

Issues in Latin American Politics

Summer 2020: June 1st - July 2nd
11:00 a.m - 12:35 p.m. – Meets Online

Brett Bessen — brett.bessen@colorado.edu
Zoom Office Hours: Tues/Thurs – 1:30 - 2:30

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to issues in Latin American politics. In the last 40 years, Latin America has made significant steps toward democratic stability and economic development. However, inequality, public insecurity, and limited political representation remain critical issues in much of the region. This class will investigate the origins of these issues and evaluate the challenges – and opportunities – that they present for modern Latin America.

The course begins by exploring the histories of colonialism and authoritarianism in the region. I will argue that understanding this history is essential to making sense of modern political issues. We then turn to the regional transition toward democracy (week two), contemporary political issues (week three), and popular responses to those challenges (week four). In the final week, we'll discuss the recent right-ward shift in Latin America's political leadership the challenge presented by COVID-19.

Course Objectives

- Identify central political issues facing modern Latin America
- Evaluate the long and short term causes of contemporary political issues
- Assess the effects of these issues on life and governance in the region
- Write about political issues in a succinct and clear fashion

Communication Policy

Canvass: Course announcements and assignments will be posted to Canvass. You are expected to check Canvass every weekday for announcements and/or changes to assigned materials. Additionally, make sure you receive email notifications when announcements are posted to Canvass.

Email: Feel free to email me with any questions or comments. I will typically respond within one day during the work week. Please send me a follow up if I don't respond within three business days.

Office Hours: Zoom office hours are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 - 3:30. You can attend office hours without prior appointment on a first-come first-served basis. We can also set up an appointment during a different time slot if necessary.

Required Texts

- Vanden and Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 6th Edition

Assignments

Weekly Reading Quizzes – 20%: You are responsible for completing and understanding the assigned readings. Short reading quizzes, covering the past week's readings, will be posted on Canvass every Friday. Reading quizzes will have a time limit (of about 10 minutes) in order to prevent the use of outside material.

Participation – 20%: You can choose to participate synchronously, by attending Zoom lectures and discussions, OR asynchronously, by completing written lecture responses. I recommend synchronous participation if possible. *Let me know if you will participate synchronously or asynchronously by June 3rd.*

Synchronous participation requires attending Zoom lectures and engaging in live class discussions. I will hold a live class every weekday beginning at 11:00 am Mountain Time. Students are allowed to miss three live sessions without a prior excuse. After three missed sessions, unexcused absences will lower your participation grade.

Asynchronous participation requires watching recorded lectures and posting written responses to Canvass at the end of the week. Written responses should be 1-2 pages double-spaced and must show engagement with the lectures and assigned readings. Lecture responses must be posted to Canvass each Friday by 11:59 p.m.

Issue Paper – 30%: You will be required to write an issue paper, where you investigate a political issue in a specific Latin American country. Issue papers should be short but well written and researched.

Final Exam – 30%: The final exam will take place during the last week of the course. The final will be open book and will include written and multiple choice components.

Grades

Letter grades will be based on the following scale. Note that I will round up grades that are within 0.5 percentage points of the next letter grade. For instance, an 83.6 would be rounded up to an 84 and receive a B in the course.

Grade Scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	0-59

Course Calendar

Week 1, June 1 - 5

Overview and Introduction

- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 1

Colonialism and Independence

- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 2
- Octavio Paz, *Reflections: Mexico and the United States*
- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 3, pgs. 43 - 55

Week 2, June 8 - 12

Authoritarianism and Democracy

- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 3, pgs. 56 - 84

- Terry Lynn Karl, *Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America*
- The Economist, *The 40 Year Itch – Populism and Polarisation threaten Latin America*

Economic Development

- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 7
- Valenzuela, J. S., & Valenzuela, *Modernization and dependency: Alternative perspectives in the study of Latin American underdevelopment.*

Week 3, June 15 - 19

Inequality

- Hoffman and Centano, *The Lopsided Continent: Inequality in Latin America*
- The Economist, *Gini Back in the Bottle*

Violence

- Enrique Arias, *The Dynamics of Criminal Governance: Networks and Social Order in Rio de Janeiro*
- David Shirk, *AMLO, Violent Crime, and Public Security in Mexico*

Representation

- Carnes and Lupu, *Rethinking the Comparative Perspective on Class and Representation: Evidence from Latin America*

Week 4, June 22 - 26

Social Movements

- *Politics of Latin America*, ch. 10
- Marc Becker, *Rafael Correa and Social Movements in Ecuador*
- Patricio Navia, *Chile's Riots: Frustration at the Gates of the Promised Land*

Public Opinion

- Carew Boulding, *NGOs and Political Participation in Weak Democracies*
- Costorena and Graves, *Support for Electoral Democracy*, in LAPOP's Pulse of Democracy

Issue Paper Due – June 26th by 10:00 p.m.

Week 5, June 29 - July 2

COVID-19 in Latin America

- Agustina Giraudy *et. al.*, *How Political Science Explains Countries' Reactions to COVID-19*
- Blofield *et. al.*, *Assessing the Political and Social Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis in Latin America*

Return of the Right?

- Niedzwiecki and Pribble, *Social Policies and Center-Right Governments in Argentina and Chile*
- Barry Cannon, *Inside the Mind of Latin America's New Right*

Final Exam – Due July 2nd by 10:00 p.m.

University Mandated Statements

Accommodation for disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.

Preferred student names and pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

Sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, I will try to accommodate your requests, but you must contact me early in the semester.

See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.