LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS
Political Science 2383, Section 10
Fall 2015

COURSE INFORMATION
CRN 62974
Time: T and R 12:45-2:00
Location: Rome 206

INSTRUCTOR
Prof. Cynthia McClintock
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Office hours: W 2:30-4:45 (and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In 1978, a third “democratic wave” began in Latin America. Now, almost all the countries in the region are considered electoral democracies. But, the quality of democracy has been uneven. Democracy continues to be challenged by the long-standing problems of poverty, inequality, and corruption and also by the recent problem of organized crime.

We explore various questions. Why, overall, has Latin America democratized? Why has democracy fared well in some nations and poorly in others? We focus on four sets of explanations: 1) political culture and history 2) economic development 3) international context and 4) political institutions. With respect to economic development, special attention is given to “modernization theory,” “dependency theory” and “the resource curse.”

We also examine the performance of Latin America’s democracies. Are they incorporating groups that were previously excluded? Are they reducing poverty, inequality, and corruption? Resolving violent conflicts? Coping with organized crime? Has it made a difference that a considerable number of women have been presidents?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
As a result of completing this course, students will:
1. Understand key trends and issues in Latin American politics.
2. Increase their capacity to think critically about Latin American politics—to assess competing theoretical interpretations and conflicting evidence.
3. Increase their ability to build a cogent argument—to advance a position with sound logic, supported by robust evidence.
4. Build their factual knowledge about Latin American politics and Latin American history.
5. Enhance their writing and communication skills.

GRADE COMPUTATION
1. Quiz (15%)
2. Critical essay (20%) (See below for guidelines.)
3. Research paper (25%) (See below for guidelines.)
4. Final exam (35%) In accord with GWU policy, the final exam will be on the officially scheduled date, not during the last week of the semester.

5. Class attendance and participation (5%). (Class discussions will not be graded, but they are an opportunity for extra credit.)

Extra Credit
Students who attend regularly and make positive contributions to our structured small-group discussions, to regular class discussion, and/or discussions on Blackboard will receive an additional 1 to 8 points on their final grade for the course. Positive contributions show knowledge of readings for the course and hone in on key questions relevant to the class session.

GUIDELINES: CRITICAL ESSAY
Each student will submit to the professor a hard copy of the essay, which is to be a maximum of 1,000 words or about 3 pages—excluding bibliography and tables or figures. Excessive length will be penalized. This essay is a critical analysis of either 1) political culture theory or 2) modernization theory or 3) dependency theory or 4) “the resource curse.” This essay should respond to this statement:

Political culture theory OR modernization theory OR dependency theory OR “the resource curse” is valid with respect to democratization in some respects AND/OR some [specify] Latin American countries, but invalid in other respects AND/OR in other [specify] Latin American countries.

Be sure to define the theory or theory that you choose. Strive for cross-national comparisons and contrasts to the degree possible. The essay should include 1) survey data about public opinion in one or more Latin American countries AND/OR 2) economic data about economic growth, per capita income, foreign direct investment, economic inequality, and/or poverty in one or more Latin American countries. Tables and figures are welcome. The essay is due in class on Oct. 29.

GUIDELINES: RESEARCH PAPER
Topics for research papers are indicated under each class session. If a student would like to modify the question, s/he should consult the professor. Alternatively, for each country that we discuss in class, students may write a research paper on any one of the following questions:

1) The country’s Freedom House score in recent years [you may choose the precise years] is correct/incorrect. This topic enables you to assess the status of democracy in the country.
2) Why has the country’s democracy fared as it has in recent years [you may choose the precise years]?
3) Have the social policies of the country’s most recent governments [you may choose the precise “recent governments”] moved reasonably sufficiently [or not] to address inequalities [you may choose exactly which inequalities] in the country?
4) [If the country has or had a female president]: Did President [identify]’s gender make a difference to democracy, governance, or social equality in the country?

