CPO 3303 Introduction to Latin American Politics  
Fall 2014

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Office hours: MW 3:15–4:15 (or by appointment), 317 Anderson  
Class schedule/location: MWF 7 (1:55–2:45), NRN 0331

Summary & objectives:
In the words of the award-winning Puerto Rican music duo Calle 13, Latin America is “un pueblo sin piernas, pero que camina” (literally: “a people without legs, but who walks”). We may take this as a metaphor for the region as a whole: as a place that has survived recurring economic crises, years of authoritarian rule, and heavy-handed domination by numerous outside powers, but that continues to flirt with a more promising future.

Unsurprisingly, the region’s famously turbulent and perhaps dialectical political and economic histories – ranging from trailblazing democratic experiments to tidal waves of authoritarianism, and including both spectacular economic booms and devastating busts – have long been of interest to scholars. Indeed, outside of Europe, Latin America seems to have attracted more attention in the field of comparative politics than any other region.

The aim of this course is to present a broad overview of the culture, history, politics, and economics of Latin America. In so doing, we will engage with the long history of intellectual works that have analyzed and critiqued the region’s trajectory. We will place particular emphasis on how thinkers from a variety of fields, perspectives, and locations have sought to make sense of the Latin American experience. Throughout, we will highlight the diversity of Latin America and link the region to broader debates and conversations in the field of comparative politics as well as in the humanities and social sciences more broadly.

Five units – organized both chronologically and thematically – move us through space and time as we grapple with the Latin American experience:

I. What is Latin America and how should we study it?  
II. Early Latin America: the making of nations, states, and societies  
III. Latin America’s long Cold War: class struggle, imperialism, and the death of democracy  
IV. Contemporary Latin America: a new era for a new region?  
V. Conclusion: future horizons/possibilities, and us

Course format:
To the greatest possible extent, this course will ideally function as a discussion-oriented seminar. That is, your comments and reactions to readings and other materials are to play a fundamental role in guiding the trajectory of the class. As such, participation and deep engagement are expected and will factor
heavily into your final grade. I will also aim to bring guest speakers into class several times during the semester.

While we will briefly review the basic contours of the fields of Latin American studies and comparative politics at the beginning of the course, time constraints prevent us from doing so in any depth. If you lack background in either area, you may wish to consult the following reference sources (many others exist as well). I also encourage you to speak to me about this during office hours.

**Latin America**

**Comparative Politics**
- Ruth Lane. *The Art of Comparative Politics.*

Books & readings:
As befits a course of this nature, the reading load is relatively heavy. I make no apologies for this. I have selected the readings with great care and expect you to read them accordingly. As there are no exams in this class, your ability to read, digest, engage with, and react to the readings will be of great importance both for your grade and our collective experience in this class.

This syllabus draws from an eclectic mix of texts. You will read works from scholars, protagonists, and activists; from Latin Americans reflecting on their own region, and U.S. thinkers for whom Latin America is the “Other”; and from Latin Americanists who are interested in the region for its own sake, as well as those who seek to understand it within a more general (and theoretical) context.

To minimize your financial burden, only one (relatively) inexpensive book is required. It may be purchased from the UF bookstore or obtained elsewhere. The other readings will be available through the course webpage (details below).

Required text:

News & current events:
You are expected to follow current events relating to Latin America on your own. Throughout the semester, we will discuss news stories and relate them to course materials. Prominent news stories will also be “fair game” for the quizzes (details below). Though there is a dearth of quality English-language coverage of Latin America, palatable sources include:

- BBC [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/latin_america/]
- The Economist [http://www.economist.com/world/americas]
Course requirements & grades:

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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20 percent: attendance & participation
In addition to attending class, you are expected to make substantive contributions to discussions, particularly in such a way that shows you have grappled with course materials. As part of this grade, you are required to come see me during office hours at least once during the semester.

20 percent: reading & current event quizzes
In the spirit of “trust but verify,” I will randomly administer quizzes throughout the semester to determine how faithfully you are keeping up with the reading assignments as well as the news. I will grade them on a “pass/fail” basis.

60 percent: reaction papers & final paper
After each of the first four units, you will write a response to the corresponding material. I will send prompts, as well as provide additional information, as the relevant dates draw near. These papers are designed to gauge whether you have been following along and contemplating the issues under consideration. The absolute maximum for each of these assignments is 500 words. To receive full credit, they must be received by midnight on the specified date. They will each be worth 10 percent of your final grade.

At the conclusion of the last unit, you will write a final paper responding to a prompt that will ask you to synthesize and think critically about the entirety of this semester’s course material. Again, I will provide more information closer to the date. The maximum length will be 1500 words. It is worth 20 percent of your overall grade.

