Latin American Politics: Democracy, Representation, and the Rule of Law (POLS W4461)

Instructor: Prof. M. Victoria Murillo (mm2140@columbia.edu)

Instructor’s Office: International Affairs Building 832.

Instructor’s Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3pm.

Class Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:10-11:25-Fayerweather 310

TAs: Julia Rubio (jmr2263@columbia.edu)
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TAs’ Office Hours: By appointment

Class Description

This is a lecture class that seeks to introduce students to social scientific analysis while discuss the shifting dynamics of political representation in Latin America. In analyzing political representation in the region, it focuses on demands for political inclusion by different actors and how they were resisted or accepted by established elites in a process that moved from regime change to electoral rotation in power. The course covers these political dynamics and their institutional consequences since the onset of the twentieth century, starting with the Mexican Revolution, until the contemporary period where democracy is the predominant form of government and elections a crucial tool for social and political change. While analyzing the politics of Latin America, we will cover important political science concepts associated with democratic representation, social inclusion and the rule of the law, such as social movement mobilization, political regime change, presidentialism, political party systems, political identities, state capacity, and institutional weakness.

The emphasis on political inclusion and representation is crucial to understand political dynamics in a region characterized by political instability during most of the twentieth century, but is also crucial to understand its current political landscape. The emphasis on social scientific concepts is useful to link the political phenomena analyzed in Latin America with its counterparts in other regions of the world and to allow students develop comparative tools for political analysis.

The class is structured to combine political science literature along with fiction and documentaries. Students are encouraged to relate the political science concepts studied in class with other forms of expression that illuminate our understanding of Latin American politics. The lectures are prepared to frame the issues of each class and complement the readings. Students are required to do the readings and expected to participate in class asking relevant questions or making appropriate comments and undergraduate students are expected to attend sections led by TAs where the bibliography of the course will be reviewed and discussed. The exams will cover the information provided in lectures and in the readings.
Requirements (for undergraduates and MA students)—there is **NO final exam** in this class, there are 2 in-class exams that cover the first and second part of the syllabus as indicated below, as well as two short papers as explained below.

- A one or two-page double spaced paper (10% of grade) linking one of list of political science concepts studied in class with a section in the novels in the first part of the class. (A list of concepts will be provided for selecting one of them; the student needs to pick the paragraph in the book and explain why is that they illustrate the political science concept selected). The two-page limit is strict since the exercise is to explain the linkage between a paragraph and a social science concept, which should require more than a few paragraphs.
- One-page double spaced paper answering one of two questions linking the literature on democratic transitions and the movie “NO” (10% of the grade) (due one week after the movie). The one-page limit is STRICT, since this is only one answer connecting the scholarly concepts with a scene of the movie.
- One in-class mid-term (30% of grade)
- One in-class second exam (40% of the grade).

The exams will cover the material discussed in the lectures and in the sections as well as required readings and movies. There will be questions linking the documentary movies and the social science concepts discussed in class. Each exam will include the material cover in that part of the course—the final only covers the second part of the course.

- Attendance to sections and participation in lectures is graded (10% of the grade). **Attendance to sections is required for undergraduates. The required texts are ONLY discussed in the sections whereas lectures focus on general concepts that frame such discussions, thus there is no overlapping between lecture and sections.**

Books


Readings:

- All the readings are on reserve at Lehman library and on e-reserve in courseworks (e-books can be accessed from CLIO). Full books are on paper in the library.
- The rest of the readings are in additional readings in courseworks.
- In addition to the PS books, you are required to read 2 novels:
  - Peronism: Tomas Elloy Martinez, *Santa Evita*
Plan of Lectures & Readings for Each Week

(1) Introduction to the Class (9/6)
Introduction to LA: the study of Latin America in Political science, the shifting meaning of political participation and implications in terms of state building in the region.

(2) Democracy: Participation & Opposition (9/8)
The concept of democracy in political science. Tensions between participation and opposition in Latin America from the construction of national states in the 1880s to the expansion of suffrage. The cases of Chile, Argentina & Mexico.

Required:

Recommended:

(3) The Failure of Democracy and the Mexican Revolution (9/13)
From the effective suffrage and no re-election to social revolution.

Required:
- Azuela, The Underdogs OR Mastretta, Lovesick.
- Skidmore & Smith, chapter 3 (Mexico): pp 47-63.

Recommended:
- David Samuels, “Political Violence” (in courseworks).

(4) The Expansion of Participation & The Emergence of Populism (9/15&9/20)
The politics of populism as a mechanism for political inclusion. The case of Argentina.

9/15: discussion of expectations about the short paper.

Required:
(5) The Economic Policies of Populism (ISI) & Corporatism (9/22)
Was there an elective affinity between economic policy and political system? Was there an economic explanation for the emergence of populism? The political incorporation of labor unions and how it shaped the political system in the post-war era. The bargaining between labor and political elites and its institutional expression in labor regulation and political representation patterns. Are political and economic inclusion the two sides of the same coin? Comparison with Keynesianism and the welfare state.

