

LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS, POLS 322  
Prof. Fred Shepherd, Spring 2009  
Office Hours: Monday 12-2:00, Wednesday 9:30-11:00, DBH 111  
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This course will focus on politics in the region which includes South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. Latin America has become increasingly democratic in recent decades; yet governments in the region have in many cases failed to address staggering political and economic inequalities. A central concern throughout the course will be the ability of Latin American governments to effectively govern and address these inequalities. The course will begin with a broad overview, which will include the study of the region's history, religion, gender relations, politics, and economics, and the status of indigenous Americans throughout the region. The second section of the course will focus on the process through which nation-states emerged in Latin America. This section will be followed by a broad survey of the impact, and legacy, of U.S. policy in the region. The course will finish with a series of case studies: first, an in-depth section on Bolivia; and then brief case studies of Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and Colombia. A central goal of the course will be to have students apply the more general theoretical lessons of earlier sections to these cases.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

Each assigned reading will be accompanied by a reading quiz. Students will be assigned two papers during the semester; I will provide paper topics, and they will focus on issues raised in class. There will also be a comprehensive final examination. Each student will write a paper based on his or her case study presentation (described below). Finally, each student will receive a class participation grade, reflecting his/her in-class contribution.

Group work will be an important part of this class. I will create three groups at the outset of the course. Each group will "represent" roughly seven Latin American nations. These groups will become the basis for three separate kinds of activities. First, groups will take quizzes together—they will take the same quizzes that individuals take after their quizzes have been handed in. Second, groups will work together to bring news articles to class and to provide commentary on them—this will happen on most class meetings. These articles will correspond to the groups' assigned nations. Each group will present breaking news stories on previously assigned topics and regions. Third, they will serve as the basis for the formal "case" presentations made in weeks 10 through 14. A subset of group members will make the presentations and run the entire class session, but the group as a whole will support their efforts. I am aware of both the promise and pitfalls of group work. During the semester, I will give students three separate opportunities to evaluate and rate the work of their fellow group members. These ratings will then negatively or positively affect each student's group grade.

I will not fail any student solely for attendance-related reasons. Yet, this course, in order to succeed, will depend on in-class participation by every student. Class participation grades will suffer as absences accumulate; after three absences, students will lose 2% of their grade with each additional absence. Peer evaluation ratings will also suffer with repeated absences. Please consult the student handbook in regard to issues of academic honesty and plagiarism.

#### BOOKS

Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost, Politics of Latin America: The Power Game, 2009  
Miguel Angel Centeno, Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America, 2002  
Greg Grandin, Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the U.S., and the New Imperialism, 2006  
Benjamin Dangl, The Price of Fire: Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia, 2007

## GRADE BREAKDOWN

### Individual Grades:

25 Quizzes, 0.5% each	12.5%
2 Papers, 13% each	26%
Final Examination	12%
Essay from Presentation	10%
Attendance and Participation	7%

### Group Grades: (Affected by Peer Ratings)

27 Group Quizzes, 0.5% each	12.5%
General In-Class Performance	10%
Case Study Class Performance	10%

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall, or call 726-4078 or 726-2105. I will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Weeks 1-3: Introduction and Overview

27 January: Introduction

29 January: Overview and History

Vanden and Prevost, pp xviii-xxiii, 1-79

3 February: Revolution and Indigenous Americans

Vanden and Prevost, pp 80-102, 239-267

5 February: Gender and Religion

Vanden and Prevost, pp 103-148

10 February: Political Economy

Vanden and Prevost, pp 149-179

12 February: Political Institutions

Vanden and Prevost, pp 190-238

### Weeks 4-5: War and the Nation-State in Latin America

17 February: Introduction

Centeno, pp 1-32

19 February: War in Latin America

Centeno, pp 33-100

24 February: War and State in Latin America

Centeno, pp 101-178, 209-215 (skim 178-209)

26 February: War and Nation in Latin America

Centeno, pp 217-280

\*\*\*Paper Due 3 March\*\*\*

### Weeks 6 and 7: U.S. Policy and its Impact

3 March: Video on U.S. Policy

5 March: Latin America in Context

Grandin, pp 1-86

10 March: The New Imperialism in Latin America

Grandin, pp 87-158

12 March: Latin America and the Middle East

Grandin, pp 159-237

Weeks 8 and 9: The Case of Bolivia

24 March: Introduction

Dangl, pp 1-54

26 March: The Bolivian Crisis in Historical Context

Dangl, pp 55-114

31 March: Natural Resources and Political Crisis

Dangl, pp 115-178

2 April: Evo Morales in Power

Dangl, pp 179-222, Handout

\*\*\*Paper Due 7 April\*\*\*

Weeks 10 - 14: Latin American Nations in Context – Student-Run Classes on Cases

7 April: Preparation Day, Video

9 April: Brazil

Case by Wilber Albert Chaffee

14 April: Venezuela

Case by Daniel Hellinger

16 April: Guatemala

Case by Susanne Jonas

21 April: Chile

Case by Eduardo Silva

23 April: Colombia

Case by John Dinges

28 April: Cuba

Case by Gary Prevost

30 April: Argentina

Case by Aldo Vacs

5 May: Nicaragua

Case by Gary Prevost and Harry Vanden

7 May: Mexico

Case by Nora Hamilton

\*\*\*Essay from Presentation Due One Week after Presentation\*\*\*

\*\*\*Final Examination 10:30, Thursday 14 May\*\*\*