Latin American Politics: Democracy, Representation, and the Rule of the Law (POLS W4461)

Instructor: Prof. M. Victoria Murillo (mm2140@columbia.edu)

Instructors’ Office: International Affairs Building 832.

Instructors’ Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3:30pm.

Class Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays

Class description

This is a lecture class that seeks to introduce students to social scientific analysis while discuss the shifting dynamics of political representation in Latin America. In analyzing political representation in the region, it focuses on demands for political inclusion by different actors and how they were resisted or accepted by established elites in a process that moved from regime change to electoral rotation in power. The course covers these political dynamics and their institutional consequences since the onset of the twentieth century, starting with the Mexican Revolution, until the contemporary period where democracy is the predominant form of government and elections a crucial tool for social and political change. While analyzing the politics of Latin America, we will cover important political science concepts associated with democratic representation, social inclusion and the rule of the law, such as social movement mobilization, political regime change, presidentialism, political party systems, political identities, state capacity, and institutional weakness.

The emphasis on political inclusion and representation is crucial to understand political dynamics in a region characterized by political instability during most of the twentieth century, but is also crucial to understand its current political landscape. The emphasis on social scientific concepts is useful to link the political phenomena analyzed in Latin America with its counterparts in other regions of the world and to allow students develop comparative tools for political analysis.

The class is structured to combine political science literature along with fiction and documentaries. Students are encouraged to relate the political science concepts studied in class with other forms of expression that illuminate our understanding of Latin American politics. The lectures are prepared to frame the issues of each class and complement the readings. Students are required to do the readings and expected to participate in class asking relevant questions or making appropriate comments and undergraduate students are expected to attend sections led by TAs where the bibliography of the course will be reviewed and discussed. The exams will cover the information provided in lectures and in the readings.
Requirements (for undergraduates and MA students):

- A one or two page paper (10% of grade) linking one of list of political science concepts studied in class with a section in the novels in the first part of the class. (A list of concepts will be provided for selecting one of them; the student needs to pick the paragraph in the book and explain why is that they illustrate the political science concept selected) The two page limit is strict since the exercise is to explain the linkage between a paragraph and a social science concept, which should require more than a few paragraphs. Due on 9/23 at 10am.

- One in-class mid-term (40% of grade) in class on 10/10
- One in-class final exam (50%). in class on 12/5

The exams will cover the material in the lectures and sections as well as required readings and movies. There will be questions linking the novels/movies and the social science concepts discussed in class. Each exam will include the material cover in that part of the course—the final only covers the second part of the course.

Background textbooks


Readings:

- All the readings are on reserve at Lehman library.
- The library reserves section (courseworks) has all the readings that can be posted (not books where copyright does not allow posting).
- In addition to the two textbooks suggested for background information, you are required to read 2 novels:
  - Mexican Revolution: Mariano Azuela, The Underdogs OR Angeles Mastretta, Lovesick.
  - Peronism: Tomas Elloy Martinez, Santa Evita
Plan of Lectures & Readings

(1) Introduction to the Class (9/3)
Introduction to LA: the study of Latin America in Political science, the shifting meaning of political participation and implications in terms of state building in the region.

Required

(2) Democracy: Participation & Opposition (9/5)
The concept of democracy in political science. Tensions between participation and opposition in Latin America from the construction of national states in the 1880s to the expansion of suffrage. The cases of Chile, Argentina & Mexico.

Required:
- Skidmore & Smith (6th. Edition), chapter 2 (available on courseworks)

Recommended:

(3) The Failure of Democracy and the Mexican Revolution (9/10)
From the effective suffrage and no re-election to social revolution.

Required:
- Azuela, The Underdogs OR Mastretta, Lovesick.
- Skidmore & Smith, pp. 45-54.
- Judith Adler Hellman, Mexico in Crisis, chapters 1 and 2.

(4) The expansion of participation & the emergence of populism (9/12&9/17)
The politics of populism as a mechanism for political inclusion. The case of Argentina.

9/18: discussion of expectations about the short paper.

Required:
- Skidmore & Smith, pp.244-259.
- Thomas Eloy Martinez, Santa Evita (novel).

(5) The economic policies of populism (ISI) and Corporatism (9/19)
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. The bargaining between labor and political elites and its institutional expression in labor regulation and political representation
patterns. Are political and economic inclusion the two sides of the same coin? Comparison with Keynesianism and the welfare state.

Required:

Recommended:

9/23 at 10am: Deadline for SHORT PAPER, please email it to the instructor and to both TAs!!!!

(6) The Failure of Political Incorporation (9/24)

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.

Required:
- Skidmore & Smith, chapter 10 (pp. 280-304).

Recommended:

(7) Social Mobilization and democratic breakdown (9/26 & 10/1) –

The Battle of Chile Part I (documentary) in class.

Required reading :
- Arturo Valenzuela, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, chapter 4, pp.81-110.
(8) Military rule (10/3)
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. The cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. 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.

Required:
- Hector Schamis, “Reconceptualizing Latin American Authoritarianism in the 1970s”, *Comparative Politics*
- Skidmore & Smith: chapter 9 (pp. 259-271), chapter 11 (pp. 315 to 340), chapter 6 (pp. 153-157, 163-170).

Recapitulation for the mid-term (10/8): all the questions you did not dare to ask before.

Mid-term (10/10): the time of truth.

(9) Transitions to Democracy I (10/15 & 10/17)
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. The cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

“No” (movie about the Chilean transition to democracy) in class.

Required

Recommended

(10) Transitions to democracy II (10/22)
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.
Required

- Skidmore & Smith, chapter 3, pp. 54-81 and chapter 4, pp.104-108.

Recommended:


(11) New democracies and economic liberalization (10/24)
The Debt Crisis & its political consequences. The crisis of incumbent regimes. Demands for political change in the context of economic constraints and increasing influence of international financial institutions and foreign investors.

Required:


Recommended


(12) The politics of economic liberalization (10/29)
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?

Required:


Recommended:

- Susan Stokes, Mandates and Democracy (Cambridge University Press 2001).

(13) Democratic Politics in Latin America: Presidentialism and its Problems (11/31)
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.

Required:


**ELECTION DAY: NO CLASS ON 11/5**

**14** Democratic Politics and Political Representation (11/7)
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.

Required

Recommended:

**15** The Inclusion of Ethnic Identities in the Political System (11/12 & 11/14)
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.

*Cocalero* (documentary about Evo Morales) in class

Required

Recommended:
Deborah Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America (Cambridge University Press 2003).*
(16) New Types of Political Participation: Identity Politics (11/19)
Political participation and identity politics. From class to gender and sexual orientation. Identity versus distributive politics.

Required

(17) The Rise of the Left in the 2000s (11/21)
The different accounts for the electoral success of the left in the 2000s: globalization, inequality, electoral accountability. From free-markets to electoral socialism? The radicalization of policies in Latin America and the different types of left (social democratic versus populist) and their explanation: commodity boom, institutional legacies, and structural conditions.

Required

Recommended:
- Steven Levitsky & Kenneth Roberts The Resurgence of the Latin American Left (Johns Hopkins University Press): introduction & conclusion.

(18) Democratic Politics and the Rule of the Law (11/26)
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.

Required


Recommended:


**Recapitulation before the exam (12/3): your last chance to ask...**

**Final exam (12/5):**