

Latin American Politics and Society

POL 385 P

T, Th 11-12.15 pm

MM 102

Spring Semester 2010

Professor Merike Blofield

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Overview

Latin America is a region of more than 400 million inhabitants, over 20 countries, and a long history of ethnic diversity and deep inequalities, of revolutions and repression, of cycles of military and democratic politics, of social movements and protest, and of renewed hopes for a better life for future generations. In Latin America, whites, blacks, indigenous, mestizos and immigrants from all over the world share an extensive land rich in natural resources. This course is an invitation to understand Latin America as a diverse region.

As an introduction to the study of Latin American politics, this course is designed to enable students to gain a basic understanding of politics and society in the region as well as to prepare students for further study of the region. In an effort to understand contemporary politics in Latin America, we will combine thematic issues with case studies. We will look at 20th century history, the impact of the Cold War and home-grown social struggles, economic development models, the difficulties of democratic consolidation, U.S.-Latin America relations, the emergence of new political actors, and the much-touted “turn to the Left”. We will deepen our understanding of these themes through case studies of Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela and Colombia.

Readings

1. Books

Peter R. Kingstone. Editor. 2006. *Readings in Latin American Politics: Challenges to Democratization*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now*. New York: Vintage Books. 1995.

Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina María de Jesus. New York: E.P Dutton Inc. 1962.

2. Reserve and blackboard readings. These are marked with a * and are either available on electronic reserves (ER) or on blackboard (BB). In some cases, they are also available

on the web, and in these cases the web address is provided. Finally, a few of the readings will be given as hand-outs and they are marked as such in the syllabus.

3. During the semester, I *highly recommend* you keep up with the Miami Herald's coverage of Latin America. The newspaper usually dedicates an entire page daily to events in the region. See *The Miami Herald* at

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/americas/>

Other online general news sources:

BBC

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

New York Times

www.nyt.com

The Economist

<http://www.economist.com>

The readings have been selected with care. In the unlikely case that I find particularly suitable readings for this course *during* the semester, I do however reserve the right to change, eliminate and/or add readings. Should this happen, I will notify you of this well in advance in class and on blackboard.

Requirements

- * Class participation. 15 percent
- * Map quiz. 5 percent
- * Reading sets (8). 35 percent
- * Mid-term exam. 20 percent
- * Final exam. 25 percent

1. Class participation. 10%.

My goal is to provide the best possible learning environment for students. Therefore, there are three non-negotiable rules for the classroom.

1. Cell phones must be turned off and stowed during class. If you have an emergency situation on a particular day that requires communicating with others outside the class you should stay away from class that day. If you use your cell phone during class you will be asked to leave immediately. If this happens more than once, you will be asked to withdraw from the course.
2. Do not come to class late. It is disruptive to the professor and to the students, and you miss important information. If you cannot come to class on time on a particular day you should stay away from class that day.

3. I prefer for you to take notes without a laptop. If, however, you choose to use a laptop I expect you to refrain from all activities unrelated to the class (eg. emailing, instant messaging, surfing the internet). If you engage in such activities you will be asked to leave as it is disruptive to others.

Lack of adherence to any of these three rules will reduce your participation grade by one grade each time (eg. down from a B to a C).

Beyond this, your participation grade will be based upon the quality of your contributions to class discussion as well as attendance. Discussion is essential for learning, and classes will be held in an inter-active lecture/discussion format.

We will be dealing with many controversial issues in class, and I expect us to have very lively and fun debates. This is of essence in a political science class. The key to remember is to treat others who disagree with you with respect, and argue against their ideas, not against them personally.

I do understand that some students prefer participating in less public ways, and participation also includes coming to my office hours and talking about the material. In sum, the participation grade is designed to tap into your level of engagement with the course material throughout the semester.

If you miss class, the responsibility for obtaining any information given during the missed class is entirely yours.

2. Map quiz. 5%. Jan 28. You will be handed a blank outline of Latin American countries, and you will be required to write in the countries as well as their capital cities.

3. Reading sets. 35%. I have divided the classes into 13 'sets' (in most cases, a set constitutes two classes). For eight of these thirteen sets, you will be responsible for handing in typed answers to reading-related questions. (See the appendix in this syllabus for a list of the sets and questions.) At least four of these readings reactions must be handed in prior to the midterm.

