

Mount Saint Mary's University
Spring 2009

PS 314

Comparative Political Systems: Latin America

MW 9-9:50 or 10-10:50

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course covers politics, including its social and economic dimensions, in Latin America. During the semester, we will explore: 1) the historical context for politics in Latin America; 2) different issues and themes that affect politics in the region; 3) key concepts such as dependency, populism, democratization, and civil society; and 4) the relationship between politics, culture, and economics. By the end of the semester, each you should also be able to apply that knowledge to contemporary cases and events.

We will begin the semester with *Politics of Latin America*, which will provide a broad survey of the region. The second half of the textbook includes single-country chapters, which will allow us to explore a number of individual countries.

Later, we will look at three recent books: *The Devil Behind the Mirror*, on globalization in the Dominican Republic; *From Movements to Parties*, on the evolution of indigenous social movements into “ethnic” parties in the Andes; and *Social Movements and Free-Market Capitalism in Latin America*, on consumer movements in the Southern Cone. These explore issues in Latin American politics from different perspectives and using different methodologies, as well as to serve as models for your own research paper.

Non-Western Studies Course

This course meets the *Non-Western Studies* requirement of the core curriculum. We will seek to understand Latin America from the perspective of those outside of the “Western humanist” tradition, in order to then critically evaluate our own cultural assumptions. One question we will address is whether an overwhelmingly Catholic region of the world with Iberian cultural roots does, in fact, stand outside of the “Western humanist” tradition.

As a *capstone course* designed for Mount juniors and seniors, we will build upon earlier core curriculum foundations. I expect you to have completed the three-semester “Western Civilization” sequence. Be aware that if you take this course as a first-year or sophomore, you will not earn credit for the required NW component of the core curriculum. You will, of course, still earn credit towards a major and/or minor. But I will hold you to the same standards as those taking this as a capstone NW course.

This is also a *writing intensive course*. As such, we will work on a number of writing assignments throughout the semester, in addition to a final research paper. The final paper will both demonstrate the ability to apply course content to a self-defined research topic, as well as reflect both quality college-level writing and critical thinking skills.

University Curriculum Goals Met By This Course

This course fulfills the following university curriculum goals and objectives, to promote:

1. An understanding of the Western humanist tradition, including its American expression, particularly as that tradition has been interpreted in Catholic thought and practice.
 - g. To achieve perspective on the Western humanist tradition by investigating at least one culture that has developed outside or beyond the dominant traditions of the West.
2. The skills of analysis, communication, and problem solving that enable students to appreciate, critique, and contribute to that tradition.
 - a. To become skilled readers, writers, and speakers.
 - d. To skillfully employ contemporary research methods, including the resources of information technology.
3. An understanding of the purposes, methods, and substance of a particular intellectual discipline.
 - a. To complete an undergraduate major.
 - b. To connect study in that major with learning in the core curriculum and electives.
4. An understanding of the nature of the good and a commitment to its practice, particularly in regard to justice, dignity, and freedom and responsibility in human communities.
 - b. To honor the dignity and worth of persons of different racial and cultural heritages.
 - d. To address the pressing questions of social justice and human need.
5. The personal synthesis of learning and the capacity for life-long inquiry that constitute the ultimate goal of a liberal education.
 - a. To seek to integrate learning across courses and disciplines within the core curriculum.
 - b. To connect core learning with learning in the major.

Department of Political Science Goals Met By This Course

This course also helps meet the following objectives of the political science major:

- To understand the similarities and differences of political systems and cultures.
- To analyze political questions using philosophical, legal, qualitative and quantitative methods.
- To understand the nature and evolution of the international political system, including state and non-state actors.
- To understand the salient features of political systems in other regions of the world such as Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Vanden, Harry E. and Gary Prevost. 2008. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Gregory, Steven. 2006. *The Devil Behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rhodes, Sybil. 2005. *Social Movements and Free-Market Capitalism in Latin America: Telecommunications Privatization and the Rise of Consumer Protest*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Van Cott, Donna Lee. 2007. *From Movements to Parties: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended (useful for your research paper)

- Baglione, Lisa A. 2007. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structures, and Methods*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The semester grade is based on the following components:

Participation	7%
In-class reading quizzes	12%
In-class exam (x2)	40% (20% each)
Reflective essays (x2)	14% (7% each)
Précis & brief proposal	7%
Research paper	20%

Participation. Read the assigned readings *before* class and come ready to discuss them. Note that *attendance* is not the same as *participation*; if you come to class every day but never offer any questions, comments, or otherwise become actively engaged in class you will earn a zero for participation. The best way to earn points for participation is to come to class every day prepared with at least one question or comment.

