

**POLITICS 140C**  
**Latin American Politics**  
**Summer Session 1, 2023: 5 Weeks**  
**Engineering Building 2, Room 192**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 to 4:30pm**

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1-3 pm in person or on zoom. [Sign up here.](#)

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**Course Description:** As a region marked by significant political turbulence, deep economic inequality, and dynamic social movements, Latin America's politics are fast moving. In recent decades, countries in Latin America have experienced the collapse of military rule, transitions to representative democracy, the adoption of neoliberal market reforms followed by their subsequent (and uneven) repudiation, and a worsening crisis of violence and insecurity. This course provides an introduction to the very fluid politics of the region both by reviewing historical patterns and by studying examples of change and continuity in the contemporary period.

We will explore Latin American politics through three main themes. The first is the place of Latin America within the global economy, from colonialism to neoliberal globalization. The second is to understand the shifting patterns of states and regimes in the region. The third is to understand the fundamental importance of struggles between subaltern classes and elites in driving the changes in the politics of the region. The course attempts to relate the economic, social, and institutional together to understand the political trends and events in the region. Topics treated in the course include: Colonialism and imperialism; revolutionary movements; democracy and authoritarianism; neoliberalism; class and social struggles; the Left in power; race and gender; security and the drug war; extractivism and the environment.

The course has two major parts. The first covers the history of Latin American politics from colonialism to the democratic transition in the second half of the twentieth century. This helps us to understand how the structures and inequalities in Latin America still shape politics to this day. The second part focuses on contemporary challenges, focusing on the institutions, political economy, and social movements that explain important political dynamics in the region.

**Learning Objectives: This course is organized around three central objectives.**

First is a solid understanding of Latin American politics and of the very real challenges facing ongoing attempts to deepen democracy in the region. Merely learning facts or memorizing dates about Latin America's political history is not the central purpose of the course, but knowing something about this history is essential in order to engage critically with political science theorizing about the region. By the end of the quarter students should be able to accurately describe the chronology and import of key political developments in Latin America. To keep abreast of current political issues in the region, students are encouraged to subscribe for the duration of the quarter to the latin america daily briefing blog

(<http://latinamericadailybriefing.blogspot.com/>), which does a great job synthesizing English-language newspaper articles about Latin America.

Second, because this is a “comparative politics” course, students will develop a set of conceptual tools and theoretical knowledge they can use to better understand political outcomes around the world and not just in Latin America – including right here in the United States. In this course, students can become fluent in the theories that comparativists have developed to explain the causes and consequences of such global phenomena as democratization, military coups, social movements, decentralization, populism, dependency, and market reforms.

The third objective is to improve students’ writing skills, including the ability to make more compelling arguments and to write papers that are well-organized and supported with empirical evidence. Strong writing skills are at a premium today, and the task of weekly writing towards a final paper should be approached with this reality in mind. Writing effectively requires that you read widely and carefully; please be advised that this is a reading-intensive course in which students are expected to devote significant time each week to the assigned readings.

### **Assignments**

The course assignments in this class revolve around relating the course readings and materials around a concrete political event in the region. Students will choose a contemporary political event in Latin America during the first week of class that will guide their work for the rest of the course. This will happen through weekly response papers that will provide the analytical backbone for a final paper. These weekly papers that support a final paper are intended to spread the work out throughout the 5 weeks of the course.

Given that this is a core course, and given that this is a 5 credit course over only 5 weeks, students should expect to commit significant time to the reading and writing workload. During a 10 week course, the expected workload per week for a 5 credit course is 15 hours (3 hours per credit). In this 5 week course, students should then be expecting 30 hours of workload. This equals out to around 150 pages of reading per week and 3 pages of writing.

***Weekly Responses:*** Students will write a response covering the readings for the week, due at midnight on Sundays. These are 3 page, double-spaced, 12-point, with Times New Roman font. Each of these responses must treat at least 3 of the week's readings (including at least one from each class). You must also bring in one new source per weekly response on your topic, which can be journalistic sources and do not have to be academic articles. In the first half you should summarize the main points of the weekly readings and your new source on your topic. In the second half, you will present your original thoughts and questions that the readings provoke, and engage how these readings can help you to understand or explain the topic that you chose at the start of the course.

***Reading Presentation and Class Discussion Leader:*** To achieve an A in the course, students at one point in the quarter will give a brief (5 minutes or so) presentation on one of the readings of the week, where they will summarize the contents of the reading in order to pose a question to be

discussed as a class, and the student will then facilitate the discussion. Students will select the class they wish to present during the first session.

***Attendance and Participation:*** Students must come to class ready to participate, including having read the course readings. Attendance is mandatory and in person. Students can miss one class without an excuse or penalty.

***Outline and Thesis Peer Review:*** On the Tuesday of Week 5 students will come with an outline of their paper, due online before class, that includes an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement. Students will peer review each other's introductions and thesis statements as an assignment in class.

