

Latin American Politics and Societies

POL 305Y

**161 University College
Tuesdays 4-6**

**University of Toronto
2019-2020**

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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.'

Learning Objectives

The specific learning objectives of this course will be:

1. To read, understand, and compare a number of interdisciplinary approaches to Latin American politics;
2. To develop a critical appreciation of recent trends in Latin America, as well as their historical roots;
3. To introduce students to contemporary and canonical social theory concepts specific to Latin American politics;
4. To improve and refine writing skills through the composition of response papers;

Course Requirements

Students are expected to have finished the day's assigned readings before lecture, and are encouraged to bring questions and concerns to class. **Lectures will compliment but not necessarily replicate assigned or summarize readings.** I am, however, always willing to answer questions on specific readings or concepts in class or office hours – in fact, I encourage it. Our aim is to develop not only a critical repertoire on the key debates surrounding Latin American Politics, but to also hone our own abilities as writers, colleagues, and global citizens.

Assessment in this course will be determined by your performance on the following:

Assignment	Value	Due Date
Map Quiz	10%	24 September
Response Paper I	15%	8 October
Response Paper II	15%	24 March
Film Response	10%	28 January
Midterm Paper	15%	4 December
Final Exam	35%	TBD

Map Quiz – Students will be provided with a blank political map and will be required to properly identify countries and capital cities of the region we are studying this semester.

Response Papers – Twice during the semester you will be asked to write one-page (500 words, single spaced) responses to your choice of 2 prompts. The aim in this sort of writing is to present an argument as clearly and concisely as possible, but without sacrificing evidence to support your claim. You should avoid elaborate introductions and conclusions. A successful paper will start with a direct thesis statement and then progress to the paper's argument, concluding with a restatement of the thesis.

Please note, it is nearly impossible to write a response paper without a significant amount of prewriting and revision. There will be many potential arguments to each prompt. Your task is to find the best argument you can make and to make care that your prose is the servant of your ideas – not vice versa. Response papers will be due via Quercus *before* the start of the following classes:

Midterm Exam – The midterm will be held in class and will be comprised of identification and short answer questions.

Final Exam – The comprehensive final exam will also be comprised of identification and short answer questions. A study guide will be posted on the last day of lecture. be held during the December 2018 exam period.

All late work will have its assessment reduced by 5% for each day past the deadline, effectively immediately.

Paperless Classroom

All assignments for this course are to be submitted via Quercus. I will not be printing the syllabus.

Grading Rubric:

A: Excellent work, with clear, challenging, original ideas supported by sufficient, appropriate, logically interpreted evidence. The essay should engage the reader in the inquiry, convincingly answer opposing views, be well organized, and free of significant flaws. An ‘A’ paper should be not just good but outstanding in ideas and presentation.

B: Good to very good work, with a clear thesis supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence, organized and interpreted logically. The ‘B’ paper may have some outstanding qualities but be marked by significant flaws which keep it from being an ‘A’; or it may be all-around good work, free of major problems but lacking the deeper insight necessary for excellence.

C: Satisfactory work, but not yet good. The ‘C’ paper meets the basic requirements of a thesis supported by interpretation of specific evidence, but it needs work in thinking and/or presentation. There may be a lack of clarity, the evidence may not always be sufficient and appropriate, or the interpretation may have logical flaws. The essay may have organizational or mechanical problems that keep it from being good. The ‘C’ paper may be good in some respects but poor in others, or it may simply be adequate but not noteworthy overall.

D: Barely passing work that shows effort but is so marred by serious problems that it cannot be considered a satisfactory paper. Papers without a readily identifiable thesis are liable to be graded ‘D’.

No Pass: Failing work—for example, a hasty, sloppy paper that shows little or no thought, effort, or familiarity with the text.

Please Note: Poor mechanics detract from your grades, but good mechanics by themselves do not make a good paper. Sloppy grammar, punctuation, and spelling tax the goodwill of your reader, which all effective writing is careful to respect. These problems won’t be overlooked, since they affect the communication of thought— but thoughtful work is the most important.

