

University of West Georgia
Spring 2018
POLS 4403 – 01
Latin American Politics
TR 09:30 – 10:45 pm Pafford 111

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the semester, students will demonstrate that they have developed the ability to:

1. Describe the main historical trends and evolution of contemporary Latin American political systems.
2. Compare Latin American political systems.
3. Write effectively about Latin American political phenomena
4. Analyze Latin American political issues and phenomena using political science concepts, theories, and methods.
5. Propose solutions to Latin American political issues through examination, investigation, formulation and construction of a research paper.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to contemporary Latin American politics. In recent decades democratically elected governments have gradually replaced authoritarian regimes and market economies have replaced state run economies. How can we explain these recent changes? During this semester, we will compare and contrast different countries in order to understand how variations in their social, political, and economic institutions have affected and continue to affect the political and economic development of Latin America's emerging democracies.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Common Language for course syllabi: <https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Required Text:

Thomas E. Skidmore, Peter H. Smith, and James N. Green. Modern Latin America, 8th. Edition. 2013. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19992923-8

In addition, other required readings will be available online through [Ingram Library's](#) databases (JSTOR, ProjectMUSE, [EReserves](#), etc.), and the class website in [CourseDen](#).

Attendance: You cannot participate, contribute, and learn if you are not in class. Therefore, attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences. **Students who miss more than 4 lectures will incur a penalty worth 10% of their Final Grade.** Please be aware that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Participation: The structure of weekly class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, in-class and online discussions, small group activities. **Current News:** One of the most important aspects of participation will entail discussing the most relevant and current political news from across Latin America. I will post links to news articles in CourseDen and you will be expected to read them before class. **Geographic Literacy:** Another important aspect of the course is to become familiar with the basic geography of Latin America. This means that I will expect everyone to identify the countries and capitals of Latin America, along with other relevant political information that we will discuss throughout the semester. So please come to class

prepared and ready to participate in whatever activities are planned for each session.

Reading Discussions: An important component of the course is to read carefully and critically in order to identify, summarize, and evaluate the main ideas and arguments in the assigned readings. You will be required to complete ten (10) reading discussions. All discussions conclude on their due date, by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, and no extensions will be granted. Below is the grading rubric for the discussions.

Reading Discussion Rubric	Points
No response or inadequate response (unconstructive criticisms of literature, does not link the discussion to the text, incoherent ramblings).	0
Adequate response (identifies some questions and ideas, but does not summarize and evaluate the arguments presented in the readings).	1-2
Good response (identifies key questions, concepts, theory, and evidence; but the summary and evaluation is not clear or coherently).	3-4
Excellent response (identifies key questions, puzzles, concepts, theory, evidence, and methodology; summarizes and evaluates how well the author develops the central argument clearly and coherently, and raises critical questions for further discussion).	5

Research Paper: You are required to write a research paper for this course. **The research paper is worth 50% of the Final Grade.** To ease anxiety over completion of this requirement, it is divided into 4 steps: case study proposal, annotated bibliography, first draft, and final draft. Please see the table below for each step's due date and grade value.

Grade Calculation – Grades will be calculated as follows:

No.	Requirement	Page Count	Due Date	% Grade Value
1	Reading Discussions (10)	TBA	See Weekly Schedule	50
3	Case Study Proposal	2	Thursday, February 01	10
4	Annotated Bibliography	5	Thursday, February 22	10
5	First Draft	10-12	Monday, April 01	20
6	Final Draft	12-15	Thursday, May 3	10

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. **Extra credit** will be awarded for documented attendance to special events such as lectures, films, community events, etc. Additional information about the online discussions, research paper, and other coursework will be discussed as the semester progresses.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Civility is very important in the conduct of politics, and it is of paramount importance in fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom. Therefore, we will adhere to the following practices during class: (1) Please arrive on time. (2) Please turn cell phones to airplane mode. (3) Please do not text, sleep, or work on material for other courses. (4) Since we will deal with controversial issues on a regular basis, and since it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility, personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Email: All e-mail communication will proceed through official UWG channels (i.e. CourseDen,

official UWG Gmail accounts). I prefer that you contact me directly at: jperalta@westga.edu

Discussion board: There is a discussion board called “Ask the Instructor a General Question.” Please ask general information or assignment questions there so that everyone may see the answers. If you need to contact me on a different matter, please contact me through the email tab of the course website. For this class to work effectively, and for you to remain informed of course developments and latest updates, please login to the course website approximately every 48 hours.

