

# INTL 4380: Latin American Politics

University of Georgia

Fall 2019, 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 the principal-agent framework, collective action, and public goods.

## How will you be graded?

Assignment	Proportion of grade
Midterm exam	30%
End of semester exam	30%
Short paper	30%
Attendance	10%

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 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 ELC. 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

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### 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

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### **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

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### **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

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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.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries*. 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Touhton, 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.