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>.

Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at <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

Email Policy

For the purposes of this course, the primary use of email will be to share information such as announcements of events of note or news stories relevant to the course material and to schedule meetings for more individualized questions. Email is a poor medium for discussing or clarifying substantive matters that come up in lectures or reading. Face to face interactions are much better for this sort of work. Please ask these sorts of questions in class or during office hours.

I do my best to respond in a timely fashion (usually within 48 hours) to all student emails. Please do not expect an immediate response, especially on evenings and weekends. Please be sure than any questions you have are not already answered in the syllabus. I will neither respond to nor acknowledge questions that can be answered in the syllabus.

Primary Texts:

Daniel C. Hellinger. *Comparative Politics of Latin America: Democracy at Last?*
(New York: Routledge, 2015)

John C. Chasteen *Born in Blood and Fire* (New York: WW Norton, 2006)

All other texts will be available on Quercus or through the students' own ingenuity.

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>

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

NACLA Report offers analysis of Latin American conditions from a critical perspective. <http://www.nacla.org>

Good analysis on regional trends in crime and public insecurity. <http://www.insightcrime.org>

Resource for political movements and activism in Latin America, from the perspective of movement participants. <http://upsidedownworld.org>

Inter-American Dialogue (analysis of political and economic trends) <http://thediologue.org>

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

Also offering excellent analysis of regional trends is the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, FOCAL. <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>

Schedule of Readings and Meetings

**Please Note: Readings may be added and/or adjusted
according to pressing events**

10 September – Introduction to the course and themes

Part One: Basics and Political ‘Tour’ of Latin America and the Caribbean

**17 September – Conceptions of Democracy & Citizenship
(Regional Introduction: Mexico and Central America)**

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Introduction” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*.

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 1” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*.

Supplemental Background:

United Nations Development Program (2016) *Multidimensional Progress:
Well-Being Beyond Income (Executive Summary)*

http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/library/human_development/informe-regional-sobre-desarrollo-humano-para-america-latina-y-e/

**24 September – Geopolitics and Dependent Development
(Regional Introduction: Caribbean)**

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 6” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Sarah A. Radcliffe (2004) “Civil Society, Grassroots Politics, and Livelihoods” in *Latin America Transformed: Globalization and Modernity (2nd ed)*. Robert N. Gwynne and Cristóbal Kay, eds. (New York: Hodder Arnold): 193-207.

**1 October – The State, Presidential Systems, and Social Movements
(Regional Introduction: The Andes)**

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 13” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 12” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 11” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Listen:

WOLA Podcast (2019) ‘The System’ versus Guatemalan Democracy

<https://www.wola.org/analysis/the-system-versus-guatemalan-democracy/>

**8 October – Inequality and Exclusion in Economic and Social Registers
(Regional Introduction: The Southern Cone)**

Leonardo Gasparini and Guillermo Cruces (2013) “Poverty and Inequality in Latin America: A Story of Two Decades,” *Journal of International Affairs* 66(2): 51-63.

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 2” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

**15 October – Human Rights, Corruption, and the Rule of Law
(Regional Focus: Southern Cone)**

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 14” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Luke Harding (2016) “What are the Panama Papers: A Guide to History’s Biggest Data Leak” *The Guardian (UK)*

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/03/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-panama-papers>

Listen:

NACLA Podcast: Odebrecht’s Original Sins

<https://nacla.org/news/2018/02/16/odebrecht%27s-original-sins-podcast>

22 October – Neoliberalism and After

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 15” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

John C Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 11” in *Born and Blood and Fire*

Michael Walton (2004) “Neoliberalism in Latin America: Good, Bad, or Incomplete?” *Latin American Research Review* 39(3): 165-183.

