

PLSc 358 - Latin American Politics

Fall Semester 2008

MW 3-4:15 – 346 MARB

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Office hours: MW 9-11 or by appointment

Objectives

For more information on Political Science learning objectives, visit https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/wiki/index.php/Political_Science

Learn facts about Latin American politics. In this course you will develop a general understanding of Latin American politics and how politics in the region compares with that of the rest of the world. You will also develop expert knowledge of at least one Latin American country, and you will learn about databases and other sources of information on politics in the region.

Learn how to apply theories in order to understand the facts. Beyond learning facts, you will improve your ability to identify patterns in Latin American politics and explain them. This analytical knowledge will allow you to make predictions and prescriptions.

Develop broader skills of research, writing, “numeracy,” and critical thinking. These basic skills are taught in most Political Science classes, and you will have several opportunities here to improve them.

Activities and grading

In order to achieve these objectives, you will have a fair amount of moderately difficult reading accompanied by group assignments, class discussions, quizzes, out-of-class exercises, a midterm, and a final exam. You will also apply what you learn to writing a significant research paper on how to improve democracy in one Latin American country. To facilitate learning, you will work with a group of your peers throughout the semester; group work is strongly encouraged everywhere except exams and quizzes.

Quizzes and exercises - 25 percent

Midterm - 10 percent

Final exam - 25 percent

Final draft of paper - 40 percent

Participation - fudge factor

Prerequisites

PLSc 200 or LtAm 211

Texts

Smith, Peter H. 2005. *Democracy in Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Latin American Weekly Report (www.latinnews.com, username/password: 001894—go through the HBLL online catalog if this doesn't work).

Additional readings on Blackboard (“BB”).

Assignments and grades in detail

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day scheduled, although I reserve the right to have you wait a few minutes so that we can use the assignments for class discussions. Assignments turned in late will lose a full grade for each 24 hour period they are late. Anything missed for a legitimate excuse can be made up without penalty.

- Daily readings** A schedule of readings and group activities follows this section. Both of these are essential to learning about Latin American politics. Do the assigned readings for each day, and faithfully prepare for class discussions. Readings and databases come from the textbook, Blackboard, or the Internet. You also need to keep up on current events in Latin America in the *Latin American Weekly Report*.
- Groups (about one-fourth of all grades)** At the beginning of the semester you will be assigned to a group of classmates. You should plan on meeting regularly to discuss readings, work on exercises, prepare for exams, and plan the final paper together. Group work is encouraged on all assignments besides your quizzes (most of them), exams, and final paper. This will be indicated for each assignment, but generally every assignment has a group portion. You will evaluate your group members twice this semester.
- Quizzes and exercises (25%)** During most classes you will be quizzed on the readings, lectures, and current events from the previous day/week. These normally come at the beginning of the hour—don't be late! The quizzes are designed to help you keep up on your readings and studying without cramming, to help me find out what you don't understand, and to encourage better group work. Please note that these aren't just "readings quizzes" with a couple of easy questions; you will have to learn the main ideas and concepts and occasionally analyze the material. In exchange for doing the online course evaluation at the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest daily quiz scores.
- On several days during the semester I will give you short research and writing assignments in place of regular readings and/or quizzes. Most of these will have some group component that requires meeting as a group, sometimes outside of class.
- Midterm and final exam (10%/25%)** These exams have the same format as the weekly quizzes (a mixture of multiple choice, fill-in, identification, and short answer) with a couple of longer essays. However, they are much longer than the quizzes and will be comprehensive. You will find that the quizzes provide a thorough study guide for the final exam; keep the question sheets. Please note the dates of each exam now.
- Research paper (group summary 10%, individual paper 30%)** Working with your group, you will write a paper of 4000-5000 words (up to 15 double-spaced pages) that presents what you consider the most serious weaknesses of democracy in the country of your choice and a set of policies to address these weaknesses. A summary of your group's conclusions will be turned in after Thanksgiving, and a final draft of this summary in December. While the summary is written as a group, you will write your own paper, based on the summary.
- You are also encouraged to turn in a full, polished rough draft of the complete paper (the portion you write) on the date in the syllabus, just after Thanksgiving. I will grade this draft as if it were the final one and give you extensive written comments; it will count for one-third of your final paper grade. However, this complete rough draft is not required. If you choose to only do the complete final draft, it is due on the last day of class and will count for the entire paper grade. You will find that a rough draft helps you do a better paper and improves your grade. Note that if you choose to do the rough draft, you can submit the final draft as late as the final exam.
- Online course evaluation** The online course evaluation at the end of the semester provides the university and me with valuable information, so I think you should be compensated for it. I will drop your two lowest daily quiz grades if you do the evaluation on time. Even if you don't need the help on your quizzes, I hope you will do the evaluation.

