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## POLITICAL SCIENCE 4331 LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS THROUGH FILM

**Brief Course Description.** This course will provide an introduction to Latin American politics by surveying some of the major political issues the region has faced since the middle of the 20th Century. After a very brief consideration of the regime types and development strategies that characterized the region historically, we will focus on the democratic regimes that characterize the region today, and the struggles of those regimes to address longstanding problems of poverty, inequality, lack of development, politically- and economically-motivated violence, and a seeming disconnect between the preferences of citizens and the actions taken by governments. We will do all this in a rather untraditional fashion – through film.

Leveraging the medium of popular media, including documentaries, cinema and television, will give us unusual insights into the political phenomena in which we are interested. While not always an unbiased historical record (and sometimes entirely works of fiction), film and other popular media provide a lens through which we can understand perspectives and interpretations of politics. For studying questions of political preferences and ideology in Latin America, this is particularly useful. Scholars do not enjoy access to extensive historical survey research archives of public opinion for Latin American countries, but we can gain some understanding of the structure of opinion and government responses to it through the documentation and dramatic portrayal of important political events and actors. The films have an additional benefit. Most of us have not had the opportunity to personally observe Latin American politics in a systematic fashion. While not fully representative of reality, the films provide images and personalities that will help ground your readings and your future studies.

Our typical (though not exclusive) pattern will be as follows: 1) end one class by watching a film; 2) between the end of that class period and the start of the next one, you will do the required readings; 3) we start the next period by discussing the film and readings; and 4) the pattern starts over again. You will be responsible for reading the necessary background materials prior to class and contributing your analysis of the film and readings to discussion. This course stresses critical thinking and analytical

skills, and I expect you to apply these in all aspects of the course. By the end of the semester, you should understand some of the the challenges facing the region and how to carry on studying them in greater depth in the future.

**Course Requirements.** The requirements for the course fall into three broad categories. The assignments are designed to keep you engaged with course materials on a weekly basis, to occasionally encourage you to come to grips with the totality of the material we have covered, and to give you the opportunity to pursue some original research and critical thinking.

Class Attendance and Participation. Thoughtful discussions will require that you have pondered the film, carefully read the assigned readings, and considered the connections among them. We will e-mail you a few discussion questions each week, randomly select a handful of you to turn in written responses to those questions, and randomly select another handful of you to come to class with additional prompts/questions for motivating discussion. Your participation, considered broadly, will account for 30% of your grade.

Exam. In the second half of the course (on April 19) we will have an in-class exam covering the films, readings, and our discussions to that point. The exam will be designed to determine whether you are retaining the material covered. Forms of questions will include true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay. Your performance on the exam will account for 40% of your final grade. You are encouraged to submit exam questions throughout the semester.

Paper. We will select 2 or 3 films not used for our weekly meetings, identify some readings related to each, and develop a question/topic/prompt that ties them together. You will select *one* of these films, readings, and question combinations and write a paper in response. You are encouraged to identify additional scholarly works on the topic and to utilize those in responding to the paper assignment.

The paper topics will be designed to evaluate your ability to grapple with more complex, cause and effect relationships. We will define a page limit for each topic – typically six or seven pages (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, etc.). Tips to keep in mind when writing your essays:

1. Be sure to state causal hypotheses clearly.
2. Define big conceptual dimensions explicitly.
3. Operationalize those dimensions concretely, thinking about the different values variables can take.
4. Choose your case specific examples such that key variables take on an array of values.

If you prefer, you are welcome to identify your own film, assemble your own readings, and devise your own paper topic. We can help in this process and with explicit prior approval, your version of the assignment can be used in lieu of ours.

Your paper will account for 30% of your final grade. The final date on which you can submit your paper is May 9, but you are welcome to submit them at any point in the semester.

### Summary of course requirements.

Participation 30%

Exam 40%

Paper 30%

**Course Readings.** The course readings for each session are detailed below, and they will be available via library reserves. You can obtain these readings through Telesis. Several of the readings come from Levitsky and Roberts' 2011 edited volume entitled *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*. You may want to consider purchasing this book.

