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 the principal-agent framework, collective action, and public goods.

How will you be graded?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Proportion of grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of semester exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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I will administer two exams, one at midterm and the other at the end of the semester. The end-of-semester exam will focus on concepts covered in the second
half of the course. Good performance on the exams requires engagement with the all of the course materials, including readings, lectures and class discussion. The exams will be multiple choice. I will offer an optional final exam, which you can use to replace your lowest exam grade. This optional, comprehensive final exam will be administered at the official time and location set by the university. I repeat, the final is optional. If you choose to take the final, I will use the two highest of your three exam grades in computing your final grade. In other words, the final would count for 30% of your grade so long as you score higher than the lowest score you received on the two previous exams.

You will also have a writing assignment. Instructions for this short paper are available on ELI. Throughout the semester, I will take attendance 10 times. Your attendance on each of these occasions is worth one point toward the final grade. Make-up and extension policy: It is your responsibility to attend all scheduled class meetings, including the times when exams are offered. No make up exams will be allowed. No extensions for assignments will be granted.

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 the book 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. The **password to access the readings is**: southamerica.

Module 1: Democracy in Latin America

**August 14-19: 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

**August 21-30: Democracy defined and discussed**

Required reading (both available as electronic reserves):

- *Przeworski et al.* (2000, Chapter 1)
- *Dahl* (1971, Chapter 1)
- *Lijphart* (1999, Chapter 3, Excerpt), on ELC

**September 2-11: No class meetings**

Module 2: Democratic transitions

**Sep 11-28: Democracy and autocracy in Latin America over the twentieth century**

Required reading:

- *Smith and Sells* (2016, Chapter 2) – Core exposition of transitions
- *Magaloni* (2010) – On course reserves, more detail on transitions and the case of Mexico
Short paper, Defining democracy, due September 13
Review, September 25 Midterm, September 27

Module 3: Institutions
Sep 30-Oct 11: Executives and stability
Required Reading:
- Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 5) – Introduction to one of the core institutional questions in LA, presidents vs. parliaments
- Linz (1994) – More on the pres. vs. parl. debate

October 14-25: Party systems, autocracy, and democracy
Required Reading:
- Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 6)
- Magaloni (2006, Introduction) – Single party systems and the case of Mexico

Module 4: State and society
Oct 28-Nov 22: State capacity and social policy
Required reading:
- Smith and Sells (2016, Chapter 8)
- Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2009)
- De La O (2015, Chapter 2)
- Fried (2011)
- Touchton, Sugiyama and Wampler (2017)

Review, Nov 25
End of semester exam, Dec 2
Final exam, Monday, Dec 9, 8-11am
References


