

Politics & Society in Latin America

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: ARGN 3003

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: On-site Faculty

Course Description

This course focuses on the history of Latin America from the late 19th Century to the present. It covers both political and economic issues such as the different political structures and development models that have characterized Latin America since its independence. It also focuses on some of the region's countries' political evolution and on the basic traits of Latin America's relation with the United States of America.

Course Objectives

The course aims to provide students with a basic understanding and knowledge of the region and relevant recent political and economic processes such as the transition to democracy, the re-emergence of populism, economic instability, poverty, overpopulation, environmental devastation, and explosive urbanization.

Methodology

Attendance to class is required to pass the course. **The course will be assessed through a final exam (80% of the final grade each) and through class participation (20% of the final grade).** Class participation will be graded in two ways: oral presentations and participations in class discussions. **All students are expected to read the course readings for each session. Course readings, rather than class notes, are the basis for exam questions.**

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	20%
Final exam	25%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Unit 1

Introduction

Required Readings

- Thomas Skidmore, Peter H. Smith and Jame N. Greene: Modern Latin America. Oxford University Press, 2010 (Seventh Edition). Chaps. 1 and 2.

Unit 2

The Authoritarian Tradition & the Third Wave of Democratization

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene, Modern Latin America, Chapter 13.
- Pérez Liñán, Aníbal and Scott Mainwaring, “Cross currents in Latin America,” Journal of Democracy, Vol 26 N1, 2015.
- Steve Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts, “Introduction: Latin America’s left turn. A framework for analysis” en Levitsky S. y K. Roberts (Eds.): The resurgence of Latin America’s Left. John Hopkins University Press, 201.1

Recommended Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene, Modern Latin America, Chapter 13.
- Huntington, Samuel: The Third Wave. Democratization in the late 20th Century. University of Oklahoma Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
- Remmer, Karen: “The Process of Democratization in Latin America.” Studies in Comparative International Development, Winter 1992-93, Vol.27, No. 4, 3-24.

- Weyland, Kurt: “Clarifying a Contested Concept. Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics”. Comparative Politics Vol. 34, N.1. 2001.
- Levitsky, Steve and J. Loxton, “Populism and Competitive Authoritarianism in the Andes”, Democratization Vol. 20 N1, 2013.

Unit 3

Economic & Social Structures

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene, Modern Latin America, Chapter 12.
- Bulmer-Thomas, Victor: The Economic History of Latin America since Independence. Cambridge University Press, 1995, Chapter 1.

Recommended Readings

- Bulmer-Thomas, Victor: The Economic History of Latin America since Independence. Cambridge University Press, 1995, Chapters 9-11.
- Williamson, John: “What Washington means by policy reform,” in Williamson, John (Ed.) Latin American Adjustment. How Much has happened? Peterson Institute of International Economics, 1990.

Unit 4

Cuba

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: Modern Latin America, Chapter 5.

Recommended Readings

- Corrales, Javier: “The Cuban Paradox,” Foreign Policy, January 6, 2014.

Unit 5

Venezuela

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: Modern Latin America, Chapter 8.

Recommended Readings

- Corrales, Javier: "The Repeating Revolution. Chávez New Politics and Old Economics", en Weyland, K; Raúl Madrid y Wendy Hunter (Eds.): *Leftist Governments in Latin America. Successes and Shortcomings*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Molina, José: "The Unraveling of Venezuela's Party System. From Party Rule to Personalistic Politics and Deinstitutionalization", en McCoy Jennifer L.; y David Myers (Eds.): *The Unraveling of Representative Democracy in Venezuela*.

Unit 6

Argentina

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 9.

Unit 7

Mid-Term Exam

Recommended Readings

- Romero, Luis Alberto: *A history of Argentina in the XX Century*. The Pennsylvania University Press, 2002.

Unit 8

Brazil

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 11.

Recommended Readings

- Fishlow, Albert: *Starting over. Brazil since 1985*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Chapters 2 and 3.

Unit 9

Chile

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 10.

Recommended Readings

- Valenzuela, Arturo: "The breakdown of democratic regimes: Chile" in Stepan, Alfred y Juan Linz (Eds.) *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America*. John Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- Remmer, Karen: "State Change in Chile, 1973-1988" in *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Fall 1989. Vol 24, N°3.

Unit 10

Mexico

Required Readings

- Skidmore, Smith and Greene: *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 3.

Recommended Readings

- "The Demise of Mexico's One-Party Dominant Regime" en Mainwaring, Scott, y Frances Hagopian (Eds): *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America. Advances and Setbacks*. Cambridge University Press, NY. 2005.

Unit 11

United States & Latin America

Required Readings

- Atkins, George P. *Latin America in the International Political System*. Westview Press, 1999. Ch. 5.
- Leogrande, W: "A poverty of Imagination: George W. Bush's Policy in Latin America " en *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 2007, Vol. 39 No. 2.
- Pastor, Robert: *Exiting the Whirlpool. U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Latin America*. Second Edition. Chapters 3-6.

Recommended Readings

- Whitehead, L. and D. Nolte "The Obama administration and Latin America: a disappointing first term." *GIGA Focus*, N6, 2012, German Institute of Global and Area Studies.
- Reid, Michael "Obama and Latin America. A promising day in the neighborhood", *Foreign Affairs*, Sept-Oct. 2015.

Unit 12

Revision

Unit 13

Final Exam

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).