Political Science 305Y: Latin American Politics and Societies  
Spring 2014

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Office: TBD  
Office hours: TBD  
(And by appointment)

Overview  
This historical survey seeks to provide students with the context necessary to understand developments in contemporary Latin American politics. The class develops thematically and chronologically, exposing students to a range of issues and debates from North American and Latin American academic and activist circles. Substantive issues will include the changing face of state sovereignty, human rights and social movements, the legacies of (neo)colonialism, neoliberalism, and ‘21st century socialism.’

The political landscape in Latin American remains as varied and fluid as ever. Regimes like those in Mexico, Colombia, and Honduras are pursuing pro-market policies, strong-armed responses to internal divisions and close political ties with the United States. These policies, as many observers have noted, are by and large extensions of previous policies, even though politicians in these countries often assert the contrary. Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador have on the other hand announced the development of ‘21st century Socialism,’ citing the statecraft of Cuba’s Fidel Castro and anti-imperialism of Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara as their guides. While such dramatic assertions have no doubt inspired many people throughout the region and the world, the project’s lack of clarity and the persistence of inherited problems – such as corruption and vicious inequality – threaten these societies’ ability to make good on their promises. Somewhere between the extremes of capitalism and anti-capitalism, Brazil and Argentina are developing social-democratic models that try to please international investors as well as increasingly contentious constituencies with varying degrees of success. Plans for regional economic, cultural and political integration are gathering momentum just as powerful local interests seek autonomy from their home states. Finally, prominent strains in Latin American critical theory are questioning if ‘Latin America’ can be said to exist all.

Course Requirements  
Attendance and active participation at class meetings is expected. Students will be expected to have completed assigned readings for every meeting prior to said meeting. More importantly, students should prepare questions, comments, interventions, and provocations on the day’s themes for use in small group and at-large discussions.
Assessment in this course will be determined by your performance on the following:

- In-Class Map Quiz 15%
- Midterm Examination 30%
- Final Examination 40%
- Pop Quizzes 10%
- Participation 5%

**A Note on Decorum, Etiquette, and Ethics**

As an instructor, I want nothing more than to encourage lively debate charged by principled and studied disagreement. These sorts of conflictual encounters are where we often find ourselves learning the most. It is imperative that the classroom and lecture hall are safe spaces where everyone feels comfortable and inspired to participate. I have a strict zero tolerance policy for discriminatory behaviour of any sort. Derogatory comments aimed at one’s gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability are as repugnant as they are unhelpful and have no place in the classroom.

Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before handing them in to the instructor. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned and the grades posted to ROSI.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto, [http://writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources](http://writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources).

**Primary Texts:**


All other texts will be available online.

**Part One: Appraising the Present Conjuncture**

**Jan 6: Introduction to the course and themes**

**Jan 8: Political Makeup of the region: States, figures, institutions**

Jan 13: Key Concepts and Critiques in the Study of Latin America

(I) Democracy & Citizenship

***Map Quiz During the first 20 minutes of Class
(note: this will be the only opportunity to take this quiz)***


Jan 15: Key Concepts and Critiques in the Study of Latin America

(II) Inequality, Violence, Development


Accessible at:

http://americasquarterly.org/node/1753

Jan 20: Neoliberalism as Restoration


Jan 22: Post-Neoliberalism as Transition


Benjamin Arditi (2008) “Arguments about the Left Turns in Latin America: A
Jan 27: Case Study – Chile and the Enduring Legacy of ‘el modelo’


Jan 29 – Case Study – Bolivia, Indigeneity, & “Andean-Amazonian Capitalism”


Feb 3 – Case Study – Brazil: Inequality and Development in the Region’s Superpower


Accessible at: http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324021104578553491848777544


Accessible at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/20/brazil-state-failure-world-cup

Feb 5 – Latin America and the New Canadian Imperialism

Guest Lecture: Tyler Shipley (York University)

Ronn Pineo (2013) “Latin America’s Backyard” Council on Hemispheric Relations report,

Accessible at:
http://www.coha.org/latin-americas-backyard


Feb 10 – Case Study – Venezuela and 21st Century Socialism


Donald Kingsbury (2013) “Solo el Pueblo Salva el Pueblo” *Viewpoint Magazine*

Accessible at:

Feb 12 – In class midterm exam

***Reading Week***
Part II: Latin America in Historical Perspective

Feb 24: From Reconquista to ‘Discovery’: Genocide, Colonization, and Extraction


Suggested:

John C. Chasteen Born in Blood and Fire Intro, Ch 1

Feb 26: Colonial Life and Postcolonial Blues

Chasteen, Ch. 2-3


Mar 5: Syncretism and Patterned Inequality

In class screening of The Devil’s Miner (Kief Davidson & Richard Ladkani, 2005)

Mar 10: Early 20th Century: Immigration and Development

Guest Lecture by Ben Bryce, (Latin American Studies, U of T)


Juan Bautista Alberdi, “Immigration as a Means of Progress.”

Search YouTube for “Viaje en el tiempo - Buenos Aires 1930”
Mar 12: Populism, Development, Urbanization

Chasteen Ch. 7


Mar 17: Revolution in the Air

Chasteen, Ch. 8

Intro, Part V, Epilogue

Suggested/Outside screening of *La Hora de los Hornos* (Octavio Getino & Fernando Solanas, 1968)

Mar 19: Authoritarian Retrenchment

Chasteen, Ch. 9


In class screening of: *La Batalla de Chile* (Patricio Guzmán, 1975)

Mar 24: ’Democratization’ and the Uneven Present


Christopher Krupa (2013) “Neoliberal Reckoning: Ecuador’s Truth Commission and the Mythopoetics of Political Violence” in *Neoliberalism, Interrupted*

Mar 26: Environmental Dilemmas and the Response of Social Movements


Mar 31: Immigration and Transnationalism


John Ross (2010) “Cartels United: Drug Cartels Win Mexico’s Super Sunday Elections” *Counterpunch*

Apr 2: Class Wrap-up and Review: Hopes and Impediments for the Future


Final exam to be held during exam week. Date, Time, and Location TBD.