Response Time and Netiquette: (1) If you ask me direct questions in CourseDen or via email, I will generally reply back within two working days or 24-48 hours (weekend and holidays are not working days). (2) Please abide by basic Internet etiquette or netiquette when communicating online. Emails must be properly addressed and use appropriate language, tone, and grammar. Also, communication in an online environment takes special consideration, so please avoid using acronyms (text message abbreviations); and keep in mind that your posts are public and cannot be retracted or deleted!

Disclaimer: No student can claim any rights based upon “perceived” omissions, ambiguities, vagueness or incompleteness contained in this syllabus. The instructor retains the right to amend this syllabus without prior notice.

Fair Use: All “Website” content and “Course Materials” for this course are intended for the sole use of the enrolled members only; for the purposes associated with it; and may not be retained, altered, shared, or further disseminated without explicit authorization from the copyright holder.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction and Latin American Context

Jan. 08 – 12: Introduction to the class and each other

Chapter 1: Why Latin America? Skidmore et al., pp. 3-13.

Chapter 2: “The Colonial Foundations, 1492 – 1880s.” Skidmore et al., pp. 14-41.

Reading Discussion 1 Due Thursday, 11 January 2018, by 5 pm.

Jan. 15 – 19: Development and Democracy

Chapter 12: “Strategies for Development” Skidmore et al., pp. 351-375.

Chapter 9: Argentina – Progress, Stalemate, Discord

Reading Discussion 2 Due Thursday, 18 January 2018, by 5 pm.

Jan. 22 – 26: Ebb and Flow of democracy. . .

Chapter 13: “Dynamics of Political Transformation” Skidmore et al., pp. 376-402.

Chapter 10: Chile – Repression and Democracy

Reading Discussion 3 Due Thursday, 25 January 2018, by 5 pm.

Jan. 29–Feb 02: Research Discussion

No readings assigned for this week

Case Study Proposal Due Thursday, 01 February 2018, by 5pm

Module 2 – Ideology and Politics in Latin America

Feb. 05 – 09: Latin America’s Left Turn

Readings TBA

Reread Chapter 12: Strategies for Economic Development

Reading Discussion 4 Due Thursday, 08 February 2018, by 5 pm

Feb. 12 – 16: Latin America’s Right Turn

Reread Chapter 10: Chile – Repression and Democracy

Reading Discussion 5 Due Thursday, 15 February 2018, by 5 pm

Module 3 – Many Countries, Different Paths

Feb. 19 – 23: Cuba: Chapter 5: “Key Colony, Socialist State” Skidmore et al., pp. 121-149.

Annotated Bibliography Due Thursday, 22 February 2018, by 5 pm

Feb. 26 – Mar. 02: Cuba (Continued)

Chapter 4: Central America – Within the U.S. Orbit

Reading Discussion 6 Due Thursday, 01 March 2018, by 5 pm

Mar. 05 – 09: Venezuela: Chapter 8: “The Perils of Prosperity.” Skidmore et al., pp. 219-243.

Readings TBA

Film: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.

Reading Discussion 7 Due Thursday, 08 March 2018, by 5 pm

Mar. 12 – 16: Venezuela: (continued)

Readings TBA

Reading Discussion 8 Due Thursday, 15 March 2018, by 5 pm

Mar. 19 – 23: Spring recess (no classes) –

Mar. 26 – 30: Research Week

First Draft Due Thursday, 29 March 2018, by 5 pm

Apr. 02 – 06: Brazil: Chapter “The Awakening Giant” Skidmore et al., pp. 306-348.

Apr. 09 – 13: Brazil (continued)

Readings TBA

Reading Discussion 9 Due Thursday, 05 April 2018, by 5 pm

Apr. 16 – 20: México: Chapter 3: “The Taming of a Revolution.” Skidmore et al., pp. 45-81.

Guillermoprieto, Alma. 2001. Looking for History. Pp. 239-274.

April 23 – 27: México (Continued)

Chapter 16: Latin America in the World Arena, 1990s-Present

Reading Discussion 10 Due Thursday, 19 April 2018, by 5 pm

April 30 – May 08: Final Exams Week

Final Draft due Thursday, 3 May 2018, 8:00am-10:00am