

INTL 4380: Latin American Politics

University of Georgia

Fall 2017, MWF 11:15-12:05pm

Instructor:	Micah G. Redman
Email:	mgredman@uga.edu
Office:	Candler 318
Phone:	(706) 542-6354
Office Hours:	Wednesdays, 9am-12pm
Room:	Caldwell 203

Welcome!

Latin America is a vibrant, diverse region whose countries grapple with poverty, inequality, ethnic divisions, and many other sources of conflict. Our course focuses on a fundamental question: Are the political institutions in Latin American countries adequate to respond to these issues? We will explore this question through the lens of core social science concepts including delegation, collective action, and public goods.

How will you be graded?

There will be **6 quizzes** over the semester, **each worth 10%** of your final grade. I will not announce the quiz dates ahead of time. The quizzes will test your factual knowledge and conceptual understanding of the material covered in course readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. You will also complete **4 short writing assignments** over the semester, **each worth 10%** of your final grade. I will distribute instructions for each writing assignment when I announce the due dates. While you will split into groups to complete these assignments, I will evaluate each of you individually. Table 1 shows the grading scale I will use to evaluate your work. There will be no midterm, final, or research paper. It is your responsibility to keep current with the material throughout the semester. **Note: No**

make-up quizzes will be offered. I will drop your lowest quiz score, and count your highest quiz score twice.

Table 1: Grade scale

Grade	Level of quality
10	Uncommonly remarkable
9	Superb
8	Good
7	Adequate
6	Poor
5	Failing

Ground rules

This is an upper division course at a research university. You are responsible for being self-motivated, self-directed, active learners. I expect you to comply with University policy, and to use common sense. For a complete list of the course policies, please see my website.

Goals and teaching philosophy

When this course is finished, you should:

Be descriptively familiar with the political systems of Latin America today

Have some knowledge of the historical roots of those systems in the twentieth century

Be able to explain aspects of those systems in terms of core social science concepts including collective action, delegation, and public goods

As your professor, it is my responsibility to create an environment that fosters your learning. You are responsible for taking advantage of that environment to achieve your goals for the course. If any aspect of the course is impeding your learning, please communicate that to me in whatever way you feel most comfortable.

Plan of the course

Our primary text for the course will be *Democracy in Latin America* by Peter Smith and Cameron Sells. You will be expected to have access to a copy of this book throughout the semester. Readings below marked with an asterisk(*) will be available as electronic reserves (password: latinam). Readings marked with the dagger(†) can be accessed via the UGA library website.

Weeks 1-3: Democracy in Latin America

Aug 14-18: Introduction

Required reading (distributed in class):

Articles on Venezuelan referendum

Aug 21-30: Democracy defined and discussed

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 1)

Przeworski et al. (2000, Chapter 1)*

Dahl (1971, Chapter 1)*

Weeks 4-5: Democratic transitions

Sep 6-15: Democracy and autocracy in Latin America over the twentieth century

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 2)

Weeks 6-11: Institutions

Sep 18-22: Accountability and delegation

Sep 25-29: The impact of institutions

Required Reading:

Przeworski (2004)

Oct 2-13: Executives and stability

Required Reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 5)

Linz (1994)*

Oct 16-25: Party systems and democracy

Required Reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 6)

Week 12-15: State and society

Oct 30-Nov 10: State capacity

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 8)

Nov 13-Dec 1: Social equity

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 9)

References

- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press.
- Linz, Juan. 1994. Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does it make a difference? In *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, ed. Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela. The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2004. "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition* 39(4):527–540.
- Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Yale University Press.
- Smith, Peter and Cameron Sells. 2016. *Democracy in Latin America*. Oxford University Press.