

**Latin American Politics**  
Bard College  
Fall 2018  
Classroom: HEG 102  
Monday and Wednesday 3:10PM-4:30PM  
Professor: Sweet  
Email: csweet@bard.edu  
Office hours: Monday 10:30-11:30; Wednesday 10:30-11:30

¡Bienvenidos! Bemvindo! Welcome to Latin American Politics. Over the next semester, we will explore the political, economic and social factors which shape this region. Over the past four decades, the majority of Latin American countries entered a period of electoral democracy that is largely unprecedented. Yet, in many countries, the state of democracy has proven uneven and unstable. Together, we will explore changes in political systems through from transitions to democracy which marked the 1980s, the pro-market reforms of the 1990s, the surge of leftist leadership in the 2000s and finally, the state of governance and representation today. Drawing from studies in the field of Comparative Politics, International Relations and Latin American Studies, this course charts the interactions of actors drawing on varying conceptual and analytical frameworks. Our aim is to understand how political institutions, economic conditions and social networks shape modern states.

No previous knowledge of Latin America is required. However, if you do not have any basic understanding of political science nomenclature, please raise questions when they arise and attend office hours as needed. The goal of the course is to bring students into the conversation on economics, society and politics in Latin America.

During the course of the semester we will refer to a textbook for some readings and in the tradition of graduate seminars, rely heavily on journal articles and primary sources. Students are required to complete readings before each session so as to substantively contribute to class discussions. The course is designed with three focus areas: readings on STATES, on MARKETS, and on SOCIETIES.

#### Course Readings:

All class readings are available to you in the book by Vanden and Prevost, *Politics of Latin America* (available for purchase and on-reserve in the library). Additional readings will be available in the google drive folder I will share with the course. Please email me immediately if you have not received this invitation or have any technical issues accessing these documents. It is likely that the readings list will evolve as the course progresses, please be aware the current reading schedule is a flexible road map, not a straightjacket. Readings may be added (or dropped) as students' interests become apparent and as political situations in the countries we are studying evolve.

#### Policies:

Please be on time for class. Only one unexcused absence is allowed, additional ones will incur a penalty. Please refrain from bringing food or drinks to the classroom. Laptop computers are allowed only with a written permission from the Dean of Students Office. No incompletes will be issued unless authorized by the instruction in advance. And please remember to turn off your cell phone as you enter the classroom. Any detected instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of the College.

With the exception of the first week, I will post PowerPoint lecture notes in the google drive folder for the coming week by 5 PM each Thursday. These lecture notes will not lay out all questions for class discussion, but they will offer a guide to the content I expect you to master. Students should feel free to download and print the PowerPoints and bring them to class. Please allow 24 hours for me to respond to emails. When you email me, please include a descriptive subject line and make sure you remind me what class you are in.

Students who anticipate problems with fulfilling course requirements because of the way they see, hear, read, or get around campus should advise me within the first two weeks of class to make special arrangements with Bard disabilities services.

#### Course Evaluation:

##### Participation (10% of final grade)

A good evaluation in participation will require attendance and full engagement. I will take attendance at the beginning of class, late arrivals will not be counted as present. Be prepared to raise questions and join in our discussions with evidence-based contributions. Share your view of the readings, be respectful of differing views, help enrichen the conversation with your classmates. We will explore the readings through many in-class exercises, both individual or group based. Be prepared to reflect through on-the-spot writing tasks. These exercises will heavily influence your course participation grade.

##### Mid-term Exam (30% of final grade)

In-class exam probing knowledge of key concepts, theories, and facts as well as a map test. We will have a review session on Tuesday, October 22th. To make good use of the review session, make sure you bring questions to class.

##### One Mini-Research paper (30% of final grade)

Develop a 10-12 page research paper examining academic research on a major political problem facing Latin America. Make sure you cite at least 6 academic sources using the Chicago Manual of Style "Author-Date" citation format and that you discuss at least 2 Latin American countries. The paper should be printed and submitted in-person *at the beginning of class* on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Late papers will not be accepted.

##### Take-home final Exam (30% of final grade)

Students will be handed a take-home final exam on December 17<sup>th</sup>. I will be available in-person to deliver the exam and answer any questions. Students will be able to draw on their notes, readings and text sources to complete the exam, which should be printed and submitted to the office of Political Studies by December 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

## **THE STATE**

Week 1: September 3 & 5

On Monday we will go over syllabus and class expectations

The Democratic State

Mainwaring, S. and Pérez-Liñán, A. (2013). "Democratic Breakdown and Survival" *Journal of Democracy* 24 (2): 123-137.