The student is to address the question as specifically as possible; detailed historical background is not to be provided. The “/” mark in the questions indicates that students can choose either or both options. The paper does not need to make a blanket yes/no argument; the argument may be nuanced. The paper should address counter-arguments. To make a cogent analytical argument, the paper should include empirical data (survey data, economic data, etc). The paper is to be carefully researched and documented; at least 25% of cited works should be required or recommended
readings from PSC 2383 and at least 25% from other readings. The paper should also incorporate material from PSC 2383 lectures as appropriate. Not only direct quotes but also paraphrased text and ideas taken from a source must be quoted. No more than 2 sentences should be taken wholesale from a single source. Also, statistics that may vary by source should be cited. For assistance with citation, visit the Writing Center at http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter.

Length: a maximum of 1,700 words (roughly 5 pages) excluding bibliography, which responds to one of the questions under a class heading in the syllabus. Excessive length will be penalized.

Submission: Each student will submit to the professor a hard copy of the paper. The deadline for students who do not present their paper in the relevant class is December 8.

There is also the opportunity for five extra points for the paper if the student does all of the following:

1) E-mails the professor between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm two days before the relevant class to let the professor know that he/she will be presenting his/her paper in the class. (If a paper spans two dates, consult the professor on which of the two is “the relevant class.”)
2) Posts his/her paper on “Discussions” in Blackboard by 3:00 pm the day before the class.
3) Summarizes his/her paper before the class for a total of 3 minutes and responds to questions on the topic. Amount of time for the student’s response to questions will be at the professor’s discretion.

GUIDELINES: CLASS DISCUSSIONS #1-5
During five sessions, students will divide into groups of five or six, exchange views about the indicated question, and after about 10 minutes report their findings to the entire class. It is expected that, prior to the class, students ponder the question and present and defend their view in the group. The goal is in part to improve your analytical and communication skills. Your work will not be graded but students whose contributions stand out will receive extra credit.

CLASS POLICIES

Paper submission: All written work must be given to the professor in hard copy and must be typed double-spaced, using a 12-point font and one inch margins and include proper citations. If for any reason you do not personally hand your paper in to the professor, you must both email it to her and put a hard copy in her box in the PSC department office (Monroe 440). Please ask the office to stamp the paper with the time of its submission. It is your responsibility to check that the professor received it.

Late work: 3 points will be subtracted from a grade for the first hour that a paper is late and, after one day, an additional 3 points will be subtracted for each day that a paper is late.

Religious holidays: Please notify the professor if you must be absent due to a religious holiday.

Power points and hard-copy handouts: Will not be available on Blackboard. It is hoped that this policy will provide an incentive for class attendance.

Computer use: Except for students with disabilities, laptop computers are banned from class. To facilitate taking notes without a laptop, hard copies of the professor’s PPTs will be distributed.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Not only direct quotes but also paraphrased text and ideas taken from a source must be cited. Academic honesty policies (http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html) will be strictly enforced. Please visit the GWU Writing Center (http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter) for further assistance.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
Any student who due to a disability may need an accommodation should contact Disability Support Services at 202 994-8250. Visit http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/ for information. For assistance with personal, career, or study-skills problems, contact the University Counseling Center at 202 994-5300, available 24/7 or visit http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices.

TEXTS
Vanden, Harry E. and Prevost, Gary, eds., Politics of Latin America. 5th ed. (V & P in syllabus). (Beyond the V & P text, brief overviews of individual countries are available on-line at The Economist country briefings (www.economist.com/countries/) and at www.state.gov.)

Current History, February 2015 issue on Latin America. (CH in syllabus)

Arocena, Felipe and Bowman, Kirk, Lessons from Latin America: Innovations in Politics, Culture, and Development. (A & B in syllabus)

Recommended:
Domínguez, J.I. and Shifter, M., eds., Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America. 4th ed. (D & S in syllabus)

ADDITIONAL READINGS
Required book chapters and articles are available on "Electronic Reserves" on Blackboard. Recommended materials that are also on “Electronic Reserves” are indicated by the symbol BB. Other recommended articles are available through "e-journal title finder" at the Aladin home page of Gelman. Journal titles are abbreviated: JD=Journal of Democracy; FP=Foreign Policy, FA=Foreign Affairs; LAPS=Latin American Politics and Society; JLAS=Journal of Latin American Studies; LARR=Latin American Research Review. Recommended books are available at the Reserve Desk in Gelman.

