

## **International Relations 466:**

### **Contemporary Issues in Latin American Politics**

**Fall 2008**

When: Tu & Th 12:30-1:50  
Where: SOS B44  
Office Hours: Tu 2:00-3:30

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#### **1. Course Description**

The course focuses on current politics in Latin America. We will first consider recent elections and debates about the direction of Latin American politics. Then we will sequentially address a range of themes: citizenship, electoral democracy, political inclusion, human rights, poverty and economic inequality, and the role of the US in the region. The discussion will touch on most of the countries in Latin America and we will both analyze current issues and consider possible responses to the problems we discuss.

#### **2. Requirements**

The basic requirements include five quizzes (20 % of the overall grade), a 15-page research paper, to be presented in class (20 %), an in-class mid-term (30 %), and an in-class final exam (30 %). Class participation is also an essential part of the course.

With regard to the quizzes, I have included provisional dates in the syllabus, but these may change slightly. The exact dates will be announced in class. Of the five quizzes, I will drop the lowest one and thus compute grades on the basis of your best four quizzes.

With regard to your research papers, you are supposed to define your own topic of study. The only requirement concerning topic selection is that it must be related to the issues discussed in the course and that it must be based upon scholarly literature, that is, academic books, articles in professional journals, etc. A brief description of your topic, on a sheet of paper or by email, is due on October 23.

#### **3. Readings**

All the readings are accessible through the Blackboard, under "Course Documents." Some of the electronic files include other materials, which do not need to be read. The specific chapters are clearly listed below.

## 1. Introduction

**An Overview of Recent Elections and Current Governments** (Meetings 1, 2, 3 & 4: 8/26, 8/28, 9/2, 9/4)

Jorge Castañeda and Patricio Navia, “The Year of the Ballot,” *Current History* (Feb. 2007): 51-57.

**Interpretations and Arguments about Current Latin American Politics** (Meetings 5, 6 & 7: 9/9, 9/11, 9/16)

Jorge G. Castañeda, “Latin America’s Left Turn,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2006).

Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid and Igor Paunovic, “Old Wine In New Bottles? Economic Policymaking by Left-of-center Governments in Latin America,” *ReVista* (Spring/Summer 2006): 44-47.

Mitchell A. Seligson, “The Rise of Populism and the Left in Latin America,” *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 18, Nº 3 (July 2007): 81-95.

Abraham F. Lowenthal, *Beyond the Western Hemisphere Idea: Understanding and Improving U.S. Policies toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Los Angeles, Pacific Council on International Policy Special Report, 2007), 16 pages.

**-Quiz # 1** (9/16)

## 2. Democracy and Citizenship

**What is Democracy? What is the State of Citizenship Rights?** (Meetings 8 & 9: 9/18, 9/23)

UNDP, “Democratic Development Indicators,” pp. 77-129, in United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Democracy in Latin America. Toward a Citizens’ Democracy* (New York Aires: UNDP, 2005).

## 3. Political Citizenship: Electoral Democracy

**Electing Representatives** (Meetings 10, 11 & 12: 9/25, 9/30, 10/1)

Sharon F. Lean, “External Validation and Democratic Accountability in Latin American Elections,” in Thomas Legler, Sharon F. Lean, and Dexter Boniface (eds.), *Promoting Democracy in the Americas? States, Multilateral, and Transnational Actors*, unpublished manuscript.

Organization of American States (OAS), *Report of the Electoral Observation Mission in Peru (2000 General Election)* (Washington, DC: OAS, 2000).

Gerardo L. Munck, “Systematizing Practices: Criteria and Methods for Electoral Observation,” pp. 34-45, in Elizabeth Spehar and Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian with Raúl Alconada Sempé (eds.), *The 2005-2006 Electoral Cycle in the Americas: A Review of the OAS General Secretariat* (Washington, DC: General Secretariat of the OAS, 2007).

**-Quiz # 2** (10/1)

### **Completing Electoral Terms** (Meetings 13, 14 & 15: 10/7, 10/9, 10/14)

Arturo Valenzuela, "Latin American Presidencies Interrupted," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 15, N° 4 (October 2004): 5-19.

Rubén M. Perina, "The Role of the Organization of American States," in Morton H. Halperin and Mirna Galic (eds.), *Protecting Democracy: International Responses* (Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2005).

Meeting 16: October 16

\*\*\* In-Class Mid-Term Exam: October 16 \*\*

## **4. More on Political Citizenship**

**Political Inclusion and Questions of Gender, Ethnicity and Race** (Meetings 17 & 18: 10/21, 10/23)

Llanos, Beatriz and Kristen Sample. *30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women's Political Participation in Latin America* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2008). 55 pp.

Álvaro Bello and Marta Rangel, "Equity and Exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Case of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples," *CEPAL Review* 76 (2002): 35-53.

Donna Lee Van Cott, "Latin America's Indigenous Peoples," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 18, N° 4 (2007): 127-142

**-Quiz # 3** (10/23)

## **5. Civil Citizenship**

**Police Killings, Torture, Prisons, and the Legal System** (Meetings 19, 20 & 21: 10/28, 10/30, 11/4)

Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2008), pp. 185-231 (section on Americas).

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), "Human Rights Developments in the Region," Chapter IV of the *OAS Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2007* (Washington, DC: OAS, 2008). Read this report online at: <http://cidh.oas.org/annualrep/2007eng/TOC.htm> Make sure to read the sections on all the four countries covered (Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela).

Daniel M. Brinks, "Lessons from the Prosecution of Rights Violations for Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law," unpublished paper, 2007

**-Quiz # 4** (11/4)

## **6. Social Citizenship**

**Poverty and Economic Inequality** (Meetings 22, 23 & 24: 11/6, 11/11, 11/13)

Joseph Nathan Cohen and Miguel Angel Centeno, "Neoliberalism and Patterns of Economic Performance, 1980-2000," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* N° 606 (July 2006): 32-67.

Evelyne Huber, "Inequality and the State in Latin America," Paper prepared for the Conference of the APSA Task Force on Difference and Inequality in the Developing World, University of Virginia, April 22-23, 2005.

Florencia Jubany and Judy Meltzer, "The Achilles' Heel of Latin America: The State of the Debate on Inequality," *FOCAL Policy Paper*, 2004.

Thomas E. Skidmore, "Brazil's Persistent Income Inequality: Lessons from History," *Latin American Politics & Society* Vol. 46, N° 2 (Summer 2004): 133-50.

**-Quiz # 5** (11/13)

## **7. The US and Latin America**

**The Bush Years** (Meetings 25 & 26: 11/18, 11/20)

Jorge I. Dominguez, "Bush Administration Policy," *ReVista* (Spring/Summer 2005): 3-5.

Peter Hakim. "Is Washington Losing Latin America?" *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2006): 39-53.

Michael Shifter, *Hugo Chávez: A Test for U.S. Policy* (A Special Report of the Inter-American Dialogue, March 2007).

## **8. An Agenda for Latin America**

**Priorities and Proposals** (Meetings 27 & 28: 11/25, 12/2)

Drawing on the knowledge we have developed in this course, we will conduct a group discussion geared to formulating an agenda for Latin America that i) identifies a set of priority issues that deserve to be addressed, and ii) presents proposals regarding the changes that would have to be implemented to tackle the main problems in the region.

**\*\*\* Thanksgiving Holiday: November 27 \*\*\***

## **9. A Review**

**Conclusions about Latin American Politics** (Meeting 29: 12/4)

**\*\*\* Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m \*\*\***