POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICA

Professor Manuel Balán
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Class meets: M: 11.35am-2.25pm
Class location: EVO420 109
Office hours: M-W: 9.30-10.30am
TAs: Aidan, Laurence

Course Description:
This course aims to introduce students to the evolving politics of Latin America. We will define and analyze key concepts and theories in political science and apply them to the study of the major political trends that have swept Latin America during the last century. The course is divided in three main sections. The first section focuses on the formation of Latin American states, and will briefly cover Latin American political history, starting with colonial legacies and moving to corporatism and the political and economic inclusion of the masses, and finishing with the democratic breakdowns and authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. The second section examines democracy and democratic institutions in the region, analyzing democratic transitions, political regimes and reforms, and institutional changes in democracy, as well as the Left Turn of the 2000s. The third section analyzes some of the main challenges facing the region, specifically focusing on issues of representation, inclusion, and participation. The class will meet once a week, for three hours (once conferences start, some sessions may be cut to 2 hours, but you should anticipate most lectures will go for the whole 3 hours). Given class size, the class will be based on primarily on lecture, although participation and discussion are welcomed and encouraged.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of this class students should:

• gain a thorough understanding of the key theoretical and empirical perspectives surrounding the major political, institutional, economic, and social debates in contemporary Latin America;
• weigh and analytically assess the diverse perspectives and methodological strategies employed to analyze current events in contemporary Latin American politics and society;
• develop critical thinking and writing skills, with the goal of producing effectively argued research and policy assessment;
• develop and practice oral communication with the objective of conveying and discussing academic ideas in oral debates

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MANUAL NOTE- TAKING LECTURE COURSE. THE USE OF ANY MOBILE COMPUTING OR COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES (INCLUDING COMPUTERS, RECORDING DEVICES, PHONES, IPADS, ETC) IS STRICTLY BANNED DURING CLASS, EXCEPT WITH THE EXPLICIT PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
Course Requirements:
Conference Participation (and attendance) 10%
Attending external Talk, written report 5%
Research Essay (due on December 3rd) 25%
Exam 1 (October 7th) 30%
Exam 2 (November 18th) 30%

In order to calculate your final grade, I will sum all of the points you have received in the class and convert the points into letter grades using the following scale:
85-100 = A. 80-84 = A-. 75-79 = B+. 70-74 = B. 65-69 = B-. 60-64 = C+. 55-59 = C. 50-54 = D. Below 50 = F
I will round up scores of 0.5 and higher and round down scores of less than 0.5. No exceptions will be made to the above system of converting points into letter grades.

Procedure for contesting grades:
Students who wish to contest a grade for an assignment or exam must do so in writing (by email, sent to me) providing the reasoning behind their challenge to the grade received, within two weeks of the day on which the assignments are returned. The TA who graded the assignment will re-grade your assignment, and may raise or lower the grade. If you are still unsatisfied after the re-assessment, you can re-submit the assignment to me (original copy with TA comments), along with your justification. I will then re-evaluate submission, but also reserve the right to raise or lower the grade.

Policy for missed exams or deadlines:
In-Class exams will take place on Oct 7th and Nov 18th. If you are absent for documented emergency medical or family reasons, an alternative exam date will be arranged. The alternative arrangement is only open to those who can provide a valid medical/family reason for missing the exam. If you cannot provide a valid reason for your absence, you will receive an F for the missed exam.
Students who need to miss an examination or work assignment due to a religious holiday should notify me via email at least fourteen days prior to the holiday. You will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Late penalties. 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. Assignments will not be accepted after 72 hours. Documented illnesses or family emergencies will be the only grounds for exceptions or extensions. 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.

LECTURES ARE NOT RECORDED. I WILL MAKE PPTs AVAILABLE AFTER EACH LECTURE.
**Breakdown of Grade Components:**

*Conference Participation and Attendance:* Attendance and participation in conferences is required and students are expected to keep up with the readings. While speaking up is important, please keep in mind that it is not just quantity that matters, but also quality. Conferences will be set up once the semester begins. **Please note: You will lose the entire 10% if you have more than 3 unjustified conference absences.**

*Attending talk, written report:* During the term, you will have to attend one of the many talks on Latin American politics that take place either at McGill or elsewhere in Montreal. After attending a talk, you will have to turn in a written report (1000 words, ~3 pages) on this talk. The report should address the following questions: 1. What is the main question and argument advanced in the talk? 2. What is the key takeaway from the presentation? 3. What are its strengths and weaknesses? 4. What question you wish you had asked the presenter at the talk? In order to write a report for a talk, it is mandatory to have attended the talk. Reports are due 3 days after the talk takes place (for example, if a talk takes place on a Thursday, you need to submit the report by the end of the day on Sunday). If in doubt about whether a talk counts (the talk needs to be about Latin American politics), please check with the instructor or your TA. I will circulate information on talks taking place during the term, but you should also do your research and find out potential talks to attend. One resource is the Latin American Studies Network of Montreal (RÉLAM, [www.relam.org](http://www.relam.org) [https://www.facebook.com/relamontreal](https://www.facebook.com/relamontreal)).

