

**PSC 252 -- LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS**  
**Spring 2015**  
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In spite of the proximity of Latin America to the United States, most U.S. citizens have little understanding of political life in the region. They tend to rely on alarmist reports about violence and instability, and suffer from misperceptions about the patterns of poverty and economic stagnation. This course attempts to move beyond superficial headline analysis to explore institutions, processes, movements and trends in the region, especially those that have emerged in the last decade. Recognizing that Latin American countries differ among themselves, we will give attention to important variations within the region. In the process of exploring these patterns, we will tackle some of the thorniest questions in the field of political science, including what the concept of “democracy” means, where this kind of system comes from, and the circumstances under which it deepens and/or erodes.

The first four weeks of this course will provide a broad conceptual overview of Latin American politics. We will spend time analyzing the political institutions, political parties, social forces, and domestic and international actors that have shaped governmental processes in the region. You will have the opportunity to examine analytical debates about the nature of democracy and its different forms of expression in Latin America. In the process, you will deepen your understanding of the varieties of democracy, the diverse configurations and roles of the state, and multiple forms of civic participation that have emerged in this politically innovative region. This discussion also gives special attention to the problems posed by the region’s legacy of inequality and external intervention.

The second section of the course examines the relationship between neoliberal transitions, democratization, and the recent political shift to the left in Latin America. This discussion allows us to ponder the meaning and durability of this shift and debate its causes and consequences. We will give special attention to four left-leaning governments in South America: Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile and Brazil. Using recent scholarly literature on the question, we explore the regional division between moderate left governments, which are characterized by gradualism and institutional persistence, and the more radical or “contestatory” left, which emphasizes deeper changes in the political and economic framework. We will compare the kinds of changes introduced in Venezuela under Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro and Bolivia under Evo Morales, which are generally viewed as more radical regimes, with those emerging in Chile under the *Concertación* governments and Brazil under the Workers’ Party, which are generally classified as more moderate, reformist systems. As we progress through the case studies, you will have the

opportunity to participate in a set of debates about the democratic and anti-democratic features that are found in these political systems.

The final section of the course examines the relationship between institutional politics, as expressed in campaigns, elections and the formal structures of government, and the non-institutional, informal forms of political life that emerge in street politics, social movements and protest campaigns. Paying close attention to popular mobilizations and “social movement partyism,” we trace the networks, discourse, strategies and alliances emerging in this politically dynamic region. Drawing on overviews and case material from Central American countries, including recent elections in El Salvador and Costa Rica, this section concludes the course.

### **READINGS:**

1. Daniel C. Hellinger, *Comparative Politics of Latin America: Democracy at Last?* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Routledge, 2015);
2. Paul Almeida, *Mobilizing Democracy: Globalization and Citizen Protests* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014);
3. Readings linked electronically to the syllabus at the D2L website.

### **GRADING**

Daily class participation	10 %
Mid-term exam	25
Venezuela or Bolivian case assessment (5-6 pages)	20
Chile or Brazil case assessment (5-6 pages)	20
Two debate briefs (1 page each) and debate participation	5
Final take-home exam on protest campaigns (4-5 pages)	20

#### *Daily class participation*

Plan to attend all class sessions, and come prepared to discuss the material assigned for the day. Missing more than two classes will result in the lowering of your participation grade.

#### *In-Class Mid-Term Exam*

The in-class exam will focus on key concepts and major theoretical debates introduced in the first four weeks of the quarter. You will be asked to write (1) short definitions of a set of concepts that we'll be using during the rest of the quarter (50 points), and (2) an interpretive essay that tackles a major theoretical issue (50 points).

#### *Case Assessments*

This class will take a close look at four Latin American countries (Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil and Chile), each of which has experienced a shift to the left in recent elections. In each case, we will try to identify the characteristics that are building and strengthening democracy and those that challenge or diminish the quality of democracy in this country. You will have the opportunity to analyze the democratic/undemocratic characteristics of one of the two “refoundational” regimes (Venezuela and Bolivia) and one of the two

“social democratic” governments (Brazil and Chile). Your case assessments should begin with a brief overview of the current political system (main political parties, leaders, political institutions, economic model, and social programs), and then turn to an analysis of the main democratic achievements and limitations found in this system.

#### *Debates and debate briefs*

Discussion of each of these four countries will conclude with a debate about the character, extent and quality of democracy found in that system. Each member of the class will participate in two of the debates. Teams composed of five students will prepare and present the arguments and evidence on each side of this debate.

You will need to decide which refoundational (Venezuela or Bolivia) and social democratic (Brazil or Chile) country you want to focus on, and which side you want to defend. I will circulate a sign-up sheet early in the quarter so that you can make your selection and begin working with your teammates.

This assignment requires you to review the readings carefully, conduct additional research as needed, and compile an outline of arguments and evidence on both sides of the debate. Debate preparation involves meeting with your teammates to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the position you will be defending and to divide up additional research required for the debate. You’ll want to review the opposing position carefully, looking for the weaknesses in the arguments that will be leveled against your position.

