

International Relations 365: Politics and Democracy in Latin America

Spring 2006

When: Tu & Th 12:30-1:50
Where: VKC 156
Office Hours: Tu 2:00-3:30
Office: VKC 326A

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1. Course Description

The course focuses on Latin America's experience with democracy and seeks to offer: 1) an survey of the region's experience with democracy, 2) a detailed discussion of the trends in Latin American politics over the last 25 years, and 3) a discussion of the challenges Latin America has still not managed to tackle successfully.

The course will seek to meet these objectives by offering both broad overviews of the region and in-depth analyses of a set of countries. The selected countries are those that are economically dominant in the region (Brazil and Mexico), that exemplify certain common patterns or notable alternatives (Argentina, Chile, Cuba) or that have been experiencing some a particularly troubling trends in recent times (Peru and Colombia). Though an emphasize will be placed on events in these countries since the 1980s, the historical context of recent developments and external influences (in particular, the role of the United States) will also be considered.

2. Requirements

The basic requirements include six quizzes (25% of the overall grade), a 15-page research paper (20%), an in-class mid-term (25%), and an in-class final exam (30%).

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 six quizzes, I will drop the lowest one and thus compute grades on the basis of your best five 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. Of course, other non-academic sources (including Internet sources), may be consulted and drawn upon. Concerning the organization of the paper, what I am looking for is the clear presentation of an argument that is well integrated with supporting information. That is, the simple description of a whole series of events is not enough. You are encouraged to get assistance from me in terms of defining your topic of research, pinpointing some of the essential sources, discussing drafts of your paper, etc. A brief description of your topic, on a sheet of paper or a 3x5 card, is due in class on March 2, and the papers themselves are due in class on April 27.

3. Readings

We will use one book, which is available at the university bookstore: Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America* Sixth edition (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Topic Outline and Reading Assignments

I. Meetings # 1, 2 & 3 (1/10, 1/12, 1/17). Issues and Trends

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Prologue, Chs. 1 and 2

II. Meetings # 4, 5, 6 & 7 (1/19, 1/24, 1/26, 1/31). Argentina

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 3.
- **Quiz # 1** (1/31)

III. Meetings # 8, 9, 10 & 11 (2/2, 2/7, 2/9, 2/14). Chile

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 4.
- **Quiz # 2** (2/14)

IV. Meetings # 12, 13 & 14 (2/16, 2/21, 2/23). Brazil

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 5.
- **Quiz # 3** (2/23)

Meeting # 15 (2/28). Mid-Term

*** In-Class Mid-Term Exam: February 28 **

V. Meeting # 16, 17, 18 & 19 (3/2, 3/7, 3/9, 3/21). Mexico

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 8.
- **Quiz # 4** (3/21)

*** Paper Topics Due: March 2 ***

*** Spring Recess: March 13-18 ***

VI. Meetings # 20, 21 & 22 (3/23, 3/28, 3/30). Cuba

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 9.

VII. Meetings # 23, 24, 25 & 26 (4/4, 4/6, 4/11, 4/13). Peru and Colombia

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Chs. 6 and 7.
- Quiz # 5** (4/13)

VII. Meetings # 26 & 27 (4/18, 4/20). The United States and Latin America

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Ch. 12.

VIII. Meetings # 28 & 29 (4/25, 4/27). Overview and a Look Forward

- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, Epilogue.
- Quiz # 6** (4/25)

***** Research Papers Due: April 27 *****

***** Final Exam: Wednesday, May 10, 2-4 p.m. *****