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<tr>
<th>Reaction paper</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>September 8</td>
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<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>September 24</td>
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<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>October 13</td>
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<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>November 21</td>
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<td>Final (cumulative)</td>
<td>December 5</td>
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Course policies:
- All assignments must be turned in via the course website (https://lss.at.ufl.edu/).
- Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 10 percent (e.g. from 95 to 85) every 12 hours.
- You can format assignments as you wish so long as the output is easy on my eyes.
- You may use your preferred citation style, provided it is applied consistently. Political science majors are encouraged to adopt APSA style (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html).
- In all of your writing assignments, style, syntax, grammar, etc. all count.
- Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.
• Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:  

University policies:
Academic honesty
Violations of the Student Honor Code (including, but not limited to, copying and plagiarizing) will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information, see:  

Counseling and wellness
A variety of counseling, mental health and psychiatric services are available through the Counseling and Wellness Center, whose goal is to help students be maximally effective in their academic pursuits by reducing or eliminating emotional, psychological, and interpersonal problems that interfere with academic functioning. For more information, call 392-1575 or visit  
http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc.

Students with disabilities
The University of Florida is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations should register with  
the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) as soon as possible by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students should present me with their accommodation letter.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Availability of readings:
* - from Márquez book
All other readings are either available on the course site (https://lss.at.ufl.edu/) or via the below links.

8/25 (M)  Course introduction

I. WHAT IS LATIN AMERICA AND HOW SHOULD WE STUDY IT?

8/27 (W)  Introducing Latin America: diverse visions of a diverse region

8/29 (F)  Deconstructing “Latin” America

9/1 (M)  NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

9/3 (W)  How to study Latin America: generalities, particularities, and the area studies debate
II. EARLY LATIN AMERICA: THE MAKING OF NATIONS, STATES, AND SOCIETIES

9/5 (F) Conquest, colonialism, and indigeneity

9/8 (M) The slave trade and Afro-Latin America

9/10 (W) The Haitian Revolution

9/12 (F) Race and mestizaje

9/15 (M) State-building, consolidation, and internal colonialism

9/17 (W) Nationalism and pan-Latin Americanism
Simón Bolívar. “Letter from Jamaica.”

9/19 (F) Economic (under)development, part I: the case of Argentina and a theory of underdevelopment

9/22 (M) Economic (under)development, part II: dependency theory and its critics
9/24 (W)  Breaking the chains? Revolutionary thinkers

III. LATIN AMERICA’S LONG COLD WAR: CLASS STRUGGLE, IMPERIALISM, AND THE DEATH OF DEMOCRACY

9/26 (F)  U.S. interventionism: an overview

9/29 (M)  Guatemala and the Central American wars

Reaction paper #2 due

10/1 (W)  The Cuban Revolution

10/3 (F)  Chile: from the peaceful vía chilena al socialismo to an authoritarian nightmare
Peter Winn. Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to Socialism. Pp. 197-205.
Gabriel García Márquez. “Why Allende Had to Die.”

10/6 (M)  The political economy of Latin America’s authoritarian regimes: external influences, neoliberalism, and la década perdida
Corey Robin. “Hayek von Pinochet.”
http://coreyrobin.com/2012/07/08/hayek-von-pinochet/

10/8 (W)  Culture during the Cold War

10/10 (F)  The memory struggle


10/13 (M) Transitology, transitional justice, and authoritarian legacies


IV. CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICA: A NEW ERA FOR A NEW REGION?

10/15 (W) Government, part I: the “left turn”/“pink tide”


10/17 (F) NO CLASS – HOMECOMING

10/20 (M) Government, part II: the Venezuela debate


Reaction paper #3 due

10/22 (W) Government, part III: democratic experiments


10/24 (F) Government, part IV: the specter of populism?

Francisco Panizza. “What Do We Mean When We Talk about Populism?” Pp. 85-115.

10/27 (M) Government, part V: regionalism and pan-Latin Americanism


10/29 (W) People and society, part I: Latin America’s “immigrant” communities


10/31 (F) People and society, part II: Afro-Latin Americans and “racial democracy”

11/3 (M) People and society, part III: religion

11/5 (W) People and society, part IV: gender and sexual politics

11/7 (F) People and society, part V: sports

11/10 (M) People and society, part VI: crime, violence, and the War on Drugs

11/12 (W) Social movements, part I: the world’s most unequal region

11/14 (F) Social movements, part II: indigenous mobilization

11/17 (M) A new development model, part I: Costa Rica as the Silicon Valley of Latin America?

11/19 (W) A new development model, part II: The Chilean Miracle/Jaguar/Tiger?
http://www.hoover.org/research/what-pinochet-did-chile.

11/21 (F) Latin America, globalization, and neoliberalism
V. CONCLUSION: FUTURE HORIZONS/POSSIBILITIES, AND US

11/24 (M)  Rising Latin America?

Reaction paper #4 due (11/25)

11/26 (W)  NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

11/28 (F)  NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

12/1 (M)  “To cease being what we are not”: Latin America, comparative politics, and Eurocentrism

12/3 (W)  Future vision (and liberation)
Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth.* Pp. 311-316.

12/5 (F)  Intellectual trajectories in comparative politics

12/8 (M)  Conclusions and remainders

12/10 (W)  Class cancelled (work on final papers)
Final paper due