

Politics of Latin America
Political Science 333
Latin American Studies 333
Fall 2023
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University

Professor Matthew Cleary

macleary@syr.edu

Office: 539 Eggers, 443-4288

Drop-in Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 – 12:30, or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 – 4:50pm, Hall of Languages 114

Course Website: use <https://blackboard.syr.edu/>

Course Objectives

This course has two main goals. The first is to introduce students to several themes that are most relevant to Latin American politics today, including the nature of the state, democratization and threats to democracy, the politics of economic development and reform, the formation and politicization of ethnic identities, and several more. The second goal is to teach students how social scientists use theoretical ideas and methodological tools to analyze, explain, and understand the contemporary Latin American experience. This requires careful study of the political and historical experiences of specific Latin American countries, and an ability to compare outcomes across countries to identify patterns, trends, and exceptions. We will learn about all of the major Latin American republics, and students will have options to focus their written work on particular countries of interest.

Attendance, Assignments, and Grading

All students are expected to do the following, on a regular basis and throughout the semester:

- Complete assigned reading before the class session for which it is listed.
- Attend class. Bring your copy of the readings (paper preferred, electronic if needed).
- Participate in class discussions.
- Turn in all written work on time.

You should aspire to attend every class session. Excessive absences will negatively affect your grade directly (through poor scores for class participation) and indirectly (through decreased exposure to course material and discussions). Please be aware that I may call on students at any time during class to answer questions or offer opinions.

Written assignments will include:

- A multi-stage research project: early in the semester, each student will select one major Latin American country for detailed study. Five assignments posted throughout the semester will ask students to investigate and report on the political and economic history of their chosen country.
- A short mid-term exam will be held on Thursday October 12, during regular class time.
- A final exam will be held on Monday, December 18, 3:00 – 5:00pm.

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------|
| Class participation | = | 15% |
| Midterm | | 15% |
| Final exam | | 25% |
| Research Project | | |
| Part 1 | | 5% |
| Part 2 | | 10% |
| Part 3 | | 10% |
| Part 4 | | 10% |
| Part 5 | | 10% |
| TOTAL | = | 100% |

Additional University Policies and Syllabus Language

Syracuse University asks instructors to convey a large amount of policy information to students. Please familiarize yourself with all of the policies and resources listed at this page:

<https://academicaffairs.syracuse.edu/important-syllabus-reminders/>. It is your responsibility to know and understand this information, including our academic integrity policies, and you may benefit from the variety of academic, mental health, and additional resources that the university provides to students and describes here. Please contact me early and often with any questions or concerns about these policies and resources.

Books and Readings

I have ordered two books to be available for purchase through the SU Bookstore (or you can easily find them online):

- Isabel Allende (1982). *House of the Spirits*.
- Guillermo O'Donnell & Philippe Schmitter (1986). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*.

All other reading materials will be posted in pdf format on the course Blackboard site.

I also recommend that you acquire a good recent history of Latin America, like Smith, Green, and Skidmore's *Modern Latin America* (9th ed., 2018), or a textbook on Latin American politics like Munck and Luna's *Latin American Politics and Society* (2022).

In the daily schedule (below), please pay attention to the page numbers assigned. For many readings, I will post an entire article or chapter as a pdf, but in some cases I direct you to focus on specific pages. Of course, you may always choose to read the remainder of the pdf in these cases. I also post tips for more efficient reading of some of the more technical articles along with the pdfs in Blackboard.

Acknowledgements

I first learned about Latin American politics from two fantastic scholars at the University of Notre Dame: Prof. Scott Mainwaring and Fr. Tim Scully. I took many ideas from Prof. Mainwaring's syllabus, including using *House of the Spirits* to illustrate Latin America's transition to modernity in the 20th century. I also borrowed from the syllabus of Prof. Susan Stokes (University of Chicago), who chaired my Ph.D. dissertation and provided invaluable mentorship. More recently I have consulted the syllabi or borrowed ideas from Prof. Heather Sullivan (Hamilton College) and Prof. Lindsay Mayka (Colby College).