The expected length of the answer will depend on the question, but a general rule is approximately one paragraph per question. Think of these as "thought pieces": the answers will be evaluated on the basis of content, thought, and style (no spelling or grammar mistakes, please!). If you quote verbatim, you need to use quotation marks and cite the page number. Put your name on the response paper, and if it is longer than one page, staple it!

These answers will be due as **hard copies at the beginning of class on either the first or the second day of the set**. For example, if you have chosen to answer reading questions for Set #4 (for readings on Feb.9 and Feb.11), they must be handed in by the latest on Feb.11, at the beginning of class. Of course, you can hand them in on Feb.11 as

well, and I certainly encourage you to do the readings for the classes in which they will be discussed, not afterwards. **No late responses will be accepted. No exceptions.**

I recommend that you keep track of the number of the reading sets you have handed in as well as your set grades by checking blackboard on a regular basis.

The reading sets will help you keep up with the readings, understand them, participate in class as well as prepare for the midterm and final exams.

4. Mid-term exam. 20%. March 11. I will hand out a list of five to seven essay questions one week prior to the exam. To answer them you will be expected to draw on readings, class lectures and discussion, as well as hand-outs. On the day of the (closed-book, in-class) exam, I will hand out three of the questions from the list. You must answer two of them.

The purpose of the exam is to enable you to synthesize everything we have covered up to this point in the course and before we move on to case studies. I highly recommend forming study groups to prepare for the exam.

5. Final exam. 25%. Wed May 5, 11-1 pm. The final exam will be similar in format to the mid-term exam. To answer them you will be expected to draw on readings, class lectures and discussion, as well as hand-outs. While the material in the course is cumulative, emphasis on the final exam will be on material covered in the second half of the course. Good answers to the essay questions will require synthesizing the thematic concerns of the first half with the case studies of the second half of the course.

Written work and plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. At best, you will receive an F grade for the entire course when you hand in plagiarized work. Plagiarism, very briefly, refers to the “stealing” of other peoples’ written work (from books, articles, newspapers, web sources, etc.) or verbal ideas. You must cite all material that is not your own. If you have doubts of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the student code, and/or talk to me. “I did not know” is not an acceptable defense after a work has been handed in. Finally, all in-class exams are to be taken without the assistance of books, notes, or other people.

Additional Comments

For any additional concerns, please do not hesitate to ask me. Moreover, my office hours are set up for you, and I encourage you to use them.

Schedule

- Jan 19 Introduction to and overview of the course
Readings: syllabus
- Jan 21 History of Latin America, 1492-today
Kingstone, ch.1 (pp.1-10)
*Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, ch.2 (hand-out)
- Jan 26 continued
- Jan 28 The Cold War, military regimes and leftwing guerrilla movements
MAP QUIZ (first ten mins of class)
*Duncan Green, "Men at Arms", *Faces of Latin America*, 1991, pp.127-41 (ER)
*Latin America Working Group, "We will be known by the company we keep", 2002, at <http://www.lawg.org/docs/lesson.pdf>
*Evan Thomas, "You Can Own the World", in *The Very Best Men*, 1995 (ER)
Recommended readings:
Guillermoprieto (GP), "Lima 1993", pp. 259-286
GP, "Managua 1990", pp. 23-46
- Feb 2 Economic development models: from industrialization to neo-liberalism
Kingstone, chapter 3 (intro, Green, Williamson)
- Feb 4 Democratization and political institutions
Kingstone, chapter 2 (intro, Schmitter and Karl, Pinheiro)
- Feb 9 Difficulties of democratic consolidation I
*Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, 1994, pp.55-69 (ER)
- Feb 11 Difficulties of democratic consolidation II
Kingstone, chapter 4, pp.111-129 (intro, Cruz and Diamint)
- Feb 16 U.S.-Latin America relations
Kingstone, chapter 5 (intro, McSherry)
*Arturo Valenzuela, "Beyond Benign Neglect", *Current History*, Feb 2005, pp.58-63 (BB)
*Michael Shifter and Daniel Joyce, "No Longer Washington's Backyard", *Current History*, Feb 2009, pp.50-57 (BB)