On the day of the debate, each person will submit an individual 1-page debate brief, outlining the main arguments and evidence you plan to present during the debate. Make sure you cover the assigned course readings carefully, giving page numbers and specific references to bolster your claims. This brief should include a bibliography of any additional sources you draw on. (Keep in mind that a brief is not just a list of topics. You need to identify three or four key issues, explain the arguments you plan to advance, and summarize the evidence that supports this position).

#### *Final take home exam*

This 4-5 page paper draws on Paul Almeida’s *Mobilizing Democracy* to explore the causes and consequences of “protest campaigns” in Latin America. Your essay will analyze the social bases and multisectoral networks used by protest movements; the main cognitive frames that inform their mobilizations; the tactics and strategies they tend to employ; their relationships with political parties and government officials; and their impacts on political life in the region.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

My office hours are MW 1:00-2:00 and 4:30-5:00, and by appointment. The best way to contact me is by email: [rspaldin@depaul.edu](mailto:rspaldin@depaul.edu). I would like each of you will come by to talk with me at some point in the quarter.

Please be aware that any late papers will lose one letter grade for each day they are late, and no papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive reasonable accommodation based on your needs, please inform me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677 in Student Center #370, and/or The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The University's Academic Integrity Policy notes that "violations of academic integrity are detrimental to the intellectual development of individuals within the community and to the community at large." Students should be aware of the strong sanctions against plagiarism as stated in the current Bulletin/Student Handbook. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion from the University. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details. If you have any additional questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials, be sure to discuss these concerns with me.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

--Introduction to course objectives and design (**March 31**)

**1. Introduction to Latin American Politics (**April 1**)**

- A. Comparative method
- B. Concepts of democracy
  - 1. Liberal democracy and “polyarchy”
  - 2. Liberal and “Illiberal” democracy
  - 3. Procedural and Substantive democracy
  - 4. Democracy and inequality

**Readings: Hellinger, Introduction, Chapters 1-2**

**2. Struggle for Sovereignty and Development (**April 6**)**

- A. Populism and the advent of mass politics
- B. Economic dependence and development theory
  - 1. From agro-export to import substitution
- C. Neoliberal and post-neoliberal transitions

**Readings : Hellinger, Chapters 5-6**

**3. Democracy and Authoritarianism (**April 8**)**

- A. Breakdown of populist democracy
- B. Varieties of military rule
- C. Re-democratization: pacted democracies and transitions

**Readings : Hellinger, Chapters 7-8**

**Debate sign up**

## **Friday, April 10**

Center for World Catholicism Conference   DePaul Student Center, Rm. 120AB  
 Registration/Check-In 5:00-5:30pm              Reception 5:30-7:00pm  
 Keynote Presentation : Michael A. Perry, OFM, Minister General, Franciscan Order  
*From Assisi to Buenos Aires: The Cry of the Planet and the Call for a New Ethics of Sustainability (Reflections on an Integral Vision of Creation in the Life of St. Francis & Pope Francis)*

## **4. Civil Society, Law and Human Rights (April 13)**

- A. Social class division and political articulation
- B. Women's movements and ethnic organizing
- C. State violence and uncivil society
- D. Rule of law and human rights protections

**Readings : Hellinger, Chapters 11 and 14**

## **5. Formal Politics : Parties and Elections (April 15)**

- A. Political party typology
- B. Constitutions and political institutions
- C. Executive-legislative relations

**Readings : Hellinger, Chapters 12-13**

## **6. Global Connections and US Involvement (April 20)**

- A. Economic globalization: opportunities and challenges
- B. Intervention, sovereignty, and democracy

**Readings : Hellinger, Chapters 15-16**

## **Mid-term exam : April 22nd**

## **7. Left governments in Latin America (April 22)**

- A. Revolution, "refoundational" regimes, and social democratic transitions
- B. Cases and political typologies

### **1. VENEZUELA: (April 27-29)**

- a. From Partyarchy to a Bolivarian Republic
- b. People's democracy? "Radical democracy"? "Illiberal democracy?"
- c. Concepts and debates about 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism

**Readings:** Hellinger, Chapters 9 and 10;

--Steve Ellner, "Social and Political Diversity and the Democratic Road to Change in Venezuela," *Latin American Perspectives* 40, #3 (May 2013): 63-82 (at D2L);  
 --Yordan K. Kutuyski and André Krouwel, "Narrowing the Gap: Explaining the Increasing Competitiveness of the Venezuelan Opposition," *Latin American Politics and Society* 56, #4 (December 2014): 71-97 (at D2L);

--Ewan Robertson, "Venezuela in 2014: Maduro Administration Given Reprieve by Divided Opposition," *Venezuela Analysis*, December 19, 2014

<http://venezuelanalysis.com/print/11096>;

--Freedom House, "Freedom in the World–Venezuela (2015)"