Also, it is required that students be up-to-date on events and issues. Valuable sources include The New York Times (NYT), The Washington Post (Wash. Post), and The Economist; see also the Latin American Weekly Report (LAWR) and Latin American Regional Report. All are available through Gelman Library e-journals.

SCHEDULE

SEP. 1 INTRODUCTION
The syllabus (!!!!)
V & P, Ch. 1.
A & B, Ch. 1.

SEP. 3 DEMOCRACY: DOES IT MATTER? HOW IS IT DEFINED? OVERALL, HOW IS IT FARING IN LATIN AMERICA?

RESEARCH PAPER: FREEDOM HOUSE RATINGS OF THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY ARE REASONABLY VALID/DEEPLY FLAWED.


Recommended:

SEP. 8-10 THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION: HISTORY AND POLITICAL CULTURE

V & P, Ch. 2, pp. 45-54; Ch. 6; pp. 188-195; pp. 201-210.
Reid, M., The Forgotten Continent, pp. 41-44.
“Francis’s balancing act in Latin America,” The Economist 7/11/15, p. 36.

Recommended:
McClintock, C., Peasant Cooperatives and Political Change in Peru, Ch. 3 HD1491.P4 M33


V & P, Ch. 7 (esp. pp. 161-163 on dependency theory).
Reid, M., The Forgotten Continent, pp. 35-40 (critique of dependency).

Recommended:
Economic and social data are readily available from World Bank and ECLAC websites.
SEP. 17-22  CUBA: WHY DID IT UNDERGO A REVOLUTION AND THEN FAIL TO DEMOCRATIZE?

RESEARCH PAPER: SINCE THE EARLY 1990s, CUBA FAILED TO DEMOCRATIZE BECAUSE [SPECIFY REASONS].

V & P, pp. 60-62, 256-258, and Ch. 19.
“Cuba’s political prisoners,” The Economist 7/10/10, p. 36.
“Rekindling old friendships,” The Economist 8/9/14, pp. 29-30.

Recommended:
Americas Quarterly (Fall 2014), articles on Cuba.

SEP. 24  THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

CLASS DISCUSSION #1: ARE THERE ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOME LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAT YOU WOULD PROPOSE FOR THE U.S.? IF SO, SPECIFY AND EXPLAIN.

RESEARCH PAPER: A COMMON ELECTORAL RULE IN LATIN AMERICA THAT SHOULD BE ADOPTED IN THE U.S. IS [SPECIFY RULE] BECAUSE [SPECIFY]. (Options include: gender quotas; the length and number of presidential terms; national electoral commissions; electoral districting; the number of veto players; election-day schedule; plurality vs. runoff rules; compulsory vs. voluntary vote; candidate-selection rules, including primaries; allocation of television time.)

V & P, pp. 210-220.
A & B, Chs. 2 and 3.
Stepan, J. and Linz, Juan J., “Comparative Perspectives on Inequality and the Quality of Democracy in the United States,” Perspectives on Politics (December 2011), pp. 841-856.
Close, D., Latin American Politics: An Introduction, Ch. 6.

Recommended:
Payne, J.M., et. al., Democracies in Development, 2nd ed., Ch. 2. JL966 .D453 2007 (This book includes additional valuable information on institutions in other chapters.)
SEP. 29  COSTA RICA: WHAT WENT RIGHT?

RESEARCH PAPER: COSTA RICA IS LATIN AMERICA’S DEMOCRATIC STAR BECAUSE [SPECIFY REASONS].

V & P, p. 66-67 (the paragraph on Costa Rica).
A & B, Ch. 4 and pp. 125-128.

Recommended:

OCT. 1  CHILE: WHAT WENT RIGHT BEFORE 1970 AND AFTER 1990?

