POLITICAL CHANGE: LATIN AMERICA

Autumn Term 2012

Final Year
Politics Department

Course Tutor:
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Term Dates:
Autumn Term: 20 September 2012 – 12 December 2012
Aims
The aim of the course is to introduce you to Latin American politics through the analysis of processes, institutions and major actors. We will assess not only historical developments and their legacies, but also the most important challenges for these young democracies: the role of the military, the reform of political institutions, populist movements and parties, left vis-à-vis right politics, and debt and economic restructuring. Overall, the course will be an evaluation of the impact of economic development, civil society and the legacy of authoritarian regimes on the democratization process of the region.

Learning outcomes
By the end of the course a successful student should be able:

- To give an account of historical processes and institutions in Latin America;
- To comprehend the extent of and the drivers of change in these societies;
- To define and discuss the strategies of the main relevant political actors;
- To understand what factors are at the origin of regime change (from democracy to authoritarianism and from authoritarianism to democracy);
- To assess the strength of present day Latin American democracies.

Students should also have enhanced the following generic skills:

- The ability to read, note, analyse and evaluate information and arguments;
- The ability to participate and co-operate constructively in group work;
- The ability to conceive and produce a substantial work of analysis and argument, presented in accordance with rigorous academic standards.

Office hours
These will be confirmed at the first seminar. You should use these to talk about anything that concerns you – including your individual progress and written work. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, guidance and feedback. It may be possible to see you at another time if you make an appointment (after the seminar or via email).

Attendance
You are advised that the Politics and Contemporary European Studies Finalists' Exam Board has a policy of taking students' overall records of class attendance into consideration when deciding on
degree classification at the end of a programme of study. This policy operates without prejudice to those who are deemed to have a legitimate excuse for non-attendance.

Course structure
This course is divided into twelve sessions and will be delivered in a three-hour weekly seminar covering the following topics:

1. Introductory session
2. The political independence of Latin America
3. State and nation building
4. The import-substituting model (ISI)
5. The military and the Southern Cone experience
6. Transitions from authoritarian rule
7. The lost decade: debt crisis and neoliberal reforms
8. Debates on the health of democracy
9. The rise of ethnic politics in Latin America
10. Right-wing vs. left-wing populism
11. Latin America’s turn to the left
12. The right in contemporary Latin America

Written work and assessment
Students will write an assessed 2000 words essay, which must be submitted (two copies) to the LPS school office in the Friston building by November 14. This constitutes 30% of the overall course mark. Students are also required to produce an assessed 4000 words essay to be submitted at the beginning of January 2013. This second essay constitutes 70% of the overall course mark (please see Sussex Direct for submission details). The course tutor will give a list of questions/topics that students can address in their essays. In addition, students will be expected to give a 10-15 minute seminar presentation, in which they provide an outline of the political development of one country (list below) in order to enable the class to discuss the singularities of the country in question. Active participation in seminar discussion is also expected.
List of countries for the presentations

- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Mexico
- Uruguay
- Peru
- Venezuela

Evaluation
At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire to help us maintain and improve our delivery and our standards. During the course, you will be asked for feedback in more informal ways. Any constructive comments are of course more than welcome at any stage.

Reading
There will be a 2-3 articles or book chapters available on the course pack – these are “essential readings”. In addition to these, you should also try to range more widely in your reading. In the following pages we provide you with different sources. First, there are a couple of books (see below), which can be seen as textbooks, because they not only cover the majority of topics to be discussed on the course, but also offer a good introduction to Latin American politics. Second, there are a couple of internet sources, which can be useful for gathering data and follow contemporary debates (see below). Finally, there are “additional readings” for each topic (see below), which will enable you to deepen your knowledge on the subject as well as to prepare coursework.

Textbooks


**Websites with relevant information to Latin American Politics**

• The Journal of Democracy continuously publishes articles related to the state of democracy in Latin America (http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/; http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jod/).

• Political database of the Americas (Georgetown University). Information on elections, constitutions, political parties, etc. (http://pdba.georgetown.edu/).

• Latinobarómetro (opinion polls for the region) (http://www.latinobarometro.org).

• Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/).


• Organization of American States – regional organization with information on a range of initiatives in the such areas as development, free-trade, and corruption (http://www.oas.org).

• Latin American Studies Association – major international organization of scholars focusing on Latin America. Site contains research and links (http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/).

• Inter-American Development Bank (reports on poverty, health, education, indigenous groups, etc.) (http://www.iadb.org).

• United Nations Development Programme, UNDP (http://www.undp.org), several national and regional Human Development reports on Latin America.