*Research Essay:* The essay should be 3000-4000 words (around 10-12 double-spaced pages), not including bibliography. I will post suggested essay topics on MyCourses. The essay is due via MyCourses on December 3rd. 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 more information on this assignment during the term.

*Exams:* On October 7 (Week 6) and November 18th (week 12) we will hold 1.5 hour exams covering the lectures, readings, movies, and conferences up until that point. The exams are not cumulative. Format of the exam will be communicated during the term, but may include short questions, short essays and questions, and map related questions. The exam will draw on Lectures, Conferences, Readings, and Movies. Basically, all that was covered in the course until the end of week 5 can be part of the first exam, and all content from week 6 to week 11, will be part of the second exam. **EXAMS WILL ONLY TAKE UP HALF A CLASS SESSION, THE WILL BE A 1.5 HOUR CLASS IN THE SECOND HALF AFTER THE EXAM.**

*Readings:* There is one book available for purchase at the McGill Bookstore:


The rest of the required readings will be made available online either through the syllabus or MyCourses. Students are responsible for tracking down the recommended. We will watch a few movies (some in class), which are required material for the class.

**Course and University Policies:**
**Integrity:** 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/integrity for more information).

**Special Needs:** If you have a disability, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514.398.6009 before you do this.

**Language:** 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. Note that this right applies to ALL written work that is to be graded, from one-word answers to dissertations.

**Course-Evaluations:** End-of-term course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the students’ learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury.

**MyCourses:** This course has its own website on MyCourses. It will be updated regularly, so you are required to check the MyCourses course page regularly as well.

**Classroom Etiquette:**
I want to create a nice and stimulating learning environment for you and your peers. To do this, I ask that you respect a few basic ground rules:

1- I will start class on time and expect you to arrive to class on time. I make important announcements at the beginning of class. In addition, people coming in late could disrupt the Professor and their fellow students.

2- Similarly, when attending lecture, I expect you to stay until the end (if you need to leave early for some specific reason, please inform me before the lecture and sit close to the door). Lectures end when the instructor says so.

3- This is a manual note-taking lecture course. The use or display of any mobile computing or communications devices (including computers, recording devices, phones, iPads, or iPods) is strictly banned during class, except with the explicit permission of the instructor in exceptional cases.¹

4- Please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones.

**Note:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change. The privilege of additional work will not be granted.

SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1
*Monday, September 2nd*. LABOUR DAY. NO CLASS!

WEEK 2
*Monday, September 9th*. Introduction to the Class: the study of Latin America in Political Science
Latin America as a region, its territory, and cartography. Why study Latin America? In class movie.

Readings:
- Modern Latin America, “Why Latin America?” Chapter 1. Pp. 3-12
- También la Lluvia (movie), shown in class.

WEEK 3

PART 1: The Formation of Latin American States
*Monday, September 16th.*

Part 1: Colonial Legacies
Colonization and the Spanish and Portuguese heritage.

Part 2: The Formation of the State in Latin America
Independence and oligarchic order in Latin America

Readings:
P1

P2.

WEEK 4
*Monday, September 23rd.*

Modes of incorporation of the popular rising classes, populism. The politics of populism as a mechanism for political inclusion. Populist governments in Argentina and Brazil. Import substitution industrialization (ISI), popular national development policies, corporatism and economic inclusion. Was there an elective affinity between economic policy and political system? Was there an economic explanation for the emergence of populism? The political incorporation of labor unions and how it shaped the political system in the post-war era.
bargaining between labor and political elites and its institutional expression in labor regulation and political representation patterns.

**Part 2: The failures of Incorporation**

The failure of the populist model of social inclusion, economic causes of the failure of populism. The promise of democracy and social mobilization for redistribution and political inclusion. Political violence and political closure. The failure of democracy to channel distributive conflict.

**Readings:**

P1.

P2.

**WEEK 5**

**Monday, September 30th.**

**Part 1: Social Mobilization and Democratic Breakdown.**

Why the military? The doctrine of national security, the cases of Brazil, Chile and Argentina. Economic development, political participation, and institutions as alternative explanations for the rise of military rule in Latin America. The emergence of Bureaucratic Authoritarian (BA) regimes.