Part Two: Contemporary Case Studies

29 October – Ecuador: From Progressive to Traditional Extractivism

Donald Kingsbury, Teresa Kramarz, and Kyle Jacques (2019) “Populism or Petrostate?: The Afterlives of Ecuador’s Yasuní-ITT Initiative” *Society and Natural Resources* 32(5): 530-547.

Sarah Radcliffe (2012) “Development for a Postneoliberal Era? *Sumak Kawsay*, Living Well, and the Limits to Decolonization in Ecuador” *Geoforum* 43: 240-249.

Charles Ripley (2019) From Rafael Correa to Lenín Moreno: Ecuador's Swing to the Right. *COHA Blog*
<http://www.coha.org/from-rafael-correa-to-lenin-moreno-ecuadors-swing-to-the-right/>

4-8 November Reading Week

12 November-- Bolivia, Indigeneity, & "Andean-Amazonian Capitalism"

Linda Farthing and Benjamin Kohl (2014) *Evo's Bolivia: Continuity and Change*. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press), Ch. 2.

Nicole Fabricant and Nancy Postero (2015) "Sacrificing Undigenous Bodies and Lands: The Political-Economic History of Lowland Bolivia in Light of the Recent TIPNIS Debate. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. 20(3): 452-474.

Supplemental:

Aldo Orellana López (2015) "Bolivia, 15 years on from the Water War"
<https://democracyctr.org/article/bolivia-15-years-on-from-the-water-war/>

Jeffery Webber (2009) "From Naked Barbarism to Barbarism with Benefits: Neoliberal Capitalism, Natural Gas Policy, and the Evo Morales Government in Bolivia" in *Post-Neoliberalism in the Americas*, Laura MacDonald and Arne Ruckert, eds. (London: Palgrave): 105-119.

19 November -- Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution

Gregory Wilpert (2007) *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power* (New York: Verso) pp. 1-29.

Julia Buxton (2016) "Venezuela After Chávez" *New Left Review* 99: 5-25.

Listen:

Behind the News (2018) Alejandro Velasco on Venezuela
<http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Radio.html#S180503>

**part 1 of the program, though many of you will also be interested in part 2's discussion of race and the origins of Political Science as a discipline.

26 November – Honduras and the 'New Canadian Imperialism'

Tyler Shipley (2013) "The New Canadian Imperialism and the Military Coup in Honduras." *Latin American Perspectives* 40: 44-61.

Council on Hemispheric Affairs (2014) “Canadian Mining in Latin America: Exploitation, Inconsistency, and Neglect COHA Special Report
<http://www.coha.org/canadian-mining-in-latin-america-exploitation-inconsistency-and-neglect/>

Sabrina Escalera-Flexhaug (2014) “Canada’s Controversial Engagement in Honduras” COHA Special Report
<http://www.coha.org/canadas-controversial-engagement-in-honduras/>

Listen

Latino Media Collective (2019): Canada’s Role in Venezuela Crisis
<https://latinomediacollecive.com/2019/05/03/may-3rd-2019-canadas-role-in-venezuela-crisis/>

3 December -- China: A Multipolar Future, or More of the Same?

Jörn Dosch and David Goodman (2012) “China and Latin America: Complementarity, Competition, and Globalization” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41(1): 3-19.

Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente (2012) “The Political Economy of Sino-Peruvian Relations: A New Dependency?” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41(1): 97-131.

Raul Zibechi (2015) “China Stakes its Claim in Latin America”
<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/international-archives-60/5247-china-stakes-its-claim-in-latin-america>

Shannon Tiezzi (2015) “China is Watching as US Seeks to Smooth Ties with Latin America”
<http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/china-is-watching-as-us-seeks-to-smooth-ties-with-latin-america/>

Part Three: Latin America in Historical Perspective

7 January – From *Reconquista* to ‘Discovery’: Genocide, Colonization, and Extraction

John Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 2” in *Born in Blood and Fire*

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 3” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*.

William M. Denevan (1992) “The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas

in 1492” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82(3): 369-385.

Supplemental Viewing:

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.

