

GOV 328L (38670)/LAS 337M (40260)/URB 350 (37665)

INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

Fall 2012 – MEZ B0.306
Professor Henry Dietz - h.dietz@austin.utexas.edu

Office: Batts 3.124
Office hours: T and W 10-12

Teaching assistants:

Jake Dizard – dizard@utexas.edu
Noah Durst – noahdurst@gmail.com

Government 328L is an introductory course to the politics of Latin America. It assumes no prior knowledge of the region, nor does it require any knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese. It does expect an open mind about how politics works, since much of the course will not be familiar to those of you whose experiences and knowledge of politics are based on the United States.

We begin with some introductory materials dealing first with the geography and history of the region, and then with some economic characteristics. We then cover the major actors in the political arena, identify four basic models of politics, and then conclude with an examination of US-Latin American relations.

328L/337M is an overview course, and cannot cover every topic of interest or of relevance to the region. In addition, the course does not pretend to investigate any single nation in depth. The course does move along quickly, and while the quantity of reading material is not great, I will expect you to know the assigned materials thoroughly. Therefore, it is an excellent idea to keep up with the readings.

There are two mid-terms and a final exam; each is composed of short answers and an essay question. These each count one third of your total grade and are not comprehensive. I will factor in in-class participation and improvement over the semester.

Any student with disabilities may request appropriate accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259).

A notice regarding academic dishonesty: You should all be familiar with the UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (see the University Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>)

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Grading: final grades will be determined on a +/- basis as follows:

93-100 = A	80-82 = B-	69-67 – D+
90-92 = A-	77-79 = C+	66-63 – D
87-89 = B+	73-76 = C	60-62 – D-
83-86 = B	70-72 = C-	Below 60 – F

BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

Blake, **Politics in Latin America, second edition (2008)**

Wiarda and Kline, **A Concise Introduction to Latin American Politics and Development (2007)**

Weeks, **US and Latin American Relations (2008)**

*Reading by Charles Anderson, to be distributed on line

SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

30 August - Introduction to the Course

4, 6, 11, 13 September - History and Socio-Economic Conditions

Wiarda and Kline, chapters 1-3

*Anderson (class handout)

Blake, Chapters 1-4

18, 20, 25 September - Major Political Actors

Wiarda and Kline, chapters 4-7

27 September - First Examination

2-30 October - Democracy, Populism, Authoritarianism and Revolution

During these weeks read Blake, chapters 5-11, as well as the materials on Peru in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Read in addition Wiarda and Kline, chapter 8.

We shall spend a certain amount of time in class discussing how to read these chapters, what to look for, and how to organize the materials found in them. Basically, read these chapters for episodes in each country that represent experience with the four models. Consider especially why democracy succeeded or failed, and why the other models likewise succeeded or failed.

1 November - Second Examination

6-29 November, 4 December – US-Latin American Relations

Weeks, complete. Read also Blake. Chapter 12

Final exam – 12 December (Monday), 9-12 – no exceptions

All optional papers are due to me by 9 November – no later.

Optional Papers

If you wish, you may write a short (6-8 pp. double-spaced) paper. This paper will be in addition to (NOT as a replacement for) the three exams. In other words, the exams are required; the paper is not.

The paper can count as much as one of the exams, but that depends on how you do on the paper. If you have an overall average of (for example) 78 on your exams and write a B paper, this will clearly bring your grade up. If, however, you have an average of 82 and write a C paper, the paper grade will not bring your overall average down. That is to say, if your paper grade can raise your overall grade, it will; if it would lower your overall grade, it won't count. The only thing your paper grade can do is raise your overall grade or keep it where it is – it can't lower your semester grade.

The topic for your paper is pretty much up to you, but it should focus on LA politics since WW II. I would strongly suggest two things: 1) think about an idea first, either drawing from the book(s) and/or lecture materials, and then come and see me (not the TAs) to talk about it; and 2) select a fairly specific topic rather than something that is too broad. For example, avoid a topic such as “Mexican Politics Since the Revolution”. Think instead about a specific election or a specific leader in a specific country. The topic does not have to be something we covered in class; if you are from, or have spent time in, a country and want to write about that country, fine.

I strongly suggest that see me once you have thought about a topic. Even if you know you want to write a paper but can't think of a topic, by all means come by. And don't wait until 7 November to start your paper (it's due 9 November); it won't be worthwhile doing.

If two of you want to write a joint paper, that's fine, but just know that each of you will receive the same grade.

On-line sources are fine, but since UT has the largest and most comprehensive university library in the United States dealing with LA (the Benson LA Collection), you would be foolish not to take advantage of it. If you don't know about it, find out about it!