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

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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 at 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: 10%
- Midterm Examination: 30%
- Final Examination: 40%
- Pop Quizzes: 20%

Late or ‘Make Up’ arrangements for the Midterm and Map Quiz will be considered only in the most pressing of circumstances. Pop Quizzes cannot be made up or taken late.

**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).

Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at [http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell](http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell). Students looking to build on their language strengths might also consider other opportunities, such as:

- the Communication Cafe, which meets weekly at four different times and locations for the first five weeks of each term for practice with oral skills like class discussion and presentations
- Reading eWriting, an online program that helps students engage course readings more effectively. You can also find further instructional advice files for students and for classroom instruction on this site.

For more information, please contact me either via email or directly, or feel free to contact the ELL Coordinator Leora Freedman at leora.freedman@utoronto.ca
Primary Texts:


All other texts will be available online.

Current Events and Further Reading

Coverage of Latin American Political, Economic, and Social happenings in the US and Canada are often poor at best, and usually absent from the news cycle entirely. I encourage students to do their best to keep abreast of regional happenings by following local newspapers, language skills permitting, or by periodically checking in with the work of think tanks, development agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations, and scholarly associations. For example:

Links including everything from online newspapers to government ministries is The Latin America Network Information Center. [http://lanic.utexas.edu](http://lanic.utexas.edu)

The Washington Office on Latin America is a policy lobbying organization focusing on issues of human rights, security and justice. [http://www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org)

NACLA Report offers analysis of Latin American conditions from a critical perspective. [http://www.nacla.org](http://www.nacla.org)

Good analysis on regional trends in crime and public insecurity. [http://www.insightcrime.org](http://www.insightcrime.org)

Resource for political movements and activism in Latin America, from the perspective of movement participants. [http://upsidedownworld.org](http://upsidedownworld.org)

Inter-American Dialogue (analysis of political and economic trends) [http://thedialogue.org](http://thedialogue.org)

The United States Institute of Peace (conflict resolution, includes database of peace accord documents) [http://www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

Also offering excellent analysis of regional trends is the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, FOCAL. [http://www.focal.ca](http://www.focal.ca)

Among Latin American based research centers, for wide-ranging and timely scholarship see FLACSO (with sites in several LA countries) [http://www.flacso.org](http://www.flacso.org)
Schedule of Readings and Meetings

Part One: Appraising the Present Conjuncture

8 September – Introduction to the course and themes

10 September – Political Makeup of the region: States, Institutions, and Issues


15 September – Key Concepts and Critiques in the Study of Latin America

(I) Democracy & Citizenship


Selected Further Reading:


17 September – Key Concepts and Critiques in the Study of Latin America

(II) Inequality and Development in Economic and Social Registers


Selected Further Reading


22 September – Neoliberalism as Restoration

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


Selected Further Reading:

Kenneth Roberts (1996) “Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in...


**24 September – Latin America and the New Canadian Imperialism**


**26 September – ‘Uncaring Canada?’ Symposium**

**29 September – Post-Neoliberalism as Transition**

Goodale & Postero (2013) “Revolution and Retrenchment: Illuminating the Present in Latin America” in *Neoliberalism, Interrupted*


*Selected Further Reading:*


1 October – Case Study: Chile and the Enduring Legacy of ‘el modelo’


Benjamin Dangl (2014) “Chile’s Student Movement Leads the Way” www.counterpunch.com

Selected Further Reading:


5 October – First Round of Brazilian General Elections

6 October – Case Study: Brazil: Inequality and Development in the Region’s Superpower


Selected Further Reading/Viewing:

Film: José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda (2002) Bus 174

***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange an extracurricular screening for this film.


**8 October – Bolivia, Indigeneity, & “Andean-Amazonian Capitalism”**


*Selected Further Reading/Viewing:*

Film: Alejandro Landes (2007) *Cocalero*

Film: Rachel Boynton (2005) *Our Brand is Crisis*

***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange extracurricular screenings for these films.***


**13 October – No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday**

**15 October – Case Study: Venezuela and 21st Century Socialism**


Donald Kingsbury (2014) “Venezuela: The Revolution will not be Tweeted” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*  

Selected Further Reading/Viewing:

Film: Kim Bartley and Donnacha O’Briain (2003) The Revolution will not be Televised
 ***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange an extracurricular screening for this film.


20 October – In class midterm exam

Part II: Latin America in Historical Perspective

22 October – From Reconquista to ‘Discovery’: Genocide, Colonization, and Extraction


Suggested Additional Reading/Viewing:

Film: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (1976) La Ultima Cena (The Last Supper)
 ***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange an extracurricular screening for this film.

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

27 October – Colonial Life and Postcolonial Blues

Chasteen, Ch. 2-3


29 October – ‘The Idea of Latin America’: Race, Class, and the Roots of a New Identity in the 19th Century


*Selected Further Reading:*


3 November – Syncretism and Patterned Inequality

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

5 November – Populism, Development, Urbanization

Chasteen Ch. 7


Selected Further Reading:


10 November – Revolution in the Air

Chasteen, Ch. 8

Intro, Part V, Epilogue

Selected Further Reading/Viewing:

Film: Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas (1968) La Hora de los Hornos: Notas y Testimonios sobre el neocolonialismo, la violencia, y la liberación (The Hour of the Furnaces: Notes and Testimonies on neocolonialism, violence, and liberation)

***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange an extracurricular screening for this film.


12 Nov: Authoritarian Retrenchment

Chasteen, Ch. 9


Selected Further Reading/Viewing:

Patricio Guzmán (1975) La Batalla de Chile (The Battle of Chile)

***Please note: if there is sufficient interest, we can arrange an extracurricular screening for this film.

**17 November: Fall break, no class**

**19 November – ‘Democratization’ and the Uneven Present**


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

*Selected Further Reading:*


**24 November – Environmental Dilemmas and the Response of Social Movements**


*Selected Further Reading:*


26 November – Insecurity and Transnational ‘Uncivil Society’


Selected Further Reading/Viewing:

Film: Cary Fukunaga (2009) Sin Nombre
**Depending on our progress, we may screen this film in class. Otherwise, if there is sufficient interest we can organize an extracurricular screening.


1 December – Class Wrap-up and Review: Hopes and Impediments for the Future


3 December – Make up class period (at instructor’s discretion)

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