POLI319 Latin American Politics

McGill University, Fall 2018 semester (3 credits)
Mondays 2:35-5:25PM, Maas 112
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Office Hours: TBA

Teaching Assistants:
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Course Description:
This course will deal with the dynamics of political change in Latin America. The course examines the various ways in which political power has been structured, exercised, and redistributed in Latin America. We will examine major themes including: leadership patterns, key institutions such as the military and the presidency, influential ideologies and modes of mobilization, political violence, gender and indigenous peoples, and major regime transitions such as the shifts to authoritarianism and, more recently, democratization. We will also analyze the role and influence of external actors in the region, especially the United States and the international financial institutions (IFIs).

Prerequisite: A basic course in Comparative Politics or a course on the region or written permission of the instructor. Note: The area in the field of Comparative Politics is Developing Areas. For this course, there is no expectation of prior knowledge of Latin American politics.

Requirements
- **Come to class prepared:** Do all the assigned readings before class. This is important in order for you to be able to follow the lectures, which will build on (rather than just review) the readings, and for participation in your conferences.
- **Attend class and take notes:** The lectures will go far beyond the material in the textbook, so you will need to absorb and retain the lecture contents in order to succeed.
- **Check the course website regularly:** I will post assignments, announcements, and other key features of the course on our website. I will remind you about this in class, but it is your responsibility to keep up with any and all online aspects of the course.

Readings:
The course readings are available in the course-pack available at the University bookstore. Copies of the course-pack will also be placed on 3-hour reserve at the library; also, many of the readings are journal articles that you can access digitally or in hard copy via the University library.
Course Requirements and Assessment:

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (10%): This includes attendance and participation in conference discussions and reflects both quality and quantity. Please note: You will lose the entire 10% if you have more than 3 unjustified conference absences.

IN-CLASS MIDTERM (25%): The midterm exam will be held in class on Monday 22 October.

RESEARCH ESSAY (35%): The essay should be 10-12 double-spaced pages. I will post suggested essay topics on MyCourses the week of October 1st. The essay is due in class on Monday 19 November. You are welcome to choose your own essay topic, but in that case, make sure to get your TA to approve the topic beforehand. I will post an essay-writing guide on MyCourses, which you should follow carefully, and which will contain information about how to choose a topic and organize your essay.

FINAL EXAM (30%): To be scheduled by the University during the final exam period in December.

PLEASE NOTE: Late work submitted without a doctor’s note will be accepted with a penalty of 10% per day late. Excuses without a doctor’s note will not be accepted. Make-up assignments will be offered only if a student misses an exam for a valid medical reason backed up by a doctor’s note. Please note that I cannot change the grading scheme if you are unhappy with your grade and wish to be granted special permission to complete a supplementary assignment for extra credit, or to have future work count for a greater percentage of your final grade. This would be unfair to the rest of the class. It is the student’s responsibility to complete course work on time – printer issues and other technical malfunctions will not be taken as a valid excuse. Make sure to back up your work regularly.

Fair Warnings: Lateness is disruptive. Please do not arrive to class late. You may take notes on a laptop computer, but be sure to switch off your ringer and put away all cell phones and other electronics before the start of class. Texting and using social media in the classroom is incredibly disruptive for students and teacher alike; I ask you all to refrain from electronically distracting yourselves, and in return, I pledge to make our class as riveting as I possibly can.

Students with disabilities: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a very serious offence. If you have any questions whatsoever about what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me at my office hours or email me. The University also has a comprehensive set of guidelines about how to avoid plagiarism, including a warning about consequences. Read the statement below:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must
understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

« L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/). »

Also:

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue). »

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

SCHEDULE OF COURSE READINGS

Week 1 (10 September): Historical Background and Political Systems

Week 2 (17 September): Populism
Corrales, Javier, 2006. “Hugo Boss,” Foreign Policy (January/February)

Week 3 (24 September): Authoritarianism (TA Conferences Begin)

Clark, Timothy, 2017. “Rethinking Chile’s ‘Chicago Boys’: Neoliberal Technocrats or Revolutionary Vanguard? *Third World Quarterly* Vol.38, No.6 pp.1350-1365

**Week 4 (1 October): NO CLASS – ELECTION DAY**

**Leftist Insurgencies *** LECTURE TO BE POSTED ONLINE *****


**Week 5 (8 October): NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING**

**Week 6 (15 October) The Historical Role of the United States**

McSherry, J. Patrice, 2005. *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* Chapters 1 and 2 (pp.1-67)


***MIDTERM EXAM IN-CLASS, Monday 22 October***

**Week 7 (29 October): Subalternity, Genocide, and Truth**


**Week 8 (5 November): Dependencia**

Film: Life and Debt (2000) Director: Stephanie Black

Week 9 (12 November): Power Configurations in Caribbean States
Schuller, Mark. 2017. “Haiti’s “Republic of NGOs”” Current History (February)

Week 10 (19 November): The Perils and Promises of Democratic Transition

Week 11 (26 November): Gender and Political Mobilization
Fisher, Jo. 1989. Mothers of the Disappeared (Boston, MA: South End Press), Chapters 3 and 7 (pp.52-70 and 127-148)

Week 12 (3 December): Post-Cold War Democracy and Violence
Week 13 (4 December): State-Society Relations and Challenges for the Future
Taylor, Matthew. 2016. “Brazil in the Crucible of Crisis” Current History (February)
Magaloni, Beatriz, and Zaira Razu. 2016. “Mexico in the Grip of Violence” Current History (February)

***Final Exam to be scheduled by the University during the final exam period***

Valuable resources for further reading on Latin American politics include: Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs (now titled Latin American Politics and Society); Journal of Latin American Studies; Latin American Research Review; Journal of Inter-American Economic Affairs; NACLA (North American Council on Latin America) Report on the Americas; Latin American Perspectives; Third World Quarterly; Foreign Affairs; Foreign Policy; Current History (especially February or March edition each year which is usually dedicated to Latin America); Journal of Democracy.

Suggested films: Che Part I and Che Part II (Steven Soderbergh), The Dancer Upstairs (John Malkovich), Life and Debt