Reading quizzes. I will periodically give short in-class quizzes at the start of class. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a zero for that day's quiz. There is no limit to the number of quizzes; they will be averaged out to account for 12% of your total grade.

Reflective essays. Early in the semester you will have *two opportunities* to write *one* short essay (3-4 pages). Each assignment is worth 7 points and asks you to write on a specific prompt. If you submit an essay for the first deadline (January 30), you may submit another for the second deadline (February 6) if you are unhappy with your grade (but you will write a new essay on the second prompt).

Later in the semester you will write a *second* reflective essay on a common prompt based on a specific excerpt from our readings. This paper is due March 23.

Précis & brief proposal. In anticipation of your research paper, you will write a short essay (2-3 pages) in which you will provide a *précis* (an “abstract” or “executive summary”) of one of the country chapters in *Politics of Latin America* (you choose the chapter). The purpose of the *précis* is to focus on the relevant information you will use

for your paper (discussed below). In addition, you must attach a brief proposal (1-2 pages) outlining how you will proceed with your research paper. The précis and proposal are one piece, and should be closely integrated.

In-class exams. There are two in-class exams during the semester. Each covers materials (readings, handouts, and discussions) covered to that point. Each includes one essay question (worth 7 points), two short answer questions (each worth 3 points), and seven identification questions (each worth 1 point). I will hand out a study guide in the previous class and you will be allowed one 3x5 index card with notes.

RESEARCH PAPER: BRIEF GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES

During the semester, you will work on a research paper (a comparative study) on a topic of your choice. The paper must be 8-10 pages long, use proper reference citations (using the *Chicago Manual of Style*)¹ and include a reference bibliography and a title page (not included in the page count). Additional guidelines will be handed out later. The research paper is due May 1.

You should select one of the 10 countries covered in the single-country chapters in *Politics of Latin America*. If you wish to select a different country, you must see me for approval; I will then provide you with an appropriate country chapter to use as the source of your précis. Additional guidelines will be handed out later in the semester. The research paper is due May 1.

Writing a paper involves a number of steps:

- selecting a preliminary research topic
- preliminary research on your topic(s) to determine if there are enough reference materials available (*if not, you may have to select a different topic!*)
- selecting and organizing your reference materials
- preparing a paper outline (*never start writing until you have outlined your ideas!*)
- writing a preliminary draft
- editing a “final” draft

None of these steps should be rushed; each is a crucial part of writing a polished paper.

Please note the following deadlines associated with your final research paper:

- **February 16:** research interest statement (in 50 words or less, specify an issue or theme from the course readings you would like to explore)
- **February 16-27:** office hour visits (you must sign up for a 20-minute discussion in which we will discuss your project)
- **March 9:** précis & brief proposal (see above); this assignment is graded and worth 7% of your total semester grade
- **April 8:** annotated reference bibliography (must include *at least* 2 books & 5 peer-review articles beyond assigned readings)

¹ A quick guide is online at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

I will provide guidelines for each of these assignments. While most are not graded, failure to submit any one will result in a 10% deduction to your final paper grade (if you fail to meet all four deadlines, you automatically lose 40% of your final paper grade).

Peer Review

On *April 8*, you must bring two copies of a rough draft of your research paper. Each of you is responsible for reading two of your fellow students' drafts. You must write each author a brief critique (at least one page) meant to help improve his or her final paper.

On *April 18*, you will discuss the peer review comments in small groups. You will also submit your peer review comments and the original draft (I will return these immediately after class). Neither peer reviews nor rough drafts will be graded, but failure to participate in peer review will result in a 10% deduction to your final paper grade.

Writing Tips & Guidelines

Spend the necessary time. Writing is a craft; it is not something we do carelessly. Style and polish count, both in college and post-college writing. The Mount's Writing Center is an excellent place to go for help and guidance. I am also willing to help by reading drafts or answering any questions you might have.

