

Twenty First Century Latin American Politics

Political Science 360

**140 University College
Tuesday 12-2pm**

**University of Toronto
Fall 2019**

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Course Overview

Following the election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1998, Latin America was characterized as experiencing a “Pink Tide” of left of centre governments. In this left turn, states set out on a post-Neoliberal path, emphasizing economic redistribution and paths of development independent of the so-called ‘Washington Consensus.’ However, despite a high degree of regional solidarity, there remained significant differences across the states of the Pink Tide, and by 2019, the ‘Tide’ has ebbed amid a regional shift to the right and persistent economic difficulties. This advanced undergraduate course introduces students to the cultural politics, themes, and internal differences among Latin American Left governments and Social Movements and their right wing counterparts. Our approach in the course will address themes through pan-regional hopes and challenges in the pursuit of social justice, and case studies – offering students in-depth investigations into individual country cases. Key questions addressed include: the status of the nation-state after globalization and neoliberal structural adjustment; resource extraction and sustainable development; regional integration; social movements, with particular emphasis on women’s, indigenous, and environmental movements; and the role of China in the new Latin America.

Learning Objectives

The specific learning objectives of this course will be:

1. To read, understand, and compare a number of interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary Latin American politics and national development;

2. To develop a critical appreciation of recent trends in Latin America, as well as their historical roots;
3. To introduce students to a range of contemporary social theory concepts and their global and local applications;
4. To improve and refine writing and research skills through the composition of research essays and response papers;

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 readings. 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 researchers, writers, and colleagues.

Paperless Classroom

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

Assessment

Your performance in the course will be measured by the following criteria

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade
Keyword I	24 September	15%
Keyword II	22 October	15%
Question Prep	25 October	10%
Response Paper	12 November	20%
Final Exam	TBD	40%

Keywords – Three times during the semester you will be asked to write a short (no more than two paragraph) entry on a key concept or event from a list provided by the professor (via Quercus). Your entry should define, contextualize, and explain the significance of your keyword in clear and concise language. You will be expected to cite your sources.

Please note, it is nearly impossible to write a strong keyword without a significant amount of prewriting and revision. Space is limited, so make sure you revise and polish your work in order to convey your idea as effectively as possible. Keywords are due via Quercus prior to the beginning of the class on the day they are due. Emailed submissions will only be accepted under extremely extenuated circumstances.

Response Paper – Students will compose a 3-5 page essay in response to a prompt circulated via Quercus. Responses should advance and argument, properly cite their sources, and engage critically and originally with the course's material.

Question Prep -- In advance of our guest speaker on 29 October, students will be divided into groups by the professor and tasked with preparing questions in line with an assigned reading. These questions are to be posted to Quercus no later than 12 noon on 25 October and will be shared with the speaker in advance of the event.

Final Exam – The final exam will be comprised of identification and short answer questions and will be held during the FAS exam period.

LATE WORK: 5% per day

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.

Late Policy: Barring personal injury or family tragedy, late submission of written work is *strongly discouraged*. Marks on any late assignments will be reduced by 5% per day past the due date.

Help with Writing

All undergraduate students taking summer courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science are eligible to use any of the five college writing centres that remain open in the summer: Innis College, New College, University College, Victoria College and Woodsworth College Writing Centres. Students may book up to TWO appointments per week. For information about writing centre appointments in the summer session, visit <http://writing.utoronto.ca/news>. To learn more about how writing centres work, visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/learning>.

More than 60 Advice files on all aspects of academic writing are available from www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice. Printable PDF versions are listed at www.writing.utoronto.ca/about-this-site/pdf-links.

Please also familiarize yourself with the helpful guide "How Not to Plagiarize" and other advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources. These pages are all listed at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.

Accessibility Services

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services as soon as possible. I will work with you and Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The Accessibility Services office is located at 455 Spadina Ave, 4th Floor, Suite 400 (next to the camps bookstore). In addition to drop in-services Accessibility Services staff can be contacted via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca and phone at (416) 978-8060. Additional resources can also be found at: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

Required Texts

Readings will either be made available on Quercus or can be found via links to their original online sources as noted in the syllabus.

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 that 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.

A note on background information and familiarity with the subject matter

Ideally students will arrive prepared with a degree of background in Latin American politics and history. However, readings and lectures are intended to be accessible to newcomers and specialists alike. Advanced knowledge of Latin American history is a much-encouraged plus, but not a prerequisite for enrollment. As always, the best way to get around any problems that might arise due to gaps in the knowledge we come to the course with is to ask questions, to ask them often, and to ask them without fear.

