

Department of Political Science, Graduate Center

City University of New York (CUNY)

Spring 2019

PSC 77906, Latin American Politics, Wednesday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, 3 credits

Professor Forrest D. Colburn

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Office hours: Room 5204, Wednesday 5:15 pm to 6:30 pm

## Syllabus

This course surveys major topics in Latin American politics. It addresses such issues as nation-building and state construction, institutions of government, public policy (especially economic policy), authoritarianism, populism, and democracy, political stability and violence, and the sources and consequences of influential ideas for the conduct of politics. This is an era of uncertainty. Established political and economic regimes have lost much of their hold, at least intellectually. But it is not clear how they will be replaced. Likewise, long-dominant conceptual models are less persuasive. Finally, how scholarship is presented—and diffused—is in transition. With the explicit goal of exploring how research in Latin American politics should be pursued in the future, reading will be drawn from a variety of methodological approaches. Similarly, there will be an exploration of how different media are employed to comment on Latin American politics, from traditional journal articles to university press books to websites to internet postings to videos. Clear, concise writing, though, is—and will always be—valued, and we will discuss writing conventions.

We will meet weekly to discuss the topics laid out below and the assigned reading. Students should be prepared to comment on the assigned reading. Students are asked to write two essays, the first of which will be brief (say five, typed, double-spaced pages) and the second of more substance and length (of perhaps twelve to fifteen, typed, double-spaced pages). We will read and discuss a well-regarded guide to composition to help prepare ourselves for writing. Topics should be discussed with the professor. Due dates will be set at the onset of the semester. Late papers are neither expected nor accepted. The course has a number of objectives: 1) to familiarize students with research on the subject of Latin American politics, 2) to teach students how to do research themselves on Latin American politics, 3) to assist students write clear, cogent prose, and 4) to help students prepare themselves for a productive academic career, able to accommodate themselves to shifting intellectual currents and changes in how research is presented and diffused.

The final grade for the course will be based on participation in our weekly discussions (25%), the first essay (25%), and the second essay (50%). Since we only meet once a week, attendance is essential. Being prepared for our discussions by having done assigned reading—and reflecting on it—will make for a more enjoyable and productive seminar for all.

Students should obtain a copy, in either paper or electronic form, of Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*.

Before we delve into academic theories, we will spend one week familiarizing ourselves with the current status of politics in Latin America. We always need to be reminded that the purpose of academic theories is to help us explain the actual conduct of politics in particular nation-states.

### Topics and Readings

- Jan 3 Introduction to the course
- Feb 6 Latin American politics at the moment—unexpected outcomes and ominous trends that are a challenge to explain  
Special issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, “Latin America’s Shifting Politics”  
D Dresser, “Can Mexico Be Saved?” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2018  
A Cruz, “How to Understand the Nicaraguan Crisis,” Wilson Center, Latin American Program/December 2018  
2018 Brazilian Election Portal, Wilson Center  
“How False News Haunted the Brazilian Elections,”  
<https://slate.com/technology/2018/.../Brazil-elections-fake-nes-whatsapp-facebook.ht>  
F Colburn, “The Left that Never Was” *Dissent*, Winter 2017
- Feb 13 Epistemological questions in the academic study of Latin American politics  
L Anderson, “Pre-Copernican Political Science: What Analysis of ‘Authoritarianism’ Reveals about the American Study of Politics,” *Journal of International Affairs* 71, Fall/Winter 2017  
V. Rafael, “Regionalism, Area Studies, and the Accidents of Agency,” *American Historical Review* 104, October 1999.  
J. Castañeda, “The Intellectual and the State in Latin America,” *World Policy Journal* 10, Fall 1993.  
P Hollander, *Political Pilgrims*  
B Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*.
- Feb 20 Historical paths  
J Mahoney, *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development: Spanish America in Comparative Perspective*  
D. North et al., “Order, Disorder, and Economic Change: Latin America versus North America,” in B Bueno de Mesquita and H Root, eds., *Governing for Prosperity*  
R Collier and D Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*  
D Rueschemeyer et al., *Capitalist Development and Democracy*
- Feb 27 Nation-building and state-construction and long-run development  
M Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America*

H Soifer, *State Building in Latin America*  
M. Kurtz, *Latin American State-Building in Comparative Perspective: Social Foundations of Institutional Order*  
F Colburn and A Cruz, *Varieties of Liberalism in Central America: Nation-States as Works in Progress*

- Mar 6 Orthodox development strategies  
V Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of Latin America since Independence*  
R Prebisch, "International Trade and Payments in an Era of Coexistence: Commercial Policy in the Underdeveloped Countries," *The American Economic Review* 49, May 1959  
W Baer, "Import Substitution and Industrialization in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 7, Spring 1972  
A Musacchio and S Lazzarini, *Reinventing State Capitalism: Leviathan in Brazil and Beyond*
- Mar 13 The "dependency" critique  
T Dos Santos, "The Structure of Dependence," *American Economic Review*, May 1970  
F Cardoso and E Falleto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*  
F Cardoso, *The Accidental President of Brazil*  
J Coatsworth, "Inequality, Institutions, and Economic Growth in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40, 2008
- Mar 20 Political conflict and regime breakdown  
S Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*  
Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*  
A Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*
- Mar 27 Authoritarianism  
D Collier, ed, *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*  
S Mainwaring and A Pérez-Liñán, *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*  
S Levitsky and L Way, *Comparative Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*
- Apr 3 "Democratization" and contemporary democracies  
G O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, 1994  
F Hagopian, "Democracy by Undemocratic Means: Elites, Political Pacts, and Regime Transition in Brazil," *Comparative Political Studies* 23, 1990  
S Stokes, *Mandates and Democracy: Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America*

- Apr 10 Political institutions: political parties, presidents, legislatures, and courts  
 S Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination," *Comparative Political Studies* 26, 1993  
 F Colburn, *Latin America at the End of Politics*  
 N Lupu, *Party Brands in Crisis: Partisanship, Brand Dilution, and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America*  
 K Roberts, *Changing Course in Latin America*
- Apr 17 Politics of economic liberalization  
 John Williamson, ed, *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?*  
 N. Moisés, "Fads and Fashion in Economic Reforms: Washington Consensus or Washington Confusion?" *Third World Quarterly* 21, June 2000  
 E Simmons, "Market Reforms and Water War," *World Politics* 68, January 2016  
 S Mazzuca, "The Rise of Rentier Populism" *Journal of Democracy* 24, April 2013  
 R Kaufman, "The Political Left, the Export Boom, and the Populist Temptation," in S Levitsky and K Roberts, eds., *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*  
 S Edwards, *Left Behind: Latin America and the False Promise of Populism*
- May 1 The social agenda: race and gender  
 D Yashar, "Does Race Matter in Latin America?" *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2015  
 D Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*  
 T Paschel, *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Colombia and Brazil*  
 M Htun, *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies*
- May 8 Concluding discussion and presentations on research projects