College papers require the use of "scholarly" sources. Do not use any of the following as reference citations in your paper:

- encyclopedias (this includes Wikipedia, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and others)
- dictionaries
- country "backgrounders" (such as CIA World Fact Book, Library of Congress Country Studies, and others)

These sources may be good places to *start* learning about a topic, but they are not worthy of citations.

The following types of references may be appropriate under certain circumstances (see me), but your paper should not exclusively (or even primarily) rely on them:

- newspaper articles
- newsmagazine articles (this includes *The Economist*, *Newsweek*, and others)
- online news sources (this includes PBS, National Geographic, and others)

STUDY TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How to Read for This Course

This course involves a substantial amount of reading. *Don't panic!* One of the important lessons of college is to learn how to read and synthesize information quickly. The purpose of a liberal arts education is not to teach you to memorize large chunks of information.

The textbook (*Politics of Latin America*) will require greater attention to detail and we will cover it more slowly. Later, as you read the single-country chapters, try to make

connections between the thematic chapters and events in that country. Ask yourself: In what ways does/doesn't the country fit the regional pattern?

Later in the semester we will read three studies of politics in Latin America from different parts of the region, focusing on different issues, and from different intellectual perspectives. You should read these later texts with two distinct, but related, purposes:

- as examples of single-country case studies (while you simultaneously work on your own research paper)
- as more detailed explorations of one or more specific theme or issue raised earlier in the semester

I don't expect you to become an "expert" on the subtle nuances of political culture in the Dominican Republic, consumer movements in the "ABC" countries, or indigenous movements and parties in the Andes. I do, however, expect you to develop a richer appreciation for the kinds of issues affecting Latin America and the way scholars bring analysis to bear on them.

How to Prepare for Reading Quizzes

I will post a number of discussion questions to accompany each set of readings. These will serve as the starting point for our in-class discussion. These will also be used as reading quiz questions (if we have a quiz, I will select one of the questions). Use these questions as a guide to your reading. If you can answer each of the questions, you will be prepared for class discussions (as well as for any possible quiz).

Time Management Tips

You should spend about as much time reading and preparing for class each week as the time we spend in class. I recommend one hour reading and taking notes for each class period, plus 5 minutes reviewing your notes *before* and 5 minutes reviewing your notes *after* each class.

I recommend spending another 2-3 hours per week for your writing assignments. Set aside 20-30 minutes each day for working on writing assignments for this class. If you work on your writing projects consistently, you will save yourself the stress of an "all-nighter" (and your will be of higher quality).

GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Special Accommodations

I will make special accommodations when necessary and appropriate. But it is your responsibility to inform me of such circumstances as early as possible and appropriate. This includes accommodations for extra time on exams.

Late Work

I do not accept late work. If you give yourself plenty of time for assignments, and avoid procrastinating, you will be prepared for any crisis. You can always submit work early. If

you know ahead of time that you will miss a deadline, you are better off submitting what you have up to that point, than not submitting anything at all.

Classroom Rules

I have very few rules for my classroom, most of which are common sense:

- no use of cell phones (this also means no texting) in class
- no use of laptops (if you are allowed one, a special note taker may be present to sit at the back of the class)
- no sleeping (if you can't stay awake, don't come to my class)
- arrive on time (arriving late is disruptive; if you are more than 5 minutes late, don't come to my class)
- bring the readings to class (I frequently reference specific pages for discussion; you should, too)
- treat everyone with the same kind of respect you would expect to be treated yourself

Academic Honesty

Finally, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Mount's guidelines regarding academic honesty. Pay close attention to pages 52-53 of the university's undergraduate manual, particularly regarding cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism (in its many forms) is a serious offense that may lead to your expulsion from the university. If you have doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, see me right away (it's not plagiarism until you submit an assignment in for a grade).