***Final paper:*** Students will compose an 1600-word report on the topics selected during the first week of the course, using the theory and tools that we learned in the class. This paper can build upon past weekly responses, however, it has to be a fully formed and structured academic essay with internal coherence and a thesis. The paper will use the theory and evidence from the class readings to explain a significant recent event in Latin American politics.

I have provided 10 topics in Latin American politics to write your paper on. If you have something else that you want to research about Latin American politics, you can bring a proposal for me to approve, but you have to do so by the end of Class 2:

- 1.) What explains how the historic protests in Chile brought a constitutional convention, but the new constitution was voted down in Chile?
- 2.) Explain the emergence and achievements/failures of the 2022 national anti-inflation strikes in either Panama, led by the teachers' unions, or in Ecuador, led by CONAIE.
- 3.) Using theories from the class, explain the Peruvian crisis of 2022-2023 following the removal of Pedro Castillo from office, or explain the coup against Evo Morales in 2019, and the return of the MAS to power a year later.
- 4.) Pick an environmental crisis in one or two countries and explain its emergence or consequences with theories from the course.
- 5.) Using theories from the class, explain the authoritarian backsliding in one or two cases.
- 6.) Why has the Cuban government lasted since the revolution?
- 7.) Pick a specific social movement of your choice in either one or two countries, and analyze why they emerge, what they accomplish, and what they don't.
- 8.) Using theories from the course, explain the condition of women's, LGBTQ+, or minority rights, and the achievements or failures in improving these rights in one or two countries (If you want to include Argentina and women's rights, you must use it as a comparison case because we are reading a paper exactly on this)
- 9.) Explain the emergence of Nayib Bukele's super mano dura gang crackdown in El Salvador and why it is popular despite its human rights violations.
- 10.) Explain the emergence of the new wave of elections of left governments in countries where they have never been elected before. Why did they emerge now and not earlier? Are these the same as the pink tide? (Honduras-Castro, Colombia-Petro, Chile-Boric, Mexico-AMLO, Peru-Castillo)

## Evaluation: Contract Grading

This class uses “contract grading.” We will speak about this in the first class, but the principle is simple. I set out, in advance, everything that you need to do. If you tick off every box to an acceptable standard (as outlined in rubrics and in class), you will receive the corresponding grade. If you do not complete any of the requirements in the column, you will not get that grade. For example, if you only turn in three weekly reading responses, you cannot receive an A even if you complete all of the other assignments. Minus grades will come from late work, and plus grades for extraordinary work.

Each assignment will receive a complete or incomplete grade. If submitted work is not of passing quality (according to the relevant rubric), you will have a further two days to resubmit.

<b>Contract Grading Rubric</b>				
Requirements	A	B	C	D
Absences	1 or less	2 or less	3 or less	4 or less
Weekly Reading Responses	4 (One of these can be completed retroactively)	3	2	2
Reading Presentation and Class Discussion Leader	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Paper Outline and Peer Review	Turned in before class and peer review in class	Peer review in class.	N/A	N/A
Final Paper	Complete	Complete	Complete	Incomplete

## Course Schedule

### PART I: Historical Foundations of Latin American Politics and Political Economy

#### *Week One*

1. **June 27th. Colonialism and Enduring features and debates of Latin American Political Economy: Neocolonialism, Imperialism, and Dependency**
  - a. Galeano, Eduardo. *The Open Veins of Latin America* 11-37
  - b. Quijano, Anibal, and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. 1992. "Americanity as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World." *International social science journal* 44(4): 549–57.
  - c. Hellenger, Daniel, 1979 "Development and Dependency: Theory and Practice in Latin America" in *Comparative Politics of Latin America: Democracy at Last?*. Routledge: 155-173
  
2. **June 29th. 20th Century States and Regimes: Populism, Corporatism, & Authoritarianism**
  - a. Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1979. "Inducements versus Constraints: Disaggregating 'Corporatism.'" *The American Political Science Review* 73(4): 967–86.
  - b. Marysa Navarro, "Evita's Charismatic Leadership," in Michael Conniff, ed., *Populism in Latin America* (University of Alabama Press, 1999), pp. 47-64.
  - c. Collier, David, 1979 "Overview of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model", In David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton University Press), pp. 19-32

#### *Week Two*

3. **No Class July 4**
  
4. **July 6th. Revolutionary Struggles and Democratization**
  - a. Wood, Elisabeth Jean. "The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador" in Goodwin, J., Jasper, J. M., & Polletta, F. (Eds.). (2001). *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*. University of Chicago Press. 267-281
  - b. Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. "Chapter 1: Introduction", in *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956*. Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 1-18.
  - c. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Transitions to Democracy: Some Navigation Instruments," in Robert Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (New York: Holmes Meier, 1992), pp. 62-75.
  - d. Collier, Ruth Berins, and James Mahoney. 1997. "Adding Collective Actors to Collective Outcomes: Labor and Recent Democratization in South America and Southern Europe." *Comparative Politics* 29(3): 285–303.