**Part 2: Authoritarianism in Latin America.**

Comparing military regimes and their political underpinning. Right-wing and left-wing military rulers and state autonomy. Repression of mobilization versus political inclusion and modernization. Southern Cone versus Andean Countries. The Mexican perfect dictatorship.

**Readings:**


Watch:
The Battle of Chile. Part 1, Part 2, Part 3.

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WEEK 6

Monday, October 7th.
Part 1: EXAM.
Part 2: Dealing with the Past: Individual and Collective Responsibility in Punishing Crimes of the Past
Movie: TBC

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WEEK 7

Monday, October 14th. THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS!

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WEEK 8

PART 2: DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONS

Monday, October 21st.
Part 1: Transitions to Democracy.
The loss of legitimacy and fall of authoritarian regimes. Patterns of transition, bargaining as a strategic game with uncertain results, the cost of military rule and how to deal with the legacy during transition to democracy. Challenges of consolidating and deepening democracy. Examples of the Southern Cone.
Transitions in the post-cold war era. Changes in the international context and the patterns of transition. The withdrawal versus the negotiation. What is the effect of the international context on regime change and democratic consolidation? The cases of Mexico and El Salvador.
Part 2: Democratic institutions and the Politics of Economic Liberalization.
Presidentialism vs parliamentary democracy, party systems and institutionalization of political parties in the region, elections and voters in Latin America, governability. The Debt Crisis & its political consequences. The crisis of incumbent regimes. Why was democracy compatible with neoliberal reforms? Was the BA literature wrong? Why was the public supportive of neoliberal reforms? What was the make-up of political coalitions that allowed neoliberal reformers to be effective at governing and winning elections?

Readings:
P1.
Mainwaring (eds). The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advan
P2.
- Weyland, Kurt. 1998. “Swallowing the Bitter Pill,” Comparative Political Studies
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WEEK 9
Moview: South of the Border, in class
No readings!
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WEEK 10
Monday, November 4th. Wednesday. March 11th. The Left Turn in the 2000s
The context of the “left turn.” From free-markets to electoral socialism? The radicalization of policies in Latin America. Typologies of the Latin American left: moderate/institutionalized (Brazil, Chile, Uruguay) vs. radical (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador). Legacies of the Left Turn.

Readings:
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WEEK 11

PART 3: The Challenges to Democratic Governance
Monday, November 11th.
The effect of free-market reform on democratic institutions. The institutional weakness of the new Latin American democracies even without military coups. Elections and accountability.

Part 2: Issues with Political Representation, Inclusion and Ethnicity
The crisis of representation in the new democracies. Political parties as channels for representation and their limitations to include new actors and to institutionalization participation. Democratic stability versus political inclusion. Check and balances versus majoritarianism. The emergence of political outsiders.
The impact of ethnic politics on the political systems of the region. Identity versus distributive politics: overlapping or alternatives? How to build successful political coalitions along ethnic lines.

Readings:
P1.

P2.
- Burgess, Katrina and Steven Levitsky. 2003. “Explaining Populist Party Adaptation in Latin America: Environmental and Organizational Determinants of Party Change in Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela,” Comparative Political Studies 36, No. 8 (October)

Chap. 1.

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WEEK 12
Monday, November 18th.
Part 1: EXAM.
Part 2: Gender Violence in Latin America
Movie: TBC
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WEEK 13
Monday, November 25th.
Political participation and identity politics. From class to gender and sexual orientation. Identity versus distributive politics.

Part 2: Democratic Inclusion? Poverty, Exclusion and Social Inequality.
Neoliberal Policies and social inequalities, social inclusion policies. Social Investment policies (Bolsa Familia, Oportunidades) and requests/responses of social movements.

Readings: Syllabus POLI319. Balán / 9


WEEK 14
Monday, December 2nd

Part 1: Democratic Politics and the Rule of the Law
The unevenness of the rule of the law in the new Latin American democracies. Political representation versus effective citizenship. Majority rule, state capacity, and the importance of check and balances beyond presidential politics.

Part 2: Democratic Threats in Latin America and the Right Turn
Is democracy, with all its problems, here to stay? Do left and right turns in the region signal a deepening of democratization or is this democratic reality of the last few decades in the region just a stage and authoritarianism will make a comeback?

Readings:
P1.

P2.
- Niedzwiecki, Sara and Jennifer Pribble (2017) “Social Policies and Center-Right Governments in Argentina and Chile” Latin American Politics & Society (pp. 72-97)
- Pagliarini, Andre. 2019. Bolsonaro’s Bad Education. NACLA.

Watch:
The edge of Democracy

*Tuesday, December 3rd. NO CLASS*