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

- Week 1**
- January 12
Introduction and hand out syllabus
- January 14
Politics of Latin America (PLA), Chapter 1 (“Introduction,” pp. 1-17)
- January 16
PLA, Chapter 2 (“Early History,” pp. 18-40)
- Week 2**
- January 19
PLA, Chapter 3 (“Democracy, Dictators, and Tío Sam,” pp. 41-79)
- January 21
PLA, Chapter 4 (“The Other Americans,” pp. 80-102)
- January 23
In-class review
- Week 3**
- January 26
PLA, Chapter 5 (“Society, Family, and Gender,” pp. 103-129)
- January 28
PLA, Chapter 6 (“Religion in Latin America,” pp. 130-148)
- January 30
First reflective essay due (first option); in-class discussion
- Week 4**
- February 2
PLA, Chapter 7 (“Political Economy of Latin America,” pp. 149-179)
- February 4
PLA, Chapter 8 (“Latin American Political Culture,” pp. 180-179)
- February 6
First reflective essay due (second option); in-class discussion
- Week 5**
- February 9
PLA (Chapter 9, “Politics, Power, Institutions, and Actors,” pp. 190-238)
Paper topic statement due
- February 11
PLA, Chapter 10 (“Revolution, Social and Political Movements in Latin America,” pp. 239-267)
- February 13

Review for first exam (hand out study guide)

Week 6

February 16
First in-class exam

February 18
PLA, Chapter 12 (“Cuba,” pp. 338-367)

February 20
PLA, Chapter 13 (“Nicaragua,” pp. 524-555)

Week 7

February 23
PLA, Chapter 14 (“Brazil,” pp. 368-393)

February 25
PLA, Chapter 11 (“Mexico,” pp. 300-327)

February 27
PLA, Chapter 16 (“Chile,” pp. 430-461)

Week 8

March 9
PLA, Chapter 17 (“Venezuela,” pp. 462-493)

March 11
PLA, Chapter 18 (“Colombia,” pp. 494-523)

March 13
PLA, Chapter 20 (“Bolivia,” pp. 556-587)

Week 9

March 16
Gregory, Chapter 1 (“The Politics of Livelihood,” pp. 11-49)
Précis and brief proposal due

March 18
Gregory, Chapter 2 (“The Spatial Economy of Difference,” pp. 50-91)

March 20
Gregory, Chapter 3 (“Structures of the Imagination,” pp. 92-125)

Week 10

March 23
Gregory, Chapter 4 (“Sex Tourism and the Political Economy of Masculinity,” pp. 130-165)
Second reflective essay due; in-class discussion

March 25
Gregory, Chapter 5 (“Race, Identity, and the Body Politic,” pp. 166-208)

March 27

Gregory, Chapter 6 (“The Politics of Transnational Capital,” pp. 209-233)

Week 11

March 30

Van Cott, Chapter 1 (“Introduction,” pp. 1-21)

April 1

Van Cott, Chapter 7 (“Conclusions and Implications,” pp. 212-236)

April 3

Van Cott, Chapter 2 (“Institutions, Party Systems, and Social Movements,” pp. 22-48)

Semester paper drafts due (for peer review)

Week 12

April 6

Van Cott, Chapter 3 (“Bolivian Indians’ Slow Path to Political Representation,” pp. 49-98)

April 8

Van Cott, Chapter 4 (“Pachakutik’s Rapid Ascent to National Power,” pp. 99-139)

Annotated bibliography due

Week 13

April 16

Van Cott, Chapter 5 (“The Failure to Form Viable Ethnic Parties in Peru,” pp. 140-176)

April 18

Peer review comments due; in-class peer review groups

Week 14

April 20

Rhodes, Chapter 1 (“Consumer Movements,” pp. 1-8) & Chapter 8 (“Democratizing Free-Market Capitalism,” pp. 167-)

April 22

Rhodes, Chapter 2 (“Explaining the Emergence of Consumer Movements,” pp. 9-44)

April 24

Rhodes, Chapter 3 (“Authoritarian Privatization and Delayed Consumer Mobilization in Chile,” pp. 45-66)

Week 15

April 27

Rhodes, Chapter 4 (“The ‘Original Sin’ of Privatization in Argentina,” pp. 67-80) & Chapter 5 (“Contentious Consumer Mobilization in Argentina,” pp. 81-104)

April 29

Rhodes, Chapter 6 (“The Gradual and Contested Privatization of Brazil’s ‘Telessauro,’” pp. 105-136) & Chapter 7 (“‘Post-Jurassic’ Regulation and Contained Consumer Response,” pp. 137-166)

May 1

Research paper due

Review for final exam (hand out study guide)

Finals Week

May 4 (9 am class)

Final exam, 9-11 am

May 8 (10 am class)

Final exam, 9-11 am