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Feb 18 Poverty: a perspective ‘from below’
*Oscar Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty” (hand-out)
Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina María de Jesus
- Feb 23 Contemporary liberal versus critical perspectives
*De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, 2003, chapters 1 and 3 (hand-out)
*Terry Lynn Karl, “Economic Inequality and Democratic Instability”, *Journal of Democracy*, 2000 (BB)
- Feb 25 New social actors I: women’s movements. Case study of abortion
Kingstone, chapter 4 (Htun), pp.147-155
*Blofield, “Women’s Choices in Comparative Perspective”, *Comparative Politics*, 2008 (BB)
- Mar 2 New social actors II: indigenous movements
Kingstone, chapter 4 (Yashar), pp.155-173
- Mar 4 The turn to the Left
*Ken Roberts, “Repoliticizing Latin America”, Woodrow Wilson Center Update on the Americas, November 2007 (BB)
- Mar 9 New efforts to fight poverty
*Blofield, “Gender Equity Policies”, Center for Hemispheric Policy Social Development Taskforce Policy Paper, 2010 (BB)
- Mar 11 **Midterm exam**
- Spring break**
- Case studies**
- Mar 23 Mexico: The PRI, corporatism and NAFTA
Kingstone, chapter 11, intro
GP, “Mexico City 1990”, pp.47-67
*Lori Saldana, “Tijuana’s Toxic Waters”, *Nacla*, Nov 1999 (BB)
- Mar 25 Democratic politics in Mexico
* Andrew Selee, “Back from the Brink in Mexico”, *Current History*, Feb 2008, pp.65-71 (BB)
* Francisco González, 2009, “Mexico's Drug Wars Get Brutal”, *Current History*, Feb 2009, pp.72-76 (BB)
- Mar 30 The Politics of Oil in the Andes
Film: *Trinkets and Beads*

- Apr 1 Bolivia: history
 GP, “La Paz 1992”, pp. 178-207
 *Donna Lee Van Cott, “Party System Development and Indigenous Populations in Latin America: The Bolivian Case”, *Party Politics*, 2000 (ER)
- Apr 6 Bolivia: The indigenous challenge
 *Laura Carlsen, “Why Bolivia Matters”, Americas Program Column, January 7, 2008 (BB)
 *Laura Carlsen, “An Interview with Alvaro García Linera, Vice President of Bolivia”, Americas Policy Program Special Report, Nov 16, 2007 (BB)
- Apr 8 Chile: Democratic development and breakdown
 Kingstone, chapter 8 (intro), pp.324-330
 *Peter Kornbluh, “Chile Declassified”, *Nacla*, 1998 (BB)
 Film: CNN *Cold War* documentary (20 mins)
- Apr 13 Stable democracy amidst enduring inequalities
 Kingstone, chapter 8 (Polumbaum)
 **New York Times*, “Chilean President Rides High as Term Ends”, October 29, 2009 (BB)
- Apr 15 Venezuela: Setting the stage for Chávez
 *Ken Roberts, “Social Correlates of Party System Demise and Populist Resurgence in Venezuela”, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Fall 2003 (BB)
- Apr 20 Venezuela: The Chávez era
 *Guillermoprieto, “Don’t Cry for Me, Venezuela”, *The New York Review of Books*, October 6, 2005 (BB)
 *Javier Corrales, 2009, “For Chávez, Still More Discontent”, *Current History*, Feb 2009, pp.77-82 (BB)
- Apr 22 Colombia: Background
 *Kingstone, chapter 9 (intro), 384-390
 GP: “Medellín, 1991”, pp.92-118
- Apr 27 Colombia: Current politics
 Guest Speaker: Dr. Bruce Bagley
 *Michael Bustamante and Sebastian Chaskel, “Colombia’s Precarious Progress”, *Current History*, Feb 2008, pp. 77-84 (BB)
- Apr 29 Exam review

FINAL EXAM Wed May 5, 11-1 pm

Appendix Reading Sets and Questions

SET 1

Jan 21 & 26

History

Skidmore and Smith, ch. 2: What were the political characteristics of each of the five phases?

Kingstone, ch.1: What are some of the recent achievements of Latin American countries?

SET 2

Jan 28

The Cold War, military regimes and leftwing guerrilla movements

Duncan Green: What is the National Security Doctrine?

Latin America Working Group: What mistakes did the US make in Latin America, according to the article?

Evan Thomas: In what ways was the UFC involved in the US government, and in what ways was the CIA involved in Guatemala?

SET 3

Feb 2

Economic development models: from industrialization to neo-liberalism

Kingstone, chapter 3

Intro: What impact did the 1973 oil shock have on Latin America?

Green: What political and economic problems did ISI run into?

