

# INTL 4380: Latin American Politics

University of Georgia

Fall 2018, MWF 11:15-12:05pm

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## 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?

Assignment	Proportion of grade
Midterm exam	25%
End of course exam	25%
Very short paper 1	25%
Very short paper 2	25%

## 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

We will use two text books as our primary sources for the course: *Democracy in Latin America* by Peter Smith and Cameron Sells and *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game* by Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost. You will be expected to have access to a copy of these books throughout the semester. All other readings will either be distributed to you via ELC, or available through UGA course reserves. You will be expected to navigate the course reserves system independently, so please be sure you are familiar with it.

### Weeks 1-4: Democracy in Latin America

#### Aug 13-17: Introduction

Required reading:

“Losing Faith in the State” and “Open Talk of a Military Coup”, both on ELC

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 1) – Introduction to democracy and autocracy in Latin America

Prevost and Vanden (2018, Chapter 3) – Primarily as background

### **Aug 20-Sep 7: Democracy defined and discussed**

Required reading (both available as electronic reserves):

Przeworski et al. (2000, Chapter 1)

Dahl (1971, Chapter 1)

**Very short paper 1, Defining democracy, due Sep 7**

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### **Weeks 5-7: Democratic transitions**

**Sep 10-28: Democracy and autocracy in Latin America over the twentieth century**

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 2) – Core exposition of transitions

Prevost and Vanden (2018, Chapter 8) – An alternative approach, focusing on political culture

Magaloni (2010) – On ELC, more detail on transitions and the case of Mexico

**Midterm, October 1**

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### **Weeks 8-11: Institutions**

**Oct 1-: Executives and stability**

Required Reading:

Prevost and Vanden (2018, Chapter 9) – A general introduction to political actors and institutions in LA

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 5) – Introduction to one of the core institutional questions in LA, presidents vs. parliaments

Linz (1994) – On ELC, more on the pres. vs. parl. debate

## **Oct 16-25: Party systems, autocracy, and democracy**

Required Reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 6)

Magaloni (2006, Introduction) – On ELC, single party systems and the case of Mexico

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## **Week 12-15: State and society**

### **Oct 29-Dec 4: State capacity and social policy**

Required reading:

Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 8)

De La O (2015, Chapter 2)

Fried (2011)

Touchton, Sugiyama and Wampler (2017)

Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2009)

Prevost and Vanden (2018, Chapter 10)

**End of semester exam, Dec 4**

**Very short paper 2, topic TBA, due Dec 12**

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## **References**

- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press.
- De La O, Ana L. 2015. *Crafting Policies to End Poverty in Latin America: The Quiet Transformation*. Cambridge University Press, New Haven.
- Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto and Beatriz Magaloni. 2009. "Aiding Latin America's Poor." *Journal of Democracy* 20(4):36–49.
- Fried, Brian J. 2011. "Distributive Politics and Conditional Cash Transfers: The case of Brazil's Bolsa Família." *World Development* 40(5):1042–53.
- 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.

- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2010. "The Game of Electoral Fraud and the Ousting of Authoritarian Rule." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(3):751–765.
- Prevost, Gary and Harry E Vanden. 2018. *Politics of Latin America: the power game*. Oxford University Press.
- 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.
- Touchton, Michael, Natasha Borges Sugiyama and Brian Wampler. 2017. "Democracy at Work: Moving beyond elections to improve well-being." *American Political Science Review* 111(1):68–82.