RESEARCH PAPER: WITH BACHELET’S SECOND ADMINISTRATION, THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE SHIFTED TO THE LEFT; WAS THE SHIFT NECESSARY AFTER DECADES OF ACCOMMODATION TO THE LEGACIES OF THE PINOCHET REGIME? OR COULD IT DE-STABILIZE A ROBUST DEMOCRACY?

V & P, pp. 59-60, p. 247, and Ch. 15.
A & B, Ch. 9.
“Cruising back to La Moneda,” The Economist, Nov. 9, 2013, pp. 41-42.

Recommended:
D & S, Ch. 8.
The film “Missing” (1982) and Devine (see Sep. 15 readings)

OCT. 6  VENEZUELA: WHAT WENT WRONG IN THE 1990s AND EARLY 2000s?

RESEARCH PAPER: 1) WHY DID PUNTO FIJO DEMOCRACY COLLAPSE IN THE LATE 1990s [SPECIFY REASONS]? OR 2) DID THE HUGO CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT BECOME AUTHORITARIAN? IF SO, IN WHAT YEAR AND FOR WHAT REASONS?

V & P, p. 253 and Ch. 17.

Recommended:
CLASS DISCUSSION #2: WHICH OF THE THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION ARE MOST PERSUASIVE?

RESEARCH PAPER: 1) THE PROTESTS AGAINST DILMA SHOW/DO NOT SHOW THAT BRAZIL’S DEMOCRACY REMAINS UNSTABLE AND VULNERABLE OR 2) SO THAT CORRUPTION SUCH AS THAT AT PETROBRAS IS REDUCED, BRAZIL’S GOVERNMENT SHOULD [SPECIFY POLICY ACTIONS].

V & P, pp. 63-64, p. 238, and Ch. 15.
A & B, Ch. 6 and pp. 128-138.
CH, article on Brazil.

Recommended:
D & S, Ch. 7.
Berthin, G., “Democratic Governance and Corruption in Latin America,” in Millett, R., et. al., Latin American Democracy, Ch. 15.
“Race and the law in Brazil: The race docket,” The Economist, 8/7/10, 36.
“Brazil’s poor schools: Still a lot to learn,” The Economist 6/6/2009, pp. 36-37.

ARGENTINA: AN UNDER-ACHIEVER

CLASS DISCUSSION #3: ARGENTINA’S 2015 ELECTION AND THE COUNTRY’S NEW PRESIDENT ARE LIKELY/UNLIKELY TO ENHANCE DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA.

RESEARCH PAPER: 1) IS ARGENTINA OR “THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY”,”VULTURE HEDGE FUNDS” MORE RESPONSIBLE FOR ARGENTINA’S 2014 DEFAULT? 2) ARGENTINA’S LEGALIZATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS LIKELY/NOT LIKELY TO BE REPLICATED IN NUMEROUS LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES OVER THE NEXT DECADE 3) ARGENTINA’S 2015 ELECTION AND THE COUNTRY’S NEW PRESIDENT ARE LIKELY/UNLIKELY TO ENHANCE DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA 4) REMEMBER THE DEBATE TOPIC FOR THE IMPACT OF WOMEN PRESIDENTS.

V & P, pp. 118-125 and 128-132 (gender, homosexuality)
CH, article on Argentina.
Update article on the election TBA.

Recommended:
The film “The Official Story” (1985)
Schwindt-Bayer, L., Political Power and Women’s Representation in Latin America. HQ1236.5.L37 S39
Sehnbruch, K. and Siavelis, P. M., eds. Democratic Chile: The Politics and Policies of a Historic Coalition, Ch. 6. JL 2681.D467 2014 (women in politics in Chile)

OCT. 27-29  PERU: A ROLLER COASTER

CRITICAL ESSAY IS DUE OCT. 29.

RESEARCH PAPER: THE GARCÍA GOVERNMENT/THE HUMALA GOVERNMENT RESOLVED CONFLICTS OVER THE EXTRACTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES REASONABLY EFFECTIVELY/INEFFECTIVELY.
2) THE HUMALA GOVERNMENT SHIFTED FROM A ROUGHLY CENTER-LEFT POSITION TO A ROUGHLY CENTER-RIGHT POSITION BECAUSE [SPECIFY REASONS].


