Course Description:

This course presents a broad overview of the main questions on Latin American political and economic development in the long run. Why did Latin America fall behind the United States? Why are Latin American societies so unequal? Why has Latin America experienced high political instability, shifting between dictatorship and democracy, and sometimes revolution and armed struggles? What are the main characteristics of Latin American democracies in the present?

The course introduces students to the main theories on democracy and development. Subsequently, it uses these theories to interpret Latin America's political instability and persistent economic inequality going back to the colonial period, all the way to the present. Finally, the course addresses some features of Latin American democracies such as state weakness, clientelism, corruption, amongst others.

Time and Location: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Room: KIMM 808 (Kimmel Center, 60 Washington Square S).

Grader: Rafael J. Ch (rafael.ch@nyu.edu)

Requirements: All students are expected to have completed the relevant readings before the class meeting each week. The course is not taught from a single textbook. Instead, weekly readings will be drawn from one required textbook, and from a collection of articles and book chapters (whenever possible, these readings will be posted on the NYU Classes course site). You should aim to evaluate critically the theoretical argument and the evidence advanced in each reading. Some of the readings contain sections that are a bit technical. You should always try to gain a basic understanding of the main argument presented in the reading rather than focus on the technical details.

I will regularly update the syllabus online, and mark the required readings at least two weeks in advance of each respective lecture. Check the course site in NYU Classes before every lecture, for the most updated version of the syllabus.

The required book is (available at the NYU Book Store):

A very useful source for many of the topics we will cover in the course and for general background is The Cambridge History of Latin America, that you can access online via the NYU Library.

The final grade is based on: two short assignments, a midterm, a final exam, and overall class participation. They will count toward the grade as follows:

Short Assignments: 25% (12.5% each)
  • 1st Assignment (Due March 1st)
  • 2nd Assignment (Due April 26th)

Midterm (Thursday, March 10): 30%
Final (Thursday, May 5): 40%
Participation: 5%

Policies:
- While I encourage Spanish-speaking students to speak to me in Spanish during office hours, please refrain from doing so while inside the classroom since your questions, comments or concerns may be of relevance to other non-Spanish speaking students.
- Students are expected to have completed the required reading before the class.
- Class attendance is strongly encouraged: we will offer cover topics not included in the required readings that you will be expected to know for the exams. In addition I may conduct unannounced short quizzes in some lectures.
- Make sure you read and adhere strictly to the basic principles of Academic Integrity (http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity) as well as the Honor Code (http://cas.nyu.edu/page/honorcode).

Websites on Latin America:

Excellent directory of Latin American newspapers and websites, country by country, by The Guardian:

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/feb/05/world-news-guide-latin-america

Other sources in English:

http://www.economist.com/world/americas
http://caracaschronicles.com
Lecture Schedule and Readings

See course site in *My Classes* for required readings. Required readings will be announced at least two weeks in advance of each lecture.

A. Introduction

Introduction (January 26)

Broad Economic Trajectories (January 28)


Broad Political Trajectories (February 2)


B. Theoretical Approaches to Latin American Politics

Institutional Approach (February 4)


Dependency and Modernization (February 9)


Cardoso, Fernando H. and Enzo Faletto (1979), Dependency and Development in Latin America, University of California Press:


C. Colonial Legacies and the Emergence of the State

Colonial Legacies: Origins of Institutions, and Inequality (February 11 and 16)

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson (2012), Why Nations Fail, Crown Publishers: New York, Chap. 1


**Emerging Markets and States: Elite democracy (February 18 and 23)**


**D. Political Instability in the 20th Century: Social Conflict, Repression, and Democracy**

**Theories on Democracy and Dictatorship (February 25 and March 1)**


The rise of populism and incorporation of the masses (March 3 and 8)


Collier, Ruth Berins and David Collier (2002), Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America, Notre Dame University Press.


Bushnell, David (1993), The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself, University of California Press, Chap. 8-9


Midterm Exam: March 10

Spring Break (No Classes): March 15 and 17
**Insurgency and Revolutions (March 22 and 24)**


Leon, Juanita (2008), *Country of Bullets: Chronicles of War*, University of New Mexico Press.

**Breakdown of Democracy and Rise of Authoritarianism (March 29 and 31)**


**Democratization (April 5 and 7)**


**E. The Quality of Democracy in Latin America: Topics**

**Macroeconomic Crisis and Economic Reforms (April 12)**


**Dysfunctional and Weak States (April 14)**


Soifer, Hillel (2013), Authority Over Distance: Institutions And Long-Run Variation In State Development In Latin America, Unpublished Book Manuscript.


Robinson, James (2013), "Colombia: Another 100 Years of Solitude?", Current History, February.


**Political Institutions: Presidentialism, Parties and Checks and Balances (April 19)**


**The Rise of Left Wing Parties in Latin America (April 21)**


**Clientelism and Vote-Buying (April 26)**


Political Resource Curse (April 28)


Current Affairs and Other Topics (May 3)

Final Exam (May 5)