Introduction to Latin American Governments and Politics
Political Science 463/563
MW 5:00-6:20pm

Professor Beck
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E-mail: Beck@UOregon.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-5:00pm

Course Description
This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the dynamic nature of Latin American politics by addressing historical and contemporary social, political, and economic developments and challenges. It explores the causes and consequences of phenomena such as revolutions, democratization, and market-oriented economic reforms. The course will give students an overview of regional trends with more in-depth study of selected countries including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela. In so doing, students will learn to study Latin America as a region, and to examine important differences within the region. Students should acquire a basic familiarity with Latin America historically and currently, knowledge of key countries and sub-regions, and will hopefully develop a desire to further their studies through future coursework, reading and travel.

Learning Goals
Substantive Learning Goals:
• To give students a deeper understanding of current and historical democratic and nondemocratic political systems in Latin America

Critical Skills and Tools:
• To identify, describe, and define basic factual information and analytical concepts concerning political systems.
• To analyze political issues and phenomena using political science concepts, theories, and methods.
• To use argument and evidence effectively to communicate original analysis of political phenomena.

Required material
• Kingstone, Peter. 2011. The Political Economy of Latin America: Reflections on Neoliberalism and Development. New York: Routledge (hereafter Kingstone); two copies have been placed on reserve at the Knight Library
• Remaining material will be available to download on the course website

Note: Students are advised that this syllabus is subject to revision throughout the term. If the syllabus is revised, it will be posted on blackboard and an announcement will be made in-class and via blackboard.
Course Format and Requirements
Students should be prepared for a fairly reading-intensive course. Class discussions will build on the readings rather than review them in detail – so simply showing up to class will not be enough to be successful. Class attendance is mandatory unless students provide a valid excuse prior to class. In addition to the weekly course material, students are encouraged to keep up to date on current events in Latin America. Below is a list of recommended sources.

1. News
   a. Latin News (http://www.latinnews.com/), especially the Latin America Weekly Report

2. Latin American politics blogs
   a. Two Weeks Notice (http://weeksnotice.blogspot.com/): written by Prof. Greg Weeks
   b. The Latin Americanist (http://ourlatinamerica.blogspot.com/)
   c. Bloggings by Boz (http://www.bloggingsbyboz.com/): written by a freelance writer and consultant about foreign policy, security, politics and Latin America
   d. Central American Politics (http://centralamericanpolitics.blogspot.com/): written by a professor at The University of Scranton
   e. Guatemala Solidarity Network (http://www.guatemalasolidarity.org.uk/blog)
   g. Americas North and South (http://americasouthandnorth.wordpress.com/)

Grading Policy
Showing up to class is mandatory and class attendance will be carefully tracked. Students who have more than two unexcused absences will lose a third of a letter grade on their final grade for each additional unexcused absence. For example, a student who misses three classes will see his/her A drop to an A-. A student who misses four classes will see his/her A drop to a B+, and so on.

Policy on Late assignments
Late assignments will lose a third of a letter grade per day past the due date. For example, an assignment that is due at 10:30 am on Wednesday arrives before 10:30am on Thursday will go from a B to a B-, one that arrives before 10:30 on Friday will go
from a B to a C+, etc. Assignments that arrive even an hour late will be penalized; plan accordingly.

**NOTE:** you can NOT pass this class without turning in ALL assignments. Students are encouraged to turn in even late assignments. This means that students who do not submit the written assignment for this course will automatically fail the course.

**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, Fabrication, Cheating, and Misconduct:**
Violations of academic integrity include:
- Plagiarism: using another author’s ideas or material without proper citation
- Cheating: copying answers on a test or assignment from another student or another source, or allowing another student to do so.
- Fabrication: the intentional use of information or citations that the author has invented.

*All work submitted for this course should be original. I will not accept work that was fully or partially completed for another course. Students who violate this policy will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the University’s Student Conduct Code. You must read the web links on Blackboard regarding academic integrity. Understanding this information is a REQUIREMENT that you MUST complete by the end of week 1. Everything in your assignments must be your own work. Neither ignorance of these policies nor the lack of an intention to cheat or plagiarize will be considered a legitimate defense. Raise questions you have with the professor before problems arise. I will flunk any student who plagiarizes and will report them to University authorities.

**Undergraduate Grading Framework**
Students’ grades for this course will be determined in the following manner:

- Reading quizzes 10%
- Written assignment 30%
- Midterm Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%

*Reading quizzes:* From time to time, students will be asked to complete unannounced short (1-2 question) quizzes based on the assigned reading. Quizzes will be administered in the beginning of class. Those who miss quizzes because of late arrival or unexcused absences will receive a zero for that day’s quiz.

*Midterm and Final Exams:* The midterm and final exams will consist of short answer questions. If you attend class regularly, participate in class discussions, and critically read
the assigned works throughout the course of the semester, and seek out help when you
need it, you will be well prepared for both exams.

Written Assignment: Students will complete a written assignment (6-8 double-spaced
pages). A topic will be selected to assess students’ comprehension and application of
course material and will be distributed two weeks before the due date.

Graduate Student Grading Framework
Graduate students will be responsible for the reading assigned to undergraduates, as
well as any additional readings that are marked for graduate students (in blue).

Students’ grades for this course will be determined in the following manner:

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<td>Reading quizzes</td>
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<td>5 Thought papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Reading quizzes: From time to time, students will be asked to complete unannounced
short (1-2 question) quizzes based on the assigned reading. Quizzes will be
administered in the beginning of class. Those who miss quizzes because of late arrival or
unexcused absences will receive a zero for that day’s quiz.