Daily Course Schedule

| Main Topic | Class | Date | Read for Today | Assignments |
|--|-------|---------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Introduction | 1 | Aug 29 | - The Economist (2022). "Special Report on Latin America," pp.3-12. (<u>Read pp.3-5 carefully</u> , skim the rest according to your interests) - Allende (1982). <i>House of the Spirits</i> , Chs. 1-3. | |
| <u>I. Modernization and State Formation</u> • Tradition and Modernity • Change and Conflict • Political Violence • State Formation | 2 | Aug 31 | - This syllabus. - Allende, <i>House of the Spirits</i> , Chs. 4-6. | |
| | 3 | Sept 5 | - Allende, <i>House of the Spirits</i> , Chs. 7-10. | |
| | 4 | Sept 7 | - Allende, <i>House of the Spirits</i> , Chs. 11-14. | |
| | 5 | Sept 12 | - Finish <i>House of the Spirits</i> if you are behind. - Constable and Valenzuela (1991). <i>A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet</i> , <u>pp.15-29, 90-94, 140-149, 152-165.</u> Recommended: - Alecio (1995). "Uncovering the Truth: Political Violence and Indigenous Organizations," in <i>The New Politics of Survival</i> , ed. Sinclair, pp.25-45. | |
| | 6 | Sept 14 | - Mazzuca (2021). <i>Latecomer State Formation</i> , pp.1-14. - Bull (2014). "Towards a Political Economy of Weak Institutions and Strong Elites in Central America." <i>European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies</i> , pp. 117-128. Recommended: - Levitsky and Murillo (2013). "Building Institutions on Weak Foundations." <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 24:2, pp.93-107. | Project Part I due Friday Sept 15 |
| | 7 | Sept 19 | WORKSHOP / DISCUSSION | |
| | 8 | Sept 21 | - Skidmore and Smith (2014). "Strategies for Economic Development," Ch. 12 of <i>Modern Latin America</i> (8 th ed), <u>read pp.343-358</u> ; remainder of chapter recommended. | |
| <u>II. Economics</u> • Growth and Development • International Trade | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|----|---------|---|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neoliberalism • Commodity Boom | 9 | Sept 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Williamson (1990). “What Washington Means by Policy Reform,” in <i>Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?</i>, pp.7-20. - Naím (1994). “Latin America: the Second Stage of Reform,” <i>J Democracy</i>, pp.32-48. | |
| | 10 | Sept 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baker (2003). “Why is trade reform so popular in Latin America: A consumption-based theory of trade policy preferences.” <i>World Politics</i>, 55:3, <u>read 423-434, 451-452.</u> - Auyero (2003). <i>Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition</i>, pp.15-47. (Read the rest of Laura’s story, through p.100, if interested). <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Perreault (2006). “From the <i>Guerra Del Agua</i> to the <i>Guerra Del Gas...</i>” <i>Antipode</i> 38:1, pp.150-172. - Silva (2009). <i>Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America</i>, Ch. 2. | |
| | 11 | Oct 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wibbels (2006). “Dependency Revisited: International Markets, Business Cycles, and Social Spending in the Developing World.” <i>International Organization</i> 60, pp.433-468. <u>Read pp.433-452 at least</u>; this is a difficult article. - Sánchez-Ancochea (2021). “The surprising reduction of inequality during a commodity boom: what do we learn from Latin America?” <i>Journal of Economic Policy Reform</i> 24:2, pp.95-118. <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wise (2021). “China in Latin America: Winning hearts and minds pragmatically,” Ch. 3 from <i>External Powers in Latin America</i>, ed. Gardini, pp.44-58. | |
| | 12 | Oct 5 | WORKSHOP / DISCUSSION | Part II due Fri Oct 6 |
| | | Oct 10 | NO CLASS – FALL BREAK | |