Williamson: What are the characteristics of the Washington Consensus, in brief?

Feb 4

Democratization and political institutions

Kingstone, chapter 2

Intro: What are some of the factors that hinder democratic consolidation?

Schmitter and Karl: What characteristics are NOT part of democracy?

Pinheiro: What is a democracy without citizenship, and what perpetuates it?

SET 4

- Feb 9 Difficulties of democratic consolidation
Guillermo O'Donnell: What is horizontal and what is vertical accountability? Which is lacking in many Latin American countries?
- Feb 11 Kingstone, chapter 4, Intro: How has the influence of labor unions changed in the last two decades?
Cruz and Diamint: What are the characteristics of the New Military Autonomy?

SET 5

- Feb.16 U.S.-Latin America relations
Kingstone, chapter 5
Intro: What economic policies has the U.S. supported over the last twenty years?
McSherry: What is McSherry's central argument?
Valenzuela: What does the author mean by "beyond benign neglect" and "Washington's heavy hand"?
Shifter and Joyce: a) How has Brazil emerged as a regional leader?
b) What are Cuba's current relations with the region, and how do the authors think the United State should proceed?

SET 6

- Feb.18 Poverty: a perspective 'from below'
Oscar Lewis: What is the 'culture of poverty'?
Child of the Dark: What does Carolina think about the state?

SET 7

- Feb.23 Contemporary liberal versus critical perspectives
De Soto, chapters 1 and 3: What are the barriers to development in Latin America?
Terry Lynn Karl: In what ways does inequality hinder democratic consolidation?
- Feb.25 New social actors I: women's movements. Case study of abortion
Kingstone, chapter 4
Htun: What legal changes have benefited women, and why have they also been inadequate in promoting equal rights in full?
Blofield: what are the effects of restrictive abortion policy in Latin America, and what are the causes?

SET 8

New social actors II: indigenous movements

Mar 2 Kingstone, chapter 4
Yashar: What is the “emerging agenda” of indigenous peoples, and why are they mobilizing more now than before?

Mar 4 The turn to the Left

Roberts: How does Roberts define populism? What different types of Leftist governments do we see in Latin America today?

Mar 9 New efforts to fight poverty

Blofield: What are conditional cash transfer programs, and what are their achievements and limits?

SET 9

Mexico: The PRI, corporatism and NAFTA

Mar 23 Kingstone, chapter 11, intro: How did the PRI seek to “contain social conflict in itself”?

Guillermoprieto (GP): What is the role of the state in the garbage pickers’ lives?

Lori Saldana: What are the environmental effects of Maquiladoras in Tijuana?

Democratic politics in Mexico

Mar 25 Selee: What are Calderón’s achievements?

González: What problems has Calderón’s ‘War on Drugs’ faced?

SET 10

Mar 30 *Trinkets and Beads*: What has happened to the Huaorani in Ecuador?

Bolivia: history

Apr 1 Guillermoprieto: Who are the coca growers and what are the politics surrounding it?

Van Cott (2000): How were the indigenous excluded from politics until the late 20th century?

Apr 6 Bolivia: The indigenous challenge

Carlsen (Why Bolivia Matters) What has the Morales government sought to do?

Carlsen (Interview): What does Vice President García say about the ‘privileged sectors’?

SET 11

- Apr 8 Chile: Democratic development and breakdown
Kingstone, chapter 8, intro: What domestic factors contributed to the breakdown of democracy?
Peter Kornbluh: Through which mechanisms was the U.S. involved?
- Apr 13 Stable democracy amidst enduring inequalities
Kingstone, chapter 8
Polunbaum: What fosters self-censorship in Chile?
New York Times: What are Bachelet's economic and social achievements

SET 12

- Apr 15 Venezuela: Setting the stage for Chávez
Roberts: What economic and political factors contributed to the collapse of Venezuela's two-party system?
- Apr 20 Venezuela: The Chávez era
Guillermoprieto: How does Chávez deal with the media?
Corrales: What mistakes has the opposition made, and how is it overcoming them?

SET 13

- Apr 22 Colombia
Guillermoprieto: What are the different sources of violence in Colombian society?
Kingstone, chapter 9
Intro: What factors led to the rise of guerrilla movements, and what factors continue to fuel them?
- Apr 27 Colombia II
Bustamante Chaskel: What are the problems with the paramilitary demobilization process?