14 January – Syncretism and Creation

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

Walter Mignolo (2005) *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell) ch 1.

21 January – Colonial Life and Postcolonial Blues

John Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 3” in *Born in Blood and Fire*

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 4” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*.

28 January – The Mexican Revolution

Nora Hamilton (2011) “Independence and Early Republic” and “The Revolution: 1910-1940” in *Mexico: Political, Social, and Economic Evolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Adolfo Gilly (2005) “Zapatism” and “The Morelos Commune” in *The Mexican Revolution*. New York: The New Press.

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 9” ***especially pps. 253-267 in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

4 February – Peronismo, Populism, and the ‘Ideology of Development’

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 5” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Karin Grammatico (2010) “Populist Continuities in ‘Revolutionary’ Peronism?: A Comparative Analysis of the Gender Discourses of the First Peronism (1945-1955) and the Montoneros” in *Gender and Populism in Latin America: Passionate Politics* edited by Karen Kampwirth. University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 122-139.

11 February -- Nationalism, Revolution, and Reaction

John Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 7” in *Born in Blood and Fire*

John Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 8” in *Born in Blood and Fire*

John Chasteen (2016) “Chapter 9” in *Born in Blood and Fire*

17-21 February Reading Week

Part IV: Challenges and Hopes

25 February -- Democratization is a Process

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 8” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Daniel Hellinger (2015) “Chapter 9” in *Comparative Politics of Latin America*

Supplemental Viewing:

Pablo Larraín (2012) *No*

3 March -- Women’s Rights are Human Rights

Tamar Diana Wilson (2014) “Violence against Women in Latin America” *Latin American Perspectives* 41(1): 3-18.

Merike Blofield and Christina Ewig (2017) “The Left Turn and Abortion Politics in Latin America” *Social Politics* 24(4): 481-510.

Joan Caivano and Jane Marcus-Delgado (2015) “Behind the Numbers: The Reproductive Rights Debate in Latin America Today” *Americas Quarterly*
<https://www.americasquarterly.org/content/behind-numbers-reproductive-right-debate-latin-america-today>

10 March -- Immigration ‘Crises’ in the Americas

Juan Orodóñez and Hugo Ramírez Arcos (2019) “At the Crossroads of Uncertainty: Venezuelan Migration to Colombia” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 18(2): 158-164.

Nicholas De Genova (2013) “Spectacles of Migrant ‘Illegality’: The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36(7): 1180-1198.

Oliver Milman, Emily Holden, David Agren (2018) The Unseen Driver Behind the Migrant Caravan: Climate Change. *The Guardian (UK)*
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/30/migrant-caravan-causes-climate-change-central-america>

Listen:

WOLA Podcast: What we saw at the Border

<https://www.wola.org/analysis/what-we-saw-at-the-border/>

17 March -- The Climate Crisis in Latin America

United Nations (2019) “World Faces ‘Climate Apartheid’ Risk, 120 more million in poverty” UN News

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1041261>

Miguel A. Altieri and Victor Manuel Toldeo (2011) “The Agroecological Revolution in Latin America: Rescuing Nature, Ensuring Food Sovereignty, and Empowering Peasants” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(3): 587-612.

Sarah Radcliffe (2012) “Development for a Postneoliberal Era?: *Sumak Kawsay*, Living Well, and the Limits to Decolonization in Ecuador” *Geoforum* 43(2): 240-249.

Supplemental:

United Nations Office on Latin America and the Caribbean (2018) *Economics of Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Graphic View*.

https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43889/1/S1800475_en.pdf

24 March -- After the Pink Tide

Alexander Main and Gustavo Cudas (2016) “The End of a Progressive Cycle?” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 48(4): 381-384.

Fernando Coronil (2011) “The Future in Question: History and Utopia in Latin America (1989-2010)” in *Business as Usual: The Roots of the Global Financial Meltdown* Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derlugian, eds. New York: New York University Press, 231-264.

31 March -- Wrap-up

*****Final exam to be held during exam week, date and time TBA*****