**Additional Issues.** I know that I do not have to belabor any of these points, but I will mention them briefly to make sure that my expectations are clear.

- Please turn off all electronic gadgets (phones, pagers, tablets, etc.) prior to class -- no texting etc. If you use a laptop for note taking, please use it only for that purpose during class.
- There are no provisions for "making up" for missed classes. You will have the readings for each given day and copies of the films are available in the reserves section of the library. If you know that you are going to have to arrive late/leave early, it would be great if you would notify me in advance.
- Please give the films your undivided attention – don't try to multitask during the viewings. Multitasking includes sleeping – one of my favorite tasks! Long films and a dimly lit room are a recipe for a nap, but we will police one another in an effort to all stay alert.
- The material covered in the films we will view is powerful and provocative. However, our goal is not the normative defense or attack of the filmmakers or their positions. Instead, we will seek to use the films as evidence, anecdotes, data, etc., accounting for any bias we each might perceive in it.
- Some of the films shown in this course contain foul language, violence, nudity, and other acts that may make you uncomfortable. If you don't think that you can view and then consider these topics in a manner appropriate to our academic setting, you should not take this course.

**Course Schedule.** Subjects for each class period, and the readings you must have completed by the time we meet are listed below. Recall that the film we will be making use of us is typically the one shown in the previous period.

### **1/19 - Logistics & Overview**

#### **1/26 - The Chain of Responsiveness**

Lagos Cruz-Coke, Marta. 2008. "Latin America's Diversity of Views", *Journal of Democracy*, 19(1): 111-125.

Powell Jr., G. Bingham. 2004. "The Chain of Responsiveness", *Journal of Democracy*, 15(4): 91-105.

*Screening: Los Olvidados (Luis Buñuel, 1950, Mexico)*

#### **2/02 - Authoritarianism, Democracy, & Development Strategy**

Blake, Charles H. 2007. *Politics in Latin America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (Read chapters 2 & 3.)

Brown, David S., and Wendy Hunter. 2004. "Democracy and Human Capital Formation. Education Spending in Latin America, 1980 to 1997." *Comparative Political Studies* 37(7): 842-864.

*Screening: The Battle of Chile (Parts I & III) (Patricio Guzmán, 1975/1979, Chile)*

#### **2/09 - Ideology & Electoral Rules**

Reynolds, Andrew, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis. 2005. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (Read pages 5-13, 27-29, 35-37, 43, 57-61, 71, 77-84, & 90.)

Rahat, Gideon, and Mario Sznajder. 1998. "Electoral engineering in Chile: the electoral system and limited democracy." *Electoral Studies* 17(4): 429-422.

Dow, Jay K. 1998. "A spatial analysis of candidate competition in dual member districts: The 1989 Chilean senatorial elections." *Public Choice* 97: 451-474.

*Screening: City of God (Fernando Meirelles, 2002, Brazil)*

## **2/16 - Economic Policy & Redistribution**

Power, Timothy J. and J. Timmons Roberts. 2000. "A New Brazil? The Changing Sociodemographic Context of Brazilian Democracy." In *Readings in Latin American Politics: Challenges to Democratization*, ed. Peter R. Kingstone. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 297-322.

Arias, Enrique Desmond, 2006. "The Dynamics of Criminal Governance: Networks and Social Order in Rio de Janeiro." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38: 293-325.

Anderson, Jon Lee, 2009. "A Report at Large. Gangland. Who controls the streets of Rio de Janeiro?" *The New Yorker*, October 5.

*Screening: Crane World (Pablo Trapero, 1999, Argentina)*

## **2/23 - Accountability & Economic Reforms**

Anonymous. 1994. "Reforming Latin America." *The Economist* 333(7891).

Magaloni, Beatriz and Vidal Romero, 2008. "Partisan Cleavages, State Retrenchment, and Free Trade Latin America in the 1990s." *Latin America Research Review* 43(2): 107-135.