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/venezuela#.VRcQk-F1x34>;

--*Democracy Now*, Amy Goodman, March 11, 2015,

On Venezuela and US policy, 21 minutes, from 14:25-35:30

<http://publish.dvlabs.com/democracynow/ipod/dn2015-0311.mp4>

#### **April 29: First Debate--Assessing the type and quality of democracy in Venezuela**

##### **2. BOLIVIA: Political Transformation and "Heterodox" Left (May 4-6)**

- a. Bolivian political instability and inequality
- b. Indigenous movements, Cocaleros and Evo Morales
- c. Heterodox social and economic reform

#### **Readings:**

--Nancy Postero, "The Struggle to Create Radical Democracy in Bolivia," *Latin American Research Review*, Special Issue, 2010: 59-78

[http://lasa-2.univ.pitt.edu/LARR/prot/fulltext/Vol45noSI/Postero\\_59-78\\_45-SI.pdf](http://lasa-2.univ.pitt.edu/LARR/prot/fulltext/Vol45noSI/Postero_59-78_45-SI.pdf);

--Jason Tockman and John Cameron, "Indigenous Autonomy and the Contradictions of Plurinationalism in Bolivia," *Latin American Politics and Society* 56, 3 (September 2014): 46-69 (at D2L);

--Clare Ribando Seelke, "Bolivia: In Brief," Congressional Research Service, April 17, 2014 <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43473.pdf>;

--Freedom House, "Freedom in the World-Bolivia (2014);"

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/bolivia#.VRce2uF1x35>

#### **May 6: Second Debate--Assessing the type and quality of democracy in Bolivia**

#### **May 11: First case assessment due (either Venezuela or Bolivia)**

##### **3. BRAZIL: "Social Liberalism" and Democratic Institutions (May 11-13)**

- a. Development and the social question
- b. Military retreat and the return of party competition
- c. PT government: expectations and discontents

#### **Readings:**

--Nicholas Lemann, "The Anointed," *The New Yorker*, December 5, 2011

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/12/05/the-anointed>;

--Mark Weisbrod, Jake Johnston and Stephan Lefebvre, "The Brazilian Economy in Transition: Macroeconomic Policy, Labor and Inequality," Center for Economic and Policy Research, September 2014 <http://www.cepr.net/documents/brazil-2014-09.pdf>;

--Ivonete da Silva Lopes, "Political Culture and the Democratization of Communication in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 41, #5 (September 2014): 129-140 (at D2L);

--Simon Romero, "In Nationwide Protests, Angry Brazilians Call for Ouster of President," *New York Times*, March 15, 2015;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/16/world/anger-bubbles-up-against-brazilian-president.html>;

--Freedom House, "Freedom in the World-Brazil (2015),"  
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/brazil#.VRccJ-F1x34>

### **May 13: Third Debate--Assessing the type and quality of democracy in Brazil**

#### **4. CHILE: Incremental reform under *Concertación* (May 18-20)**

- A. Post-military transition to democracy
- B. Adjusting neoliberalism in a democratic era
- C. Possibilities for and constraints to reform

#### **Readings:**

- Claudio Fuentes, "Shifting the Status Quo: Constitutional Reforms in Chile," *Latin American Politics and Society* 57, #1 (2015): 99-122  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2015.00258.x/epdf>;
- Cristian Cabalin, "Neoliberal Education and Student Movements in Chile: Inequalities and Malaise," *Policy Futures in Education*, 10, #2 (2012): 219-228  
[http://www.academia.edu/1836169/Neoliberal\\_education\\_and\\_student\\_movements\\_in\\_Chile\\_Inequalities\\_and\\_malaise](http://www.academia.edu/1836169/Neoliberal_education_and_student_movements_in_Chile_Inequalities_and_malaise);
- Peter J. Meyer, "Chile: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, January 10, 2014 <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40126.pdf>;
- Freedom House, "Freedom in the World-Chile (2014)"  
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/chile#.VRcdOeF1x34>

### **May 20: Fourth Debate: Assessing the type and quality of democracy in Chile**

May 25: Memorial Day holiday

#### **May 27: Second case assessment due (Brazil or Chile)**

Film on social movements in Latin America

#### **8. Mobilizing Democracy: protests, politics and change (June 1-3)**

- A. Catalysts and dynamics of protest campaigns in Latin America
- B. Case reports and interpretations (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua)

**Readings for Monday June 1: Almeida, Chapters 1-3**

**Readings for Wednesday June 3: Almeida, Chapters 4, 6, and 8**

Take home exam due **Monday, June 8th at 5:00PM** in my PSC mailbox, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 990 W. Fullerton.

## **Spring 2015 PSC 252 Latin American Politics Debate Roles**

**Venezuela**

Democratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Undemocratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Bolivia**

Democratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Undemocratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Brazil**

Democratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Undemocratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Chile**

Democratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Undemocratic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.