Vanden and Prevost, Chapter 3, *Democracy and Dictators*, pp 43-84.

Week 2: September 10 & 12

The Gendered State

Piscopo, Jennifer. (2017) "Still Left Behind: Gender, Political Parties, and Latin America's Pink Tide" (co-authored with Kendall D. Funk and Magda Hinojosa). *Social Politics*, 24 (4) 2017: 399-424

Vanden and Prevost, Chapter 5, Society, Family and Gender, p. 112-136.

Week 3: September 17 & 19

The Single-Party State: Spotlight on Mexico

Hamilton, Nora, "Mexico," (2018) Chapter 12 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Magaloni, B. (2005). "The Demise of Mexico's One-Party Dominant Regime: Elite Choices and the Masses in the Establishment of Democracy" in *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, Eds. Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring, Cambridge University Press, pp. 121-146.

O'Neil, Shannon (2018) "López Obrador and the Future of Mexican Democracy" *Foreign Affairs*

Week 4: September 24 & 26

The Resource State: Spotlight on Chile

Silva, Eduardo, "Chile" (2018) Chapter 15 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Mazzuca, S. (2013). "The rise of rentier populism," *Journal of Democracy* pp. 108-22

Frankel, Jeffrey. (2012). "Chile's Countercyclical Triumph," *Foreign Policy*, 27 June.

Week 5: October 1 & 3

Chaffee, Wiber Albert, "Brazil" (2018) Chapter 14 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Donaghy, Maureen, Rennó, Lúcio, Layton, Mathew, (2017) "Does Welfare Provision Promote Democratic State Legitimacy? Evidence from Brazil's Bolsa Família Program," *Latin American Politics and Society*, Pages: 99-120

Sweet, Cassandra, (2014) "Brazil woke up stronger? Power, protest and politics in 2013," *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 34 (1)59-78.

Week 6: October 8 & 10

Fall Break

Week 7: October 15 & 17

Neoliberalism and Representation: Spotlight on Argentina

Vanden and Prevost, Chapter 7, The Political Economy of Latin America, pp 157-193.

Lupu, Noam. "Latin America's New Turbulence: The End of the Kirchner Era," *Journal of Democracy*, April 2016

Vacs, Aldo, "Argentina" (2018) Chapter 13 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Week 8: October 22 & 24

Midterm Review

In-Class Exam

Week 9: October 29 & 31

The Left Turn: Spotlight on Venezuela

Hellinger, Daniel (2018) Chapter 17 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Beasley-Murray et al, "Latin America's Left Turns: an Introduction," *Third World Quarterly*, 30(2), pp. 319-330.

Rodríguez, "An Empty Revolution: the Unfulfilled Promises of Hugo Chávez." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008.

Weisbrot, "An Empty Research Agenda: The Creation of Myths About Contemporary Venezuela," Center for Economic and Policy Research, March 2008.

Week 10: November 5 & 7

Commodity Boom: Spotlight on Bolivia

Morales, Waltraud (2018) Chapter 18 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Postero, "Morales's MAS Government: Building Indigenous Popular Hegemony in Bolivia," *Latin American Perspectives* 37:3 (2010), pp. 18-34.

Eaton, "Backlash in Bolivia: Regional Autonomy as a Reaction against Indigenous Mobilization," *Politics & Society* 35:1 (2007), pp. 71-102

Week 11: November 12 & 14

Documentary

Cocalero (2007) Bolivia.

Week 12: November 19 & 21

Spotlight on Guatemala

Jonas, Susanne, Chapter 20 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Documentary: "Granito/How to Nail a Dictatory"

\*\*Mini research paper due November 22

Week 13: November 26 & 28

Spotlight on Cuba

Prevost, Gary, Chapter 19 in *Politics of Latin America*, Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, ed.

Exploding Mojitos: The First "Sonic Attacks" Targeting American Diplomats in Cuba May Have Taken Place Thirty Years Ago

Clips from "Cuba Libre"—Documentary on Cuban history

Week 14: December 3

Spotlight on Puerto Rico

\*\*\*No class December 5—Advisor Day

Week 15: December 10 & 12

Chapter 11 "US-Latin American Relations"

The US-Mexico Border

Course conclusion

\*\*\*Final take-home exam will be emailed to the class on Sunday December 16<sup>th</sup> and should be emailed in PDF format to [csweet@bard.edu](mailto:csweet@bard.edu) by Monday 17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.