**INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

INTA 2241

Spring 2017

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11:05 – 11:55

Manufacturing Related Disciplines Complex (MRDC) 3403

There are no prerequisites for this course

This course fulfills the Social Science requirement at Georgia Tech

Instructor: Alberto Fuentes ([alberto.fuentes@inta.gatech.edu](mailto:alberto.fuentes@inta.gatech.edu))

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. or by appointment in office 316, Habersham (781 Marietta St)

**Overview**

This course introduces students to the political and developmental trajectories of Latin America’s countries. Students will begin by examining the similarities and differences across the region’s current socio-economic and political landscape. They will then explore a variety of factors that help explain these modern-day commonalities and variations. Those factors are grouped under three thematic categories. The first addresses the colonial experience and independence era. The second turns to the strategies of economic development pursued in the post-independence period. The third reviews the political dynamics that have swept across the region’s countries over the past two centuries. This introductory course will prepare students to better understand and evaluate Latin America’s political and developmental achievements and failures. Students will also be ready for more advanced courses on Latin American politics and government.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior and the global system
2. Understand and critically evaluate some of the explanations for Latin America’s current political and socio-economic conditions
3. Use this knowledge in a practical problem-solving way to analyze and address issues of immediate international concern
4. Express their arguments clearly and effectively both in written reports and class discussions

**Readings:**

Required text: Skidmore et al. “Modern Latin America,” Eighth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2014.

All additional readings will be available on the class website on Canvas.

**Requirements:**

* Attendance and Participation (10%): Attendance is required, and students must complete the assigned readings before class in order to participate in class activities. Absences will count against students’ participation score.
* Worksheets (15%): Throughout the course, students will participate in different in-class activities, including discussions, small group projects and case analyses. In some of those activities, students will be required to complete written worksheets. There are three possible grades for the worksheets: check plus (🗸+), check minus (🗸-) and 0. There will be 16 worksheets spread out throughout the semester. The lowest worksheet score will be dropped.
* Quizzes (10%): Students will complete 11 pop quizzes throughout the course. These short quizzes will have two short answer questions related to the readings for the class. The lowest quiz score will be dropped.
* Midterm Exam (20%): The midterm exam will take place on Friday, February 9. More details will be provided one week before the exam.
* Essay (20%): On Wednesday, March 14, students will turn in one four-page essay. The question to motivate the essay will be provided on Wednesday, March 8, one week before the due date.
* Final exam (25%): The final exam will take place on April 27 (11:30a - 2:20p). Students will be required to write two essays. Questions for the essays will be provided on Friday, April 20.

**ADAPTS**

The instructor will work with ADAPTS so that all students have an equal opportunity for success. For information on ADAPTS, see <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>

**Academic integrity and Honor Code**

While students are encouraged to work together and collaborate with each other, you should clearly differentiate your work from that of others, including your peers and bibliographical sources. Complete and accurate representation of all direct quotations and paraphrased material is required. Plagiarizing will be addressed in accordance with the Georgia Tech Honor Code (<http://honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>)

