve.</b>
3, 4 & 5	Aug. 30 & Sept. 1 & 6.	B. Economic, Political, and Social Portraits Reading: Lehoucq, <i>The Politics of Modern Central America</i> , Introduction & chap. 1.
<b>II. DEMOCRATIZATION AND REVOLUTION</b>		
6, 7 & 8	Sept. 8, 13 & 15.  Outline & annotated bibs. due on the 8 <sup>th</sup>	A.i. Revolution and Democratization in Central America Reading: Lehoucq, <i>The Politics of Modern Central America</i> , Introduction and chaps. 2-3.
9 & 10	Sept. 20 & 22.  Advanced draft due on 22 <sup>th</sup> .	A.ii. Economic Reform in Central America Reading: Lehoucq, <i>The Politics of Modern Central America</i> , chap. 4.  Stephen Van Evera, <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i> (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), appendix. <b>On Reserve.</b>
11 & 12	Sept. 27 & 29.	A.iii. The Quality of Democracy in Central America Reading: Lehoucq, <i>The Politics of Modern Central America</i> , chap. 5 & conclusion.

III. DEMOCRATIZATION, BREAKDOWN, NEOLIBERAL REFORM		
13 & 14	Oct. 4 & 6. Final draft due on the 4 <sup>th</sup> .	B.i. Political Developments Reading: Solimano, <i>Chile and the Neoliberal Trap</i> , chaps. 1-2.
15 & 16	Oct. 11 & 13	B.ii. Neoliberal Developments Reading: Solimano, <i>Chile and the Neoliberal Trap</i> , chaps. 3-6.
17	Oct. 20.	B.iii. The Quality of Democracy in Chile Reading: Solimano, <i>Chile and the Neoliberal Trap</i> , chaps. 7-9.
IV. DEMOCRATIZATION AND REGIME CHANGE		
18, 19 & 20	Oct. 25, 27 & Nov. 1	A. The Unraveling of Democracy & Commodity Booms and Busts Reading: Corrales and Penfold, <i>Dragon in the Tropics</i> , chaps. 1-2 & 3-4.
21 & 22	Nov 3 & 8.	B. Electoral Authoritarianism? Reading: Corrales and Penfold, <i>Dragon in the Tropics</i> , chaps. 7-9 (& 6 is optional).
V. VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRATIZATION		
23	Nov. 10.	A. Violence Reading: Joseph and Buchenau, <i>Mexico's Once and Future Revolution</i> , chaps 1-4.
24 & 25	Nov. 15 & 17.	B. The PRI Reading: Joseph and Buchenau, chaps. 5-7.
26 & 27	Nov. 22 & 29.	B. Democratization and Change Reading: Joseph and Buchenau, chaps. 8- 9.
28	Dec. 1.	Conclusion <b>Due Date for Final Paper (TBA)</b>

### Appendix 1 – Essay Assignments

*First Essay Question:* What changes has democratization brought to a Central American country?

*Second Essay Question:* What are the development and political challenges that a Latin American country faces? Please focus on a Latin American country outside of Central America.

Each of these questions must have an answer that is at least 8 pages long and does not exceed 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (12-pt font with at least 1.0 margins, including a bibliography). Each assignment requires submitting an outline and annotated bibliography (of 10

items for each essay) as well as an advanced draft of the essay before turning in the final version of your essay. We will discuss each of these assignments in class. Due dates for the first essay are listed on the syllabus; we will produce the deadlines for the other assignment in class.

Use the citation format of the *American Political Science Review*, which is available at: <http://uncg.libguides.com/content.php?pid=100907&sid=1079424>. You will lose points if your citations are incorrect.

## Appendix 2 – Notes on Writing English and for Using the Writing Center

Effective English writing is brief and austere. Several rules worth following include:

1. Always put subjects before verbs and their objects. Do not say: “The presidency was won by the PAN.” It is better to say that, “The PAN won the presidency.”
2. Use strong verbs and avoid adverbs and adjectives. Never use two to make a point. It is much better to say that: “Economic crisis transformed political preferences,” than to say “political preferences about parties were fueled by a dramatic and major economic crisis.” The first is much better (and shorter).
3. Never use the passive voice. Always identify your subject. Never say: “Logit analysis was used in this paper.” It is better to say, “The paper (or “I,” or “my analysis,” etc. ) uses logit models.”
4. Avoid past tenses, if you can. The present tense and the active voice make for better papers.

A great and short primer about writing English is William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*. *The Economist* magazine is also marvelous for its use of the English language. Gary Cox and Robert Bates are two political scientists who write exceedingly well.

Visit the Writing Center often as part of a more general strategy to improve your writing. Conversations with students and with the Center’s Director suggest that a useful visit starts with a concrete request. It is not a good idea to tell a Writing Center consultant that a professor made me come here. A good paper starts with a proactive stance, one where the writer is looking for help to address one or more issues relevant for her paper assignment. Questions worth raising with the Writing Center or anyone else whose advice you seek include:

1. Is my argument persuasive? Do I have convincing reasons in support of my conclusion?
2. What are my claims? Do I have evidence for my claims?
3. Have I organized my paper effectively?
4. Have I filled my paper with unnecessary facts?
5. Have I asked a tutor or a friend for her overall impressions on my work?

It is best not to ask a tutor or friend to spell- and grammar-check your writing. Only raise these issues if you are not sure how to apply the rules for writing good English. Instead, use your visits to the Writing Center to obtain answers to questions like the aforementioned. Finally, write a summary of your session with the Writing Center consultant. Identify the central points of your conversation and review these notes as you draft your paper.