Thought Papers: Graduate students must submit at least five 3-5 page (double-spaced)
thought papers based on the readings for the week of their choice throughout the
course of the quarter. If more than five are submitted, then the highest five grades will
be taken. Thought papers should demonstrate comprehension of the assigned readings
and original thought – either by responding to an argument, applying theories to
empirical cases, comparing and contrasting approaches, etc. A given week’s thought
paper should be submitted via blackboard by Thursdays at noon.

Research Proposal: Students are required to submit a 1-2 page research proposal
outlining a topic relevant to Latin America to investigate for a final research paper by
February 16th (5:00pm) via blackboard. The research proposal should outline the
question to be investigated, the importance of the topic and the ways in which you will
go about answering the question.

Research Paper
Students will complete a 15-20 (double-spaced) page research paper on an approved
topic. Research papers should reflect mastery of relevant course material as well as
research outside of the course material. Given the space limitations, the best papers
will be focused around a central argument, systematically support it with evidence (from
primary and/or secondary material), and address possible alternative arguments. Research papers should include

- A clear statement of the research question and its (empirical or theoretical) importance
- A concise discussion of existing/contrasting answers to the central research question
- A comparative critique of the advantages and disadvantages of existing literature and/or methods
- An outline of your central findings as they relate to research question and existing literature
- A discussion of broader implications (and potentially areas for future research)
- A properly formatted list of works cited

Research papers are due on March 16th at 10:00am via blackboard.

**Students with Disabilities**
Both I, as a professor, and the University of Oregon are committed to creating inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if any aspects of my instruction methods or course design result in barriers to your participation. If you have a disability, I encourage you to contact Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 uoaec@uoregon.edu. Visit their website at http://aec.uoregon.edu/. If you have already been in contact with the Accessible Education Center and have a notification letter, please provide me with a statement from them during the first week of class so that we can make appropriate arrangements. University policy requires that “students MUST present a notification letter to receive testing accommodations” (see http://ds.uoregon.edu/DS_Pages/DS_Responsibilities.html).

**Classroom Etiquette**
All cell phones should be silenced or turned off completely before class. Students are asked to respect their peers by refraining from talking, texting, or otherwise creating distractions during class. Students who fail to do so will be asked to leave. Computers are allowed in class for note-taking purposes only. If they become a distraction, they will be banned.

**Connecting with the Professor**
I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 48 hours during the business week (weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm). Students are also encouraged to attend office hours if they have questions or concerns about course material. Students are also encouraged to review links posted on blackboard (in the folder marked “communication”) for guidelines for appropriate ways to communicate with faculty, including common email “blunders” to avoid and how to ask for letters of recommendation.
Class 1: Introduction and Regional Overview (January 5)

Class 2: Key Players and Dominant Theories of Development and Democracy (January 7)
- Kingstone, Chapter 1, 1-18
- Review University’s Student Conduct Code (link on blackboard)

Class 3: Colonialism and Independence (January 12)
- Kingstone, Chapter 2, 18-44

Class 4: Colonialism and Independence cont’d (January 14)

Class 5: NO CLASS (January 19, Martin Luther King Day)

Class 6: Political Economy over Time (January 21)
- Kingstone, Chapter 3, 45-83 (stop at “Neoliberalism, Scourge or Savior: A Paired Comparison)

Class 7: Mexico (January 26)
- Recommended:
  o Listen to “Mexicans Want a New Approach to Bloody Drug War” (NPR, June 8, 2012) (7:47)

Class 8: Mexico continued (January 28)

Class 9: Brazil (February 2)
BUREAUCRATIC – AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND DISCUSSION OF CAUSES)


• Recommended:
  o “How Fake Money Saved Brazil” (NPR)

Class 10: Argentina (February 4)


Class 11: Chile and the Democratic Road to Socialism (February 9)


• Kornbluh, Peter. 2003. The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability, 79-115

• Recommended:
  o Commanding Heights: Video on Chicago Boys

Class 12: Catch up and midterm review (February 11)

Class 13: Midterm: includes reading material and lectures up through Chile (February 16)

• GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE BY 5:00pm, via blackboard

Class 14: Cuba and the Revolutionary Road to Socialism (February 18)


• Recommended: “What the Future Holds for Cuba’s Economy” NPR, Talk of the Nation (30:10)
Class 15: Guatemala and US Intervention (February 23)
• Recommended:
  o NPR podcasts on Vigilantism and Lynching in Guatemala
  o “What Happened at Dos Erres?” This American Life, NPR
• UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENTS POSTED ON BLACKBOARD (due March 9th at 4:45pm via blackboard)

Class 16: Anti-Market Backlash, New Forms of Political Organization and Mobilization (February 25)

Class 17: Venezuela, Neopopulism, and The Pink Tide (March 2)
• Kingstone, Chapter 4, 91-126.
• Recommended:

Class 18: Political Institutions (March 4)
• Kingstone, Chapter 5, 127-143
• UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 9:30am.

Class 19: Women in Informal and Formal Politics (March 9)

**Class 20: Transnational Flows: Drugs** (March 11)
  • “Burn-out and Battle Fatigue: As Violence Soars, so do Voices of Dissent against Drug Prohibition.” *The Economist* March 17, 2012.

*Undergraduate final exam: Monday, March 16th 7:15pm*
*Graduate Student Research Papers due Monday, March 16th at 10:00am via blackboard.*