Other policies

Making up assignments

I accept legitimate excuses for tardiness and absence and allow you to retake quizzes or turn in projects late—but only for legitimate excuses. These include serious family or personal matters, illness, and events beyond your control. I can't excuse assignments that you miss for personal reasons; you have the assignment schedule and are responsible for knowing it. Don't plan weddings, trips, reunions, etc. on days that assignments are due or during the final exam. If you must miss class for personal reasons, use your free quizzes or a make-up assignment.

There are no regularly scheduled extra-credit assignments. However, you may make up missed or badly-done assignments by proposing your own creative solutions. Whatever you propose should be something that *at least equals the worth of what you missed* and maybe requires some extra work and learning from you. Come to me with your detailed proposal before turning in anything. Note that these are make-up assignments, not extra credit; you cannot use these to "add points" to your total, only to replace an existing assignment.

University Policies

Honor Code Standards

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact **be** your own work and not that of another. Always provide references to the sources of your ideas and data, and never reprint large pieces of published material without using appropriate punctuation marks (quotation marks or, for more than a few lines of cited text, indentation). This applies to material you find on the Web as well as traditional published material. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB; 24-hour hotline 367-5689) or with the Honor Code Office (4440 WSC).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC, 422-2767). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

Date	Topic	Assignments
Sept 3	Introduction; Syllabus	
8	Basic definitions; research paper	Sample student paper (BB) Mainwaring and Scully, "Latin America: Eight Lessons for Governance" (BB)
10	Defining democracy	Smith Introduction
15	Defining democracy	O'Donnell (BB) Exercise: Your definition of democracy
17	Measuring democracy	Smith, Chapter 1 Polity IV codebook (online) Freedom in the World methodology (online)
22	Measuring democracy	Exercise: Measuring democracy
24	Transitions and consolidations	Smith Chapter 2 Linz and Stepan, "Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation: Democracy and its Arenas" (BB)
29	Transitions and consolidations	Exercise: Measuring consolidation
Oct 1	The military	Smith Chapter 3
6	Democracy and international relations	Smith Chapter 4
8	Modes of Linkage: Program and Clientelism	Mainwaring, "Patronage, Clientelism, and Patrimonialism," pp. 175-80 (BB) Kitschelt, "Linkages Between Citizens and Politicians," pp. 845-53 (BB)
13	Modes of Linkage: Program and Clientelism	Kitschelt et al., "Long-term influences on the structuring of Latin American party systems" (BB)
15	Modes of linkage: Charisma and populism	Conniff, "Populism in Latin America: Introduction" (BB) Hawkins, "How populist is Chávez? Measuring Populist Discourse in Comparative Perspective" (BB)
20	Modes of linkage: Charisma and populism	Hawkins, "The Causes of Populism in Comparative Perspective" (BB)
22	Parties and party systems	Shively, "Parties," pp. 247-69 (BB)
27	Parties and party systems	Smith Chapter 6, pp. 176-82
29	Midterm exam/group evaluation #1	
Nov 3	Presidential powers and electoral rules	Smith Chapter 6, pp. 156-75
5	Presidential powers and electoral rules	Exercise: Electoral rules and their consequences
10	Civil Society (include graph and	Smith Chapter 9

	discussion on social capital)	
12	Civil Rights and Liberties	Smith Chapter 10
17	Civil Rights and Liberties: Causes of Corruption	--Coatesworth, "Obstacles to Economic Growth in Nineteenth-Century Mexico" (BB) --Triesman, "The causes of corruption: A cross-national study" (BB)
19	Civil Rights and Liberties: the Media	TBA
24	Political Economy of Development	Smith Chapter 8
25	No class—Thanksgiving break	
Dec 1	Political Economy of Development: problem areas	Exercise: Economic development Summary rough draft due Optional rough draft due
3	Public Opinion/Democratic Culture	Smith Chapter 11
8	Elections and participation	Smith Chapter 7
10	Last day of class	Final draft due (1)
12-13	Reading days	
Friday, Dec 19, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Final exam/group evaluation #2	Final draft due (2)