| | | | | |
|---|----|--------|---|---------------------------|
| | 13 | Oct 12 | MIDTERM | |
| <u>III. Regime Type</u> • Coups • Democratization • The “Left Turn” • Backsliding | 14 | Oct 17 | - Lipset (1959) “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 53:1, pp.69-105 – <u>read just pp.69-85.</u> - O’Donnell & Schmitter (1986). <i>Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies</i> , pp.3-14. | |
| | 15 | Oct 19 | - O’Donnell & Schmitter (1986). <i>Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies</i> , pp.15-47. | |
| | 16 | Oct 24 | - Cleary (2006). “A ‘Left Turn’ in Latin America? Explaining the Left’s Resurgence.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 17:4, pp.35-49. - The Hugo Chavez Show (2008). Frontline/PBS documentary, 84 minutes. Hyperlink here. Recommended: - Smilde (2021). “From Populist to Socialist to Authoritarian Chavismo: Obstacles and Opportunities for Democratic Change” Woodrow Wilson Center Latin America Program, pp.1-16. | |
| | 17 | Oct 26 | - Cleary & Ozturk (2022). “When does backsliding lead to breakdown?...” <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 20:1, pp.205-221. - Hunter & Vega (2022). “Populism and the military: symbiosis and tension in Bolsonaro’s Brazil,” <i>Democratization</i> 29:2, pp.337-359. - Meléndez-Sánchez (2021). “Latin America Erupts: Millennial Authoritarianism in El Salvador,” <i>J Democracy</i> pp.19-32. | |
| | 18 | Oct 31 | WORKSHOP / DISCUSSION | Part III due Fri Nov 3 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-----------|---|---------------------------|
| <u>IV. Institutions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Rules and Constitutions • Party Systems • Clientelism | 19 | Nov 2 | - Siavelis (2000). <i>The President and Congress in Postauthoritarian Chile: Institutional Constraints to Democratic Consolidation</i> , Ch. 1. | |
| | 20 | Nov 7 | - Levitsky et al. (2016). <i>Challenges of Party-Building in Latin America</i> , Ch. 1. Read only pp.1-26. Recommended: - Mainwaring et al. (2018). "Party System Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse," <i>Party Systems in Latin America</i> , ed. Mainwaring, pp.17-33. | |
| | 21 | Nov 9 | - Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes (2004). "Vote Buying in Argentina." <i>Latin American Research Review</i> , pp.66-88. - Holland (2016). "Forbearance," <i>American Political Science Review</i> , <u>read pp.232-237, 245</u> , read the rest if interested. | |
| | 22 | Nov 14 | WORKSHOP / DISCUSSION | Part IV due Fri Nov 17 |
| <u>V. Contemporary Issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race & Ethnicity • Gender • Insecurity • LAIR | 23 | Nov 16 | - Telles and Bailey (2013). "Understanding Latin American Beliefs about Racial Inequality," <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 118:6, pp. 1559-1595. - Cleary (2020). "Subordinated Autonomy and the Political Inclusion of Women in Indigenous Mexico," <i>LAPS</i> , pp.44-64. | |
| | | Nov 21-23 | NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING | |
| | 24 | Nov 28 | OPEN SESSION – TBD | |

| | | | | |
|--------|----|--------|--|----------------------|
| | 25 | Nov 30 | <p>- Piscopo (2015). “States as Gender Equality Activists: The Evolution of Quota Laws in Latin America,” <i>Latin American Politics and Society</i> 57:3, pp.27-49.</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>- Bedrosian (2022). “How #NiUnaMenos Used Discourse and Digital Media to Reach the Masses in Argentina,” <i>Latin American Research Review</i>, pp.100-116.</p> <p>- Daby and Mosely (2022). “Feminist Mobilization and the Abortion Debate in Latin America: Lessons from Argentina.” <i>Politics & Gender</i>, pp.359-393.</p> | |
| | 26 | Dec 5 | <p>- Trejo and Ley (2018). “Why Did Drug Cartels Go to War in Mexico?...” <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 51:7, pp.900-937, <u>read pp.900-916.</u></p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>- Trudeau (2022). “Limiting aggressive policing can reduce police and civilian violence,” <i>World Development</i>, pp.1-18.</p> | |
| | 27 | Dec 7 | <p>- Almagro (2019). “Defending Democracy and Human Rights in the Western Hemisphere,” <i>Prism</i> 8:1, pp. 2-11.</p> <p>- Long (2021). “The United States in Latin America: Lasting asymmetries, waning influence?” Ch. 1 from <i>External Powers in Latin America</i>, ed. Gardini, pp.15-28.</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>- Di Bonaventura-Altuve (2021). “The Collective Promotion of Democracy and Authoritarian Backsliding: The OAS in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Honduras,” <i>The Latin Americanist</i>, 65:2, pp. 233-263.</p> | Part V due Fri Dec 8 |
| Review | 28 | Dec 12 | REVIEW AND DISCUSSION | |
| Final | | Dec 18 | FINAL EXAM: 3:00 – 5:00pm, HL 114 | |