Students less familiar might consider referencing general histories of Latin America such as:

John C. Chasteen (2011) *Born in Blood and Fire* (New York: W.W. Norton)

Tulio Halperin Donghi (1993) *The Contemporary History of Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press)

Eduardo Galeano (1997) *Open Veins of Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press)

Robert Gwynne and Cristobal Kay (1999) *Latin America Transformed* (New York: Routledge)

The professor is also more than happy to point students toward sources according to their own particular interests.

***Análisis de Coyuntura* and the Importance of Outside Sources**

This is a course on contemporary Latin America at a time when ‘facts on the ground’ are rapidly being rewritten. While the primary focus of the course will be the themes and readings for each meeting, we will always allow time at the beginning of class to discuss, debate, and inform each other about current events in the Latin America. The aim of this sort of *análisis de coyuntura* (conjunctural analysis) is to draw our collective attention to the causes and consequences of the moments we are studying beyond the confines of the syllabus.

Latin American affairs are notoriously misrepresented – or ignored – in the North Atlantic Press. I wholeheartedly encourage you to add non-North American sources of

information to your daily news and analysis repertoires. If you are fortunate enough to read languages other than English, all the better! Staying informed is one of our key responsibilities as global citizens.

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>

Please feel free (and encouraged!) to share any other sources of news and analysis you encounter.

Schedule of Readings and Discussion Topics

10 Sept – Intro to Course

17 Sept – The Contemporary Scene

Arturo Escobar (2010) “Latin America at a Crossroads: Alternative Modernizations, Post-Liberalism, or Post-Development?” *Cultural Studies* 24(1): 1-65.

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

Strongly Suggested:

Emir Sader (2011) “The New Mole” in *The New Mole: Paths of the Latin American Left* (New York: Verso). pp. ix-28.

Suggested and Supplemental:

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 Crisis*. Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derluguian, eds. (New York: NYU Press). p.231-265.

Enrique Dussel (2008) *Twenty Theses on Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Jorge Castañeda (2006) “Latin America’s Left Turn” *Foreign Affairs* 85(3): 28-43.

David Harvey (2007) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: University Press).

24 Sept – Neoliberalism and Post-Neoliberalism (I): The Lost Decades and the Pink Tide

Harry E Vanden and Gary Prevost (2017) “The Political Economy of Latin America” in, *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game (Sixth Ed)*. Pp. 157-191, ***with special emphasis on 169-181.

William Robinson (2006) “Promoting Polyarchy in Latin America: The Oxymoron of ‘Market Democracy’” in *Latin America after Neoliberalism* (New York: The New Press): 96-119.

Sara Motta (2013) “‘We are the ones we’ve been waiting for’: The Feminization of Resistance in Venezuela” *Latin American Perspectives* 191(40): 35-54.

Suggested and Supplemental:

Fernando Ignacio Leiva (2008) *Latin American Neostructuralism: The Contradictions of*

Post-Neoliberal Development. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Daniel Ozarow (2014) “When All They Thought was Solid Melted into Air: Resisting Pauperization in Argentina during the 2002 Crisis” *Latin American Research Review* (49)1: 178-202.

1 Oct – Neoliberalism and Post-Neoliberalism (II): From Polyarchy to Popular Democracy...and Back?

Julian Yates and Karen Bakker (2014) “Debating the ‘Post-Neoliberal Turn’ in Latin America.” *Human Geography* 38(1): 62-90.

Barry Cannon (2016) “Understanding the Right in Latin America” and “Coups, Smart Coups, and Elections: Right Power Strategies under Left-led governments” in *The Latin American Right: Elite Power, Hegemony, and the Struggle for the State*. (New York: Routledge).

Debora Loppreite (2015) “Gender Politics in Argentina after Neoliberalism: Opportunities and Obstacles for Women’s Rights” *Latin American Perspectives* 42(1): 64-73.

8 Oct – Climate Change, Extractivism, and Social Movements

Thea Riofrancos (2017) “*Extractivismo* Unearthed: A Genealogy of a Radical Discourse” *Cultural Studies* 31(2-3): 277-306.

Murat Arsel, et al (2016) “The Extractive Imperative in Latin America” *The Extractive Industries and Society* 3(4): 880-887.

Andrea Spikin and Jorge Rojas Hernández (2016) “Climate Change in Latin America: Inequality, Conflict, and Social Movements of Adaptation” *Latin American Perspectives* 43(4): 4-11.

15 Oct - Groups and readings for Speaker Q and A distributed

15 Oct – China and Latin America: New Frontiers or New Dependencies?

Carol Wise (2017) “After the China Boom: What Now for Latin America’s Emerging Economies?” in *The Political Economy of China-Latin America Relations in the New Millennium: Brave New World*. Margaret Myers and Carol Wise, eds. (New York: Routledge): 143-169.