## Part II: Contemporary Dynamics in Latin American Politics and Political Economy

### Week 3

#### 5. July 11th. 50 Years of Neoliberalism

- a. Portes, Alejandro, and Kelly Hoffman. 2003. "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change during the Neoliberal Era." *Latin American Research Review* 38(1): 41–82.
- b. Letelier, Orlando. 1976. "The 'Chicago Boys' in Chile: Economic Freedom's Awful Toll." *The Nation*.  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/the-chicago-boys-in-chile-economic-freedoms-awful-toll/>.
- c. Soederberg, Susanne. 2012. "The Mexican Debtfare State: Dispossession, Micro-Lending, and the Surplus Population." *Globalizations* 9(4): 561–75.

#### 6. July 13th. What is Democracy? Democratic Tensions

- a. Centeno, Miguel Ángel. 1997. "Chapter 1: *Salinastroika*" and "Chapter 8: Democracy Within Reason," in *Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico*. Second edition. Pennsylvania State University Press. 3-20, 211-229
- b. Carter, Miguel. "The Landless Rural Workers Movement and Democracy in Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 45, no. S1 (January 2010): 186–217.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/lar.2010.0032>.

### Week 4

#### 7. July 18th. Democratic Institutional Challenges

- a. Juan Linz, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: The Case of Latin America* (Johns Hopkins University, 1994), pp. 3-22
- b. Eaton, Kent. 2015. "Disciplining Regions: Subnational Contention in Neoliberal Peru." *Territory, Politics, Governance* 3(2): 124–46.
- c. Ezequiel Gonzalez-Ocantos and Virginia Oliveros, "Clientelism in Latin American Politics," in Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latin American Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

#### 8. July 20th. Race and Gender

- a. Wade, Peter. 2008. "Race in Latin America." In *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, Blackwell Companion to anthropology, ed. Deborah Poole. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub. 177-192
- b. Eduardo Silva, "Social Movements and the Second Incorporations in Bolivia and Ecuador" In Silva, Eduardo, and Federico Matías Rossi, eds. 2018. *Reshaping the Political Arena in Latin America: From Resisting Neoliberalism to the Second Incorporation*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press. (pp. 32-60)

- c. Daby, Mariela, and Mason W. Moseley. "Feminist Mobilization and the Abortion Debate in Latin America: Lessons from Argentina." *Politics & Gender* 18, no. 2 (June 2022): 359–93. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X20000197>.

**9. July 25th. Left Turn, Right Resurgence, Left Again?- New movements, the Pink Tide, Backlash**

- a. Gaudichaud, Franck, Massimo Modonesi, and Jeffery R. Webber. 2022. "Chapter 1", *The Impasse of the Latin American Left*. Duke University Press. 11-74

\*\*\*Paper outline due at the beginning of class\*\*\*

**10. July 27th. Major Challenges: Security and Extractivism**

- a. Svampa, Mariastella. 2015. "Commodities Consensus: Neoextractivism and Enclosure of the Commons in Latin America." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114(1): 65–82.
- b. Schirmer, Jennifer. "The Guatemalan Politico-Military Project: Legacies for a Violent Peace?" *Latin American Perspectives* 26, no. 2 (March 1, 1999): 92–107.
- c. Correa-Cabrera, Guadalupe. "Chapter 7: The Zetas' War and Mexico's Energy Sector" in *Los Zetas Inc.: Criminal Corporations, Energy, and Civil War in Mexico*. University of Texas Press, 2017.

\*\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE August 1st\*\*\*

**Classroom Environment:**

I am committed to creating a classroom that is an open space where we can all learn together, as a group, and not simply as individuals. In this class students will vary widely in their existing knowledge on the topic. But that is ok because the point of being in a class together is not to show what we already know that others do not, but to bring up the level of understanding of all of us together. When we are having discussions, this means it is ok to be wrong, and it also means that we should be generous and act in good faith towards all classmates.

**Course Materials:**

All course materials and readings will be available on Canvas.

**DC Requirement:**

In the Politics major the university's disciplinary communication (DC) requirement is fulfilled by completing any three of your required four core courses (105A, B, C, D; 120A, B, C; 140A, B, C, D; 160A, B, C). The goal of this DC requirement is to ensure that you acquire the skills in writing and other forms of communication necessary for your major. The central goals of the core courses are breadth of knowledge within the major and training and improvement in writing. You should see the core courses as a progressive and cumulative process requiring sustained attention to the form and quality of your writing.

**Academic Honesty:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work submitted in this class must be your own. If you use the words or ideas of any other person you must cite your source accurately and consistently.

Any use of AI like Chat.GPT will be treated as plagiarism with equal consequences.

Students should familiarize themselves with the university's Academic Integrity policy here: <https://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/section1/academic-integrity.html>

And the Academic Misconduct Policy for Undergraduates here: <https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html>

**Disability Resource Center (DRC):**

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu).

**Title IX:**

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential, counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462.

**Slug Support Program:**

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction. To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the Dean of Students Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at [deanofstudents@ucsc.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ucsc.edu).