Required:

Recommended:

9/26 at 10am: Deadline for SHORT PAPER, please email it to the instructor and to both TAs!!!!

(6) The Failure of Political Incorporation (9/27)
The promise of democracy and social mobilization for redistribution and political inclusion. Political violence and political closure. The failure of democracy to channel distributive conflict.

Required:
- Skidmore & Smith, Chapter 10 (Chile): pp.268-293.

Recommended:

(7) Military Rule & Democratic Breakdown (9/29, 10/4 & 10/6)
Economic development, political participation, and institutions as alternative explanations for the rise of military rule in Latin America. The emergence of Bureaucratic Authoritarian (BA) regimes. The cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Comparing military regimes and their political underpinning. Right-wing and left-wing military rulers and state autonomy. Repression of mobilization versus political inclusion and modernization. Southern Cone versus Andean Countries.
Required:

*The Battle of Chile, Part I* (documentary) in class.

**Recapitulation for the mid-term (10/11) & Mid-term (10/13): the time of truth.**

(9) Transitions to Democracy I (10/18 & 10/20)
Patterns of transition, bargaining as a strategic game with uncertain results, the cost of military rule and how to deal with the legacy during transition to democracy. The cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

“NO” (movie about the Chilean transition to democracy) in class.

Required:

**10/18 INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONE PAGE SHORT PAPER ON THE MOVIE**

(10) Transitions to Democracy in the Post-Cold War Era (10/25)
Transitions in the post-cold war era. Changes in the international context and the patterns of transition. The withdrawal versus the negotiation. What is the effect of the international context on regime change and democratic consolidation? The cases of Mexico and El Salvador.

Required:
- Skidmore & Smith, pp.63-68 (Mexico).
Recommended:

(11) New Democracies & Economic Liberalization (10/27)
The Debt Crisis & its economic and political consequences. The crisis of incumbent regimes, influence of international financial institutions and foreign investors. The diffusion of the “Washington Consensus.”

Required:

Recommended:

ONE PAGE SHORT PAPER ANSWERING QUESTION ON THE MOVIE DUE on 10/31 at 10am (please email to instructors and both TAs).

(12) The Politics of Economic Liberalization & Reforms by Surprise (11/1)
Unlike reformers, legislative and electoral support for reform policies. Why was democracy compatible with neoliberal reforms? Reforms adopted by populist parties. Conditions that brought voters to support reform. The make-up of political coalitions that allowed neoliberal reformers to be effective at both governing and winning elections.

Required:

Recommended:
Susan Stokes, Mandates and Democracy (Cambridge University Press 2001).

(13) Presidentialism & Political Instability (11/3)
The effect of free-market reform on democratic institutions. Presidential dependence on public opinion. Executive concentration of power, vertical accountability and political protests. New forms of political instability replacing military coups. The effect of institutions on presidential stability.
Required:

Recommended:

**ELECTION DAY: NO CLASS ON 11/8**

**14** Crisis of Political Representation & Party System Change (11/10)
The crisis of representation in the new democracies. Political parties as channels for representation and their limitations to include new actors and to institutionalization participation. Democratic stability versus political inclusion. Check and balances versus majoritarianism. The emergence of political outsiders.

Required

Recommended:

**15** The Rise of the Left & Ideological Polarization in the New Millennium (11/15)
The different accounts for the electoral success of the left in the 2000s: the commodity boom and the rise of the Left. The radicalization of policies in Latin America and the different types of left (social democratic versus populist) and their explanation. Reactions from the Right and social polarization.

Required:

Recommended:

The crisis of representation and the emergence of ethnic politics. Identity versus distributive politics: overlapping or alternatives? How to build successful political coalitions along ethnic lines. Ethnopopulism and of the Left-wing wave in Latin America.

Required

*Cocalero* (documentary about Evo Morales) in class

Recommended:

*(17) Identity Politics: Gender & Sexual Orientation (11/29)*
Political participation and identity politics. From class to gender and sexual orientation. Identity versus distributive politics. What are the conditions that facilitate reforms related to identity politics from gender quotas to gay marriage.

Required:
• Mala Htun, *Inclusion Without Representation* (Cambridge University Press, 2015): chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Recommended:
Democratic Politics and the Rule of the Law (12/1)
The unevenness of the rule of the law in the new Latin American democracies. Political representation versus effective citizenship. Majority rule, state capacity, and the importance of check and balances beyond presidential politics. The tension between the expansion of rights and the historical legacies of weak rule of the law. The pending challenges of Latin American democracies.

Required:

Recommended:

Recapitulation of second part of the course (12/6) and Second In-Class Exam (12/8).