

Latin American Politics
Political Science 3702-001
Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Glen Biglaiser
glen.biglaiser@unt.edu

Office Hours: T, R: 11:00 am– 12:00 pm (oba)
Wooten Hall 167, (940) 565-2312

Students graduating from the University of North Texas should be able to demonstrate awareness and knowledge of distinct cultures or subcultures, including but not limited to ethnicity, gender, class, political systems, religions, languages, or human geography. Different types of political rule have marked the Latin American landscape in the twentieth century. This course attempts to understand these differences. The course begins by examining the democracies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay from the end of World War II to the onset of authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 1970s. It next compares explanations for the emergence of authoritarian rule and for the return of democratization in these countries. The effects of economic policy choice under military rule are highlighted here. The course then examines countries that remained democratic over the past fifty years, including Colombia and Venezuela. From this, relations between the United States and Central America and Mexico are discussed, with issues of revolution in Cuba coming to the forefront. The course concludes by examining the government and politics in Latin America in the 1990s – 2023.

Grades will be based on a midterm (25%), term paper (25%), and final (35%). Class participation (including an oral debate) is strongly encouraged and is worth 15% of your final grade.

Grade Scale

A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69; F=less than 60%

Required Texts

Biglaiser, Glen. 2002. *Guardians of the Nation? Economists, Generals, and Economic Reform in Latin America*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Booth, John A., Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker. 2020. *Understanding Central America, 7th ed.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Wynia, Gary. 1990. *The Politics of Latin American Economic Development, 3rd ed.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The books are available on e-reserve: <https://iii.library.unt.edu/search/r?SEARCH=PSCI+3702>

Required Class Reader

Assigned readings not in the required texts are available on Canvas.

Learning Outcomes Related to CLASS Requirement for Diversity and Global Issues

At the end of this course, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

1. Identify the origins, influences, and limits of one's own cultural heritage;
2. Demonstrate the ability to learn from and empathize with perspectives and experiences different from one's own;
3. Show an understanding of the interrelationships of self, local society, and global environments;
4. Describe the impacts of complex, worldwide systems;
5. Explain the reasoning for one's ethical responsibilities within worldwide systems.

Outcome Assessments

Examinations and a term paper will be used to assess the overall learning outcomes. The first five learning outcome will be assessed through essay and identification terms on midterm and final examinations. The sixth and seventh outcomes will be assessed based on a term paper and oral debates and class participation.

Attendance. Attendance is expected in the course. Attending class will help improve your course performance and participation grade.

Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly, as I will provide important course information here.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Use of Artificial Intelligence for Assignments According to the UNT Academic Integrity Policy ([UNT Policy 6.003](#)), any form of "unauthorized assistance" constitutes cheating. As a result, use of any artificial intelligence is not authorized for assignments in this course.

ADA Accommodation Statement. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures. UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for

covering course materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior. Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1: August 21-25

The Political and Economic History of Latin America

Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 13-41, on Canvas.

Week 2: Aug. 28 – Sept. 1

Theories of Economic Development in Latin America

Wynia, 24-136.

Week 3: September 4-8

Antecedents to the Rise of Authoritarianism in the Southern Cone and Peru

Biglaiser, 21-46.

Wynia, 167-192; 214-224; 249-259.

Week 4: September 11-15

Theories of Policy Choice under Military Rule in Latin America

Biglaiser, 1-20; 47-109.

Supplemental Reading: Wynia, 225-248; 260-283.

Movie: “*The Americas: Brazil (Capital Sins)*,” discussion afterward.

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/0cbc9616-5436-49b6-ba27-9c3990773701>

Week 5: September 18-22

The Fall of Authoritarianism in the Southern Cone and Peru

Biglaiser, 159-183.

Week 6: Sept. 25-29

Redemocratization in the Southern Cone and Peru

Ellner (2001), “Latin American Democracy in “Post-Consolidation” Literature: Optimism and Pessimism.” *Latin American Politics and Society*, on Canvas.

Piscopo and Siavelis (2021). “Chile’s Constitutional Moment.” *Current History*, on Canvas.

McNulty (2018). “Peru’s Struggle with the Fujimori Legacy.” *Current History*, on Canvas.

Auyero (2020). “Unprotected: Why Argentina’s Poor Turn to Peronism.” *Current History*, on Canvas.

Week 7: October 2-6

Exceptions to the Rule: Democracy in Colombia and Venezuela

Wynia, 193-213.

Vanden and Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, pp. 438-485, on Canvas.

Posada-Carbo (2017). "The Difficult Road to Peace in Colombia." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Velasco (2018). "The Pyrrhic Victories of Venezuela's President." *Current History*, Canvas.

October 5: Handout Study Guide for Midterm

Week 8: October 9-13

Central America and the US (I): Monroe Doctrine through Good Neighbor Policy

Skidmore and Smith (2001), *Modern Latin America*, 355-368, on Canvas.

Drake (1991), "From Good Men to Good Neighbors: 1912-1932," in Lowenthal, ed.,

Exporting Democracy, 3-40, on Canvas.

October 10: Midterm Exam.

Week 9: October 16-20

Central America and the US (II): The Cold War and Political Exclusion

Booth, Wade, and Walker, ch. 1-4.

Week 10: October 23-27

Central America and the US (III): The Rise and Decline of the Revolutionary Option

Booth, Wade, and Walker, ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

Lehoucq (2014). "Central America's Violent Legacy." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Wolf (2021). "A Populist President Tests El Salvador's Democracy." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Week 11: Oct. 30 – Nov. 3

Mexico-US: An Evolving Relationship

Skidmore, Smith, and Green (2014), *Modern Latin America*, 47-78, on Canvas.

Camp (2014), *Politics in Mexico*, 263-294, on Canvas.

Week 12: November 6-10

Mexico: Economic and Political Liberalization, Migration, and Drug Trafficking

Camp (2014), *Politics in Mexico*, 295-317, on Canvas.

Staudt (2018). "How NAFTA Has Changed Mexico." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Hagan et al. (2019). "Mexico Migration and Social Mobility." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Week 13: November 13-17

Cuba: Its Political and Economic History

Wynia, ch. 11.

Final Paper Due: Thursday, November 16th (submit using Turnitin on Canvas).

Thanksgiving Break Nov. 20-24

Weeks 14: Nov. 27 – Dec. 1

Contemporary Cuba

Sweig and Bustamante (2013), "Cuba After Communism: The Economic Reforms That Are Transforming the Island," *Foreign Affairs*, on Canvas.

Henken, et al. (2015). "Overcoming Cuba's Internal Embargo." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Movie: "The Fidel Castro Tapes." discussion afterward.

November 30: Handout Final Exam Study Guide

Week 15: Dec. 4-7

Politics of Latin America into the Twenty-First Century

Castañeda and Navia (2007), "The Year of the Ballot." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Hunt (2022). "Why Latin America Has Embraced Ecotourism." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Arias. (2020). "How Criminals Govern in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Lustig and Trasberg. (2021). "How Brazil and Mexico Diverged on Social Protection in the Pandemic." *Current History*, on Canvas.

Final Exam: Thursday, December 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.