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| **Week** |  | **Topic** | **Readings** | |
| **LATIN AMERICA TODAY** | | | | |
| Week 1  January 8 – 14 | M |  |  | |
| W | Introduction |  | |
| F | Socio-Economic Similarities | Economist. “Latin America’s Economies: Learning the lessons of stagnation.” June 27, 2015.  \*Recommended: SSG “Venezuela,” pp. 212 – 235 | |
| Week 2  January 15 – 20 | M | HOLIDAY – NO CLASS |  | |
| W | Political Similarities | Paley, D. “The Honduran Business Elite one year after the coup.” *NACLA*, November 30, 2017.  \*Recommended: Wright, L. “Slim’s Time.” *The New Yorker*, June 1, 2009. | |
| F | Socio-Economic and Political Differences | Economist. “The Tragedy of Argentina: A century of decline.” February 17, 2014.  Newman, L. “The other side of Chile’s economic miracle.” *Al Jazeera,* November 16, 2013.  VICE NEWS. “Behind the protests in Caracas: Venezuela rising.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwQcVx9-bpw>)  De la Jara and Taj. “An election that defines the two faces of Chile.” *The Sydney Morning Herald.* | |
| **COLONIALISM AND INDEPENDENCE** | | | | |
| Week 3  January 21 – 28 | M | Explaining the Similarities and Variations | SSG pp. 16-29 | |
| W | Regional similarities: Colonialism | Acemoglu and Robinson. *Why Nations Fail: the origins of power, prosperity and poverty.* New York: Crown Publishers, 2012. (read pp. 18 – 44, skim pp. 45 – 57) | |
| F | Sub-regional variation: Colonialism | Mahoney, J. “Long-run development and the legacy of colonialism in Spanish America.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 9 (1), 2003 (read pp. 50 – 74) | |
| Week 4  January 29 – February 4 | M | The Roots of Independence | SSG pp. 29- 44. | |
| W | Independence through War | SSG pp. 47-53 | |
| F | NO CLASS |  | |
| Week 5  February 5 – 11 | M | Independence through Accommodation | SSG pp. 296 – 305 | |
| W | Bloodless Independence | SSG pp. 79 – 84 | |
| F | MIDTERM EXAM |  | |
| **STRATEGIES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** | | | | |
| Week 6  February 12 – 18 | M | Liberalism: Tenets | | SSG pp. 343 – 349 |
| W | Cases of Liberalism: Argentina, Mexico, Central America | | SSG “Argentina,” pp. 236 – 267  \*Recommended: SSG “Central America,” pp. 79 – 108 |
| F | The End of the Liberal Era | | Economist. “Raul Prebisch: Latin America’s Keynes.” March 5, 2009. |
| Week 7  February 19– 25 | M | Import Substitution Industrialization: Tenets | | SSG pp. 350 –354 |
| W | A case of ISI: Brazil’s Petrobras | | Petrobras. “Our history.” (<http://www.petrobras.com.br/en/about-us/our-history/>)  Priest, T. “Petrobras in the History of Offshore Oil” in ed. Schneider, B. *New Order and Progress: Development and Democracy in Brazil.* Oxford University Press, 2016. (pp. 53-77)  Review: Economist. “Latin America’s Economies: Learning the lessons of stagnation.” June 27, 2015. |
| F | The End of the ISI Era | | Kandell, J. “José López Portillo, President When Mexico's Default Set Off Debt Crisis, Dies at 83.” *The New York Times*, February 18, 2004. |
| Week 8  February 26 – March 4 | M | NO CLASS | |  |
| W | The Socialist Alternative: Tenets | | SSG, pp. 354-358  Frank, A.G. *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution.* MR, New York, 1969. (read pp. 3-9) |
| F | The Socialist Case: Cuba | | SSG “Cuba,” pp. 112 – 141 |
| Week 9  March 5 – 11 | M | Neoliberalism: Tenets | | SSG pp. 358 – 364  Williamson, J. “What Washington Means by Policy Reform,” in ed. Williamson, J., *Latin American Adjustment: How Much has Happened?* Peterson Institute for International Economics: Washington D.C., 1990 (read pp. 1-2 and 8-9, rest optional) |
| W | A Case of Neoliberalism: Chile | | SSG “Chile,” pp. 268 – 295  Review: Newman, L. “The other side of Chile’s economic miracle.” *Al Jazeera,* November 16, 2013.  \*Recommended: “The Andes” (section on Peru), pp. 155 – 166 (especially 162 – 164). |
| F | Free Trade Agreements: NAFTA and MERCOSUR | | Anderson, J. “How Mexico deals with Trump.” *The New Yorker*, October 9, 2017.  Felter and Renwick. “Mercosur: South America’s Fractious Trade Bloc.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 13, 2017. |
| Week 10  March 12 – 18 | M | The Great Recession of 2008: A Challenge to Neoliberalism | | Cypher, J. “Mexico’s economic collapse.” *NACLA*, July/August 2010.  “Lessons from Brazil: Why is it bouncing back while other markets stumble?” *Knowledge@Wharton,* November 11, 2009. |
| W | New Alternative Strategies | | De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. “Can Rafael Correa deliver his citizens’ revolution for Ecuador?” *The Guardian*, May 29, 2014.  Neuman, W. “Turnabout in Bolivia as Economy Rises from Instability.” *New York Times*, February 16, 2014.  Bello. “How Deep is their love?” *Economist,* March 12, 2015.  \*Recommended: SSG “The Andes” (sections on Bolivia, Ecuador), pp. 165 – 183  ESSAY DUE |
| F | NO CLASS | |  |
| **SPRING BREAK: March 20 – 26** | | | | |
| **POLITICAL DYNAMICS** | | | | |
| Week 11  March 26 – April 1 | M | Oligarchic Rule and Co-optative Democracy | | SSG pp. 370 – 373  \*Recommended: SSG “Colombia,” pp. 184 – 211. |
| W | The Strongmen | | SSG “Mexico,” pp. 47 – 78 |
| F | The Mexican Revolution | | Womack Jr., J. *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (pp. TBD) |
| Week 12  April 2 – 8 | M | The Great Depression and Political Crisis | | Chapter TBD in Drinot and Knight (eds.) *The Great Depression in Latin America*. Duke University Press, 2014. |
| W | Military rule, populism and bureaucratic authoritarianism | | SSG pp. 373 – 380 (and review pp. 244-261) |
| F | Human Rights under Military Rule | | Goldman, F. “Children of the Dirty War.” *The New Yorker*, March 19, 2012. |
| Week 13  April 9 – 15 | M | Populist Alliances | | SSG “Brazil,” pp. 296 – 340 |
| W | The Revolution in Plantation Economies | | SSG pp. 380 – 384 |
| F | Cases of Revolution: Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador | | SSG pp. 92 – 102  The Guardian. “Tomas Borge, Sandinistas’ last surviving founder, dies aged 81.” May 1, 2012. |
| Week 14  April 16 – 22 | M | The Third Cycle of Democracy | | SSG pp. 384 – 395 |
| W | Rise and Fall of the New Left and Conservative Alternatives | | Anderson, J. “Post-script: Hugo Chavez, 1954 – 2013.” *New Yorker*, March 5, 2013.  Miroff, N. “Juan Manuel Santos: The risk-taking Colombian president who lost a peace vote but won a Peace Prize.” *The Washington Post*, October 7, 2016. |
| F | Wrap-Up | | FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS PROVIDED |