About the Bildner Center

The Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies is a forum for the gathering of academics, students, policy makers, civil society leaders, and other specialists working on contemporary issues in the Americas. Founded in 1982 at the urging of philanthropist Albert Bildner, this nonpartisan center generates information, policy and background studies, problem-oriented research, and encourages the formation of networks and intellectual communities.

The Bildner Center seeks to create an international community of people, ideas, and enterprises to forward the understanding of the complexities of social, economic, political, cultural, and ecological life in the Western Hemisphere. The Center fosters research and understanding through a number of programs, both country and theme specific. The broad themes are Democracy and Human Rights, Sustainable and Equitable Development, Integration and Globalization, and Knowledge and Culture. The Brazil Project and the Cuba Project study these two countries in regional, comparative, and global context. Each of these programs invites distinguished scholars and practitioners to participate in an ongoing dialogue to generate greater public comprehension, as well as public policy recommendations.

Mauricio A. Font is Director of the Bildner Center and Professor of sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center. His books include: Coffee, Contention, and Change (1991), Transforming Brazil: A Reform Era in Perspective (2003), and Brazilian Dirigismo: Origins, Limits, and Twilight (2003).
Special Seminar

Germano A. Rigotto
Governor of Rio Grande do Sul

Murillo Aragão
Political Analyst

In this relatively informal meeting with Governor Rigotto, we hope to discuss current political dynamics in Brazil, Brazilian studies in this area, and related subjects.

Germano Rigotto has just been elected Governor of Rio Grande do Sul, one of Brazil's largest states. During his political career of 27 years, he was elected to Brazil's Chamber of Deputies in 1991 and reelected in 1994 and 1998. An influential member of Congress, he was leader of the PMDB and the governing majority, and also presided several major congressional commissions, including that focused on Tax Reform. Mr. Rigotto has participated in various international conferences in Europe, The United States and Latin America, where he has delivered talks about economic and political conditions in Brazil, the taxation system, and the reform reforms in Brazil. Mr. Rigotto has advanced degrees in Dentistry and Law from Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). He is the author of Não tá morto quem peleia: A agonia do Sul Brasil e a luta pelo Banco Meridional.

Murillo Aragão is one of Brazil's leading experts on political analysis, congressional affairs and public policies. He has been working in this field since 1981 when he arrived in Brasília from Rio de Janeiro. In 1982, he founded Arko Advice, a political and public policies analysis company. Dr. Aragão taught at the Universidade de Brasília (Political Science Department) and is Editor, along with Professor Benício Schmidt, of the magazine Política Comparada. In 1998, the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Brazil honored him with the Ordem do Rio Branco (Comendador). Mr. Aragão holds a B.A. in Law from the Faculdade de Direito do Distrito Federal, a Master Degree in Political Science from the Universidade de Brasilia and a Ph.D in Sociology from the Center for Studies of Latin America and Caribbean at the Universidade de Brasília.

Thursday, December 5, 2002 10:45 A.M.
President's Conference Room (8201)
The Graduate Center
City University of New York

The Brazil Project aims at the creation of a network of academic and policy specialists to study processes of reform and sustainable social development in Brazil and neighboring countries. The project fosters its goals through symposia and international seminars, research, collaborative relations, and publications. These seek to better understand and evaluate ongoing processes of economic and political reform, their efficiency in addressing societal needs, Brazil's new role in regional and world affairs, and how processes of globalization shape reform and the consolidation of democracy. The first track of this project concentrates on Brazil and Brazil-US relations; the second develops a comparative and regional perspective that includes Chile, Argentina, and other neighboring countries, as well as North America.

Affiliated faculty:

Desmond Arias, Political Science
Jerry Carlson, Film Studies
Amy Chazkel, History
Margaret Graham, History
Kenneth Erickson, Political Science
Mauricio Font, Sociology
Laura Randall, Economics
Michael Turner, History

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