Recommended:
D & S, Ch. 11.
Ponce, A., & McClintock, C., “The Explosive Combination of Inefficient Local Bureaucracies and Mining Production: Evidence from… Peru,” LAPS (Fall 2014), pp. 118-140.

NOV. 3-5  COLOMBIA: STILL HAUNTED BY INSURGENCIES?

RESEARCH PAPER: 1) THE KEY REASONS WHY COLOMBIA’S PEACE PROCESS IS NOT YET FINALIZED ARE [SPECIFY REASONS] OR 2) THE KEY REASONS WHY FORMER PRESIDENT ALVARO URIBE RETAINS POPULARITY ARE [SPECIFY REASONS].

V & P, pp. 248, 268-271 and Ch. 16.
Update article TBA.

Recommended:
D & S, Ch. 9.
“De Recesiones y Auges: Colombia entre 1990 y 2008,” Nueva Historia Económica de Colombia, Ch. 17.
“Colombia: Uribe’s Hostage Triumph,” The Economist, 7/5/08, p. 45 BB

**NOV. 10**

**ORGANIZED CRIME IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?**

**CLASS DISCUSSION #4:** WHAT POLICIES ARE LIKELY TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING VIOLENT CRIME IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO?

**RESEARCH PAPER:** TO REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME IN [SPECIFY ONE OR TWO CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES OR MEXICO], THESE POLICIES [SPECIFY] ARE MOST PROMISING.

D & S, Ch. 3.
CH, article on Central America.
“Gangs and Youth Violence in Central America,” Daring to Care, Washington Office on Latin America (October 2008), pp. 29-30.
“America’s Safer Streets,” The Economist 8/25/12, pp. 21-22.
“A broken system,” The Economist 7/12/14, pp. 31-33.
“The broken-truce story,” The Economist 1/31/15, p. 29.

Recommended:

**NOV. 12-17**

**MEXICO: “SO FAR FROM GOD….”**

**RESEARCH PAPER:** 1) THE PRI HAS/HAS NOT OVERCOME ITS AUTHORITARIAN PAST OR 2) OVERALL, U.S. POLICY TOWARDS MEXICO
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY HAS HELPED/NOT HELPED TO BUILD DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY.

D & S, Ch. 10 (review pp. 265-266).
“Mexico’s Middle Class Fortifies Opposition,” Wash. Post, 6/7/00, pp. 1 & 19.

Recommended:
“Film on Mexico’s Disputed ’06 Election Stirs Emotions,” NYT 12/2/07, p. 19.

NOV. 19, 24, THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND KEY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES—MEXICO, VENEZUELA, AND CUBA

CLASS DISCUSSION #5: IS THERE A POLICY THAT THE U.S. SHOULD PURSUE TO REVIVE DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA? IF SO, WHAT?

RESEARCH PAPER: 1) THE U.S. IS/IS NOT IN PART RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ECLIPSE OF DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA/THE RESILIENCE OF AUTHORITARIANISM IN CUBA 2) THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION’S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH CUBA IS/IS NOT LIKELY TO HELP REVIVE DEMOCRACY IN CUBA WITHIN 5 TO 10 YEARS.

THE ALLOCATION OF TIME ON EACH OF THE THREE COUNTRIES WILL DEPEND ON STUDENTS’ INTEREST AND OTHER FACTORS.

CH, articles on Venezuela and Cuba.
McCoy, J., “Engaging Venezuela: 2009 and Beyond,” in Lowenthal, A.F. et. al., The Obama Administration and the Americas, Ch. 10.
Bunce, V. and Wolchik, S., review of Advancing Democracy Abroad, Perspectives on Politics (Sept. 2010), pp. 923-925.
Update articles TBA.

DEC. 3-
DEC. 8

CONCLUSION

RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE DEC. 8 IF NOT PRESENTED PREVIOUSLY.