Gibson, L. Edward and Ernesto Calvo, 2000. "Federalism and Low-Maintenance Constituencies: Territorial Dimensions of Economic Reforms in Argentina." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 32-55.

*Screening: The Take (Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein, 2004, Canada)*

## **3/1 - Democracy and Economic Policy Outcomes**

Geddes, Barbara. 1995. "The Politics of Economic Liberalization." *Latin America Research Review* 30(2):195-214.

Luna, Juan P., and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2005. "Political Representation in Latin America. A Study of Elite-Mass Congruence in Nine Countries." *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(4): 388-416.

Johnson, Gregg B., and Brian F. Crisp. 2003. "Mandates Power, and Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 487-511.

*Screening: El Bonaerense (Pablo Trapero, 2002, Argentina)*

### **3/08 - Politician's Dilemma**

Geddes, Barbara. 1991. "A Game Theoretic Model of Reform in Latin American Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 85(2): 371-392. (especially 371-377)

Smulovitz, Catalina. 2003. "Citizen Insecurity and Fear in Argentina." In *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy and the State*, ed. Hugo Fruhling and Joseph Tulchin. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 125-152.

Eaton, Kent, 2008. "Paradoxes of Police Reform. Federalism, Parties, and Civil Society in Argentina's Public Security Crisis." *Latin America Research Review* 43(3): 5-32.

*Screening: None*

### **3/15 - Spring Break**

#### **3/22 - Review**

Powell Jr., G. Bingham. 2004. "The Chain of Responsiveness." *Journal of Democracy* 15(4): 91-105.

Arnold, Jason Ross, and David J. Samuels. 2011. "Evidence from Public Opinion." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 31-51.

*Screening: Our Brand is Crisis (Rachel Boyton, 2005, Bolivia)*

#### **3/29 - Crisis of Representation?**

Kaufman, Robert R. 2011. "The Political Left, the Export Boom, and the Populist Temptation." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 93-116.

Singer, Matthew M. and Kevin M. Morrison. 2004. "The 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Bolivia." *Electoral Studies* 23: 172-182.

Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2008. "Bolivia's Constitutional Breakdown." *Journal of Democracy* 29(4): 110-124.

Centellas, Miguel. 2009. "Research Note: Electoral Reform, Regional Cleavages, and Party Stability in Bolivia." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2: 115-131.

*Screening: Cocalero (Alejandro Landres, 2007, Bolivia)*

#### **4/05 - Reputations and Campaigning**

Handlin, Samuel, and Ruth Berins Collier. 2011. "The Diversity of Left Party Linkages and Competitive Advantages." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 139-161.

Stokes, Susan. 2001. *Mandates and Democracy. Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Read Chapter 1)

Madrid, Raúl. 2011. "Origins and Policies of the Movimiento al Socialismo." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 239-259.

Screening: *Lula's Brazil: The Management of Hope* (Gonzalo Ajirón, 2005, Brazil)

#### **4/12 - Reputations and Policy-Making**

Wiesehomeier, Nina. 2010. "The Meaning of Left-Right in Latin America: A Comparative View." Kellogg Working Paper No. 370.

Murillo, María Victoria, Virginia Oliveros, and Milan Vaishnav. 2011. "Economic Constraints and Presidential Agency." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 52-70.

Hunter, Wendy. 2011. "Brazil: The PT in Power." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 306-324.

Screening: *None*

#### **4/19 – EXAM**

Screening: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Briain, 2003, Venezuela)

#### **4/26 - The Future of Democracy in Latin America**

Levitsky, Steven and Kenneth M. Roberts, 2011. "Conclusion: Democracy, Development, and the Left". In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 399-427.

Anderson, John Lee. 2008. "A Reporter at Large. Fidel's Heir. The Influence of Hugo Chávez." *The New Yorker* June 23.

López Maya, Margarita, 2011. "Venezuela: Hugo Chávez and the Populist Left." In *The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America*, ed. Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 239-259.

#### **5/09 - PAPER DUE**