• There are also a range of online journals specialising in Latin American Politics including: *Journal of Latin American Studies, Latin American Perspectives, Latin American Politics and Society, Latin American Research Review* and *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. Journals such as *Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Democratization* and *The Third World Quarterly* also regularly feature articles on Latin American Politics.
1. INTRODUCTORY SESSION

In this class we outline the course, assign the student presentations, talk about the assessments, and examine the nature of the academic literature on Latin American politics. General questions about the development of the course will be answered and we will briefly talk about the topics to be addressed in each of the sessions. In addition, we will discuss a text about the legacies of colonialism.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**


2. THE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF LATIN AMERICA

This class will be focused on one specific question: How can we explain that Latin America experienced a process of political independence from the Spanish and Portuguese Empire at the beginning of the 19th century? To answer this question, we will discuss a set of different arguments, and we will analyse the trajectories of political independence that several countries experienced across the region. Special emphasis will be given to the cases of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**


3. STATE AND NATION BUILDING

In this class we will discuss the process of state and nation building in Latin America. The driving idea of this session is that in Latin America the creation of the state preceded the formation of the nation. We will examine the impact of this particular political sequence (first the state and then the nation) on the way in which political order has been achieved and maintained in Latin America.

Essential Reading

Additional Reading
4. THE IMPORT SUBSTITUTION INDUSTRIALIZATION (ISI) MODEL

After the Great Depression of 1929, Latin America started to build a new model of economic development, which in the scholarly literature has been referred to as the “import substitution industrialization” (ISI) model. In this class we will discuss not only the main characteristics of this model, but also its rise and fall. Special emphasis will be given to a political economy perspective, according to which the ISI model permitted the formation a particular type of state and civil society.

Essential Reading


Additional Reading


5. THE MILITARY AND THE SOUTHERN CONE EXPERIENCE

Which role did the military play in Latin America during the 20th century? How can we understand that the armed forces have been a crucial political actor in many societies of the region? Why did the countries of the Southern Cone experience a breakdown of democracy during the 1960s and 1970s? This session aims to answer these questions and will examine the political involvement of the armed forces in Latin America. We will take into account internal and external factors that fostered the intervention of the military in politics, and we will analyse the rise and fall of the so-called “bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes”.

Essential Reading

Additional Reading
While authoritarian rule was on the rise during the 1960s and 1970s, most countries of the region went through a process of transition to democracy during the 1980s. In this class we will analyse the different arguments that have been developed to explain the collapse of the “bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes”, and we will also analyse the (f)actors that influenced the process of transition from authoritarian rule. In this regard, particular emphasis will be given to the analytical framework developed by Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**


7. THE LOST DECADE: DEBT CRISIS AND NEOLIBERAL REFORMS

Scholars have called the 1980s the “lost decade” because Latin America experienced a deep debt crisis, which had devastating social and political effects. Not only poverty and unemployment increased, but also the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank supported reform programs that led to the dismantlement of the “import-substituting model” (ISI). In this class we will examine the causes and consequences of the debt crisis of the 1980s, and we will also discuss the implementation of neoliberal reforms across the region.

Essential Reading

Additional Reading
8. DEBATES ON THE HEALTH OF DEMOCRACY

Given that most Latin American countries experienced a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in the 1980s, in the 1990s scholarly attention focused on the nature of this democracy. In this class we will revise some of the key works, which paved the way for the emergence of a new research agenda on democracy and democratization in Latin America. At the same time, we will examine socio-economic and socio-political indicators to get a better picture of the state and prospects of Latin American democracies.

Essential Reading

Additional Reading
THE RISE OF ETHNIC POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA

With the return of democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, Latin America began to experience a series of new challenges. One of the most pressing questions became the incorporation of the indigenous population. Since the latter has been systematically discriminated and excluded, national and international actors have claimed that Latin America’s return to democracy should involve the promotion of new economic and political policies in favour of indigenous peoples. In this class we will examine this challenge.

Essential Reading

Additional Reading
When Latin America started to move toward democracy in the 1980s, nobody really thought that populism would re-emerge in the region. However, populism has reappeared in many countries. In fact, scholars have identified “two waves of populism” in the region: a neoliberal one in the 1990s, and a radical left-wing one from the 2000s onwards. In this session we will analyse these “two waves of populism”, and we will discuss not only the concept of populism, but also the impact of populism on democracy. Special attention will be given to the cases of Fujimori in Peru and Chávez in Venezuela.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**

Since the end of the 1990s, left-of-centre leaders and parties have been gaining increasing electoral support in Latin America. This has generated a growing academic and public debate about Latin America’s turn to the left. One of the main topics under discussion concerns the impact of left-of-centre governments both on democracy and economic development. In this session we will examine the different types of left-of-centre governments that have appeared in the region, and also the explanatory variables for this turn to the left.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**


The right is facing a difficult situation in contemporary Latin America. This results from the exhaustion of the right’s conservative modernization project focused on the free market and a narrow interpretation of democratic politics. Not by coincidence, left-of-centre parties have been winning elections across Latin America in the last decade. In this class we will examine how conservative forces are reacting to the turn to the left, and we will discuss the future of the right in Latin America.

**Essential Reading**


**Additional Reading**