James Cypher and Tamar Diana Wilson (2015) “China and Latin America: Processes and Paradoxes” *Latin American Perspectives* 42(6): 5-26.

Alicia Puyana and Agostina Costantino (2015) “Chinese Land Grabbing in Argentina and Colombia.” *Latin American Perspectives* 42(6): 105-119.

Supplemental and Suggested:

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

Margaret Myers and Carol Wise (2017) *The Political Economy of China-Latin America Relations in the New Millennium: Brave New World*. (New York: Routledge).

22 Oct – Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution

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

Barry Cannon (2014) “As Clear as MUD: Characteristics, Perspectives, and Strategies of the Opposition in Bolivarian Venezuela: *Latin American Politics and Society* 56(4): 49-70.

Donald Kingsbury (2019) “Spectacle, Internationalization, and the Elephant in the Room in Venezuela’s Crisis.” *NACLA Blog* 23 May, 2019
<https://nacla.org/news/2019/05/28/spectacle-internationalization-and-elephant-room-venezuela%E2%80%99s-crisis>

THE DIG PODCAST: *Venezuela*

<https://www.blubrry.com/jacobin/41457768/the-dig-venezuela/>

Suggested and Supplemental

George Ciccariello-Maher (2013) *We Created Chávez: A People’s History of the Venezuelan Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press.

25 Oct -- Groups Post Q and A contributions to Quercus no later than 12 noon.

29 Oct – Escalation and De-Escalation (and Re-Escalation) in Colombia’s Long Civil War

Catherine C LeGrand, Luis van Isschot and Pilar Riaño-Alcalá (2017) “Land, Justice, and Memory: Challenges for Peace in Colombia” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 42(3): 259-276.

***NB: This is an introduction to a special issue of the journal entirely dedicated to the aftermath of the Colombian peace process. Students may be interested in exploring other issues outlined at the end of the article.

Ana María Bejarano (2003) “Protracted Conflict, Multiple Protagonists, and Staggered Negotiations: Colombia, 1982-2002” *Canadian Journal of Latin American Studies*. 28(55-56): pp. 223-247.

Forrest Hylton and Aaron Tauss (2018) “Change and Continuity in Colombian Politics”
NACLA Report on the Americas
<https://nacla.org/news/2018/06/29/change-and-continuity-colombian-politics>

5 Nov – No Class, Reading Week

12 Nov – Response Paper due no later than beginning of class

12 Nov – Nicaragua: *Sandinismo* betrays *Sandinismo*

Daniel Faber (1999) “La Liberación del Medio Ambiente: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Ecology in Nicaragua, 1979-1999” *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 10(1): 45-80.

Roger Burbach (2009) “Et tu, Daniel? The Sandinista Revolution Betrayed” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 42(2): 33-37.

WOLA PODCAST: *Resisting Repression in Nicaragua*
<https://adamisacson.com/wola-podcast-resisting-repression-in-nicaragua/>

Suggested and Supplemental:

Matilde Zimmerman (2000) *Sandinista!: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press.

James Dunkerly (1989) *Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Modern Central America*. New York: Verso.

19 Nov – Brazil after the Workers’ Party

Adam Bledsoe (2019) “Racial Antagonism and the 2018 Brazilian Presidential Election” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 18(2): 165-170.

Wendy Hunter and Timothy Power (2019) “Bolsonaro and Brazil’s Illiberal Backlash” *Journal of Democracy* 30(1): 68-82.

The Intercept’s Brazil Archive, Parts 1-4
<https://theintercept.com/2019/06/09/brazil-archive-operation-car-wash/>

Suggested:

Dan LaBotz (2015) “Brazil: Lula, Rousseff, and the Workers Party Establishment in Power” *New Politics* 15(2): 53-60.

Michael Reid (2014) *Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press)

26 Nov – Keyword 3 due no later than beginning of class

26 Nov – Opening Cuba

Emily Morris (2014) “Unexpected Cuba” *New Left Review* 88: 5-45.

Camila Piñeiro Harnecker (2014) “Nonstate Enterprises in Cuba: Building Socialism?”
Latin American Perspectives 41(4): 113-128.

James Baer (2019) “Cuban Constitution of 2019” *Council on Hemispheric Affairs Blog*
<http://www.coha.org/cuban-constitution-of-2019/>

Suggested and Supplemental:

Thomas Skidmore, Peter Smith, & James Green (2014) “Key Colony, Socialist State” in
Modern Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press).

Antoni Kapcia (2008) *Cuba in Revolution: A History since the Fifties*. London: Reaktion
Books.

3 Dec – Class Wrap Up