

# LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Fall 2010  
POLI 4065  
4:40-6:00, T/Th  
116 Stubbs Hall

## INSTRUCTOR:

Kristin Wylie

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Office: 217 Stubbs Hall

Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

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## COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This is both an upper-level political science course and an introductory course to the politics and governments of Latin America. As such, students should be familiar with the fundamental theories and terms of comparative politics, which will serve as the framework with which we will analyze Latin American politics. However, the course neither assumes prior knowledge of the region nor requires proficiency in Spanish/Portuguese. Instead, the course is designed to familiarize students with the history and contemporary politics of Latin America while demonstrating how the tools and concepts of comparative politics can be applied to understand political events and trends. The central focus of the course will be the political and economic liberalization of Latin America, with an emphasis on the primary actors, institutions, and structures involved in these ongoing processes.

Having successfully completed this course, students should have refined their comprehension of comparative politics and acquired a critical understanding of the issues confronting Latin America today. This is an explicitly discussion-based course, and therefore ***requires that students do the readings regularly and actively participate in class discussions.***

## REQUIRED TEXT

O'Toole, Gavin. 2007. *Politics Latin America*. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman.

This book is available for purchase at the university bookstores and [online](#). Additional readings will be posted on Moodle when possible and otherwise via course packet, to be made available from the Co-op Bookstore.

## REQUIREMENTS/ GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Students are responsible for all material in the lectures and for completing all weekly readings *by the Tuesday session*.

Students will be evaluated according to the following (A: 90-100; B: 80-90; C: 70-80; D: 60-70; F: 0-59):

1. Eight weekly write-ups (1% each, 8% total). For eight weeks, you are to submit a one-page typed digest of the week's readings/film by the beginning of class on Thursday (no late or email submissions allowed). You can earn up to one percentage point per write-up (one per week), for a maximum of 8 percentage points. The write-ups should be brief synopses of the theme/issues dealt with in the readings, not a summary of each individual reading and not based on lecture only. Try to bring the ideas together. Partial credit may be given so you will have to put some thought into this; however, it should require no more than 30-45 minutes of work after you complete the readings. Completing these assignments will do wonders for reading comprehension and exam preparation.
2. Discussion leadership (8%). Each student is expected to serve as a discussion leader once during the semester. On the day that you are the discussion leader you should submit a 3-4 page (double-spaced) reaction paper that outlines the assigned readings for the day, as well as at least three well thought out discussion questions for the class. Discussion leaders (3-4 per week) must coordinate and come prepared to provide a brief introduction to the readings (10-15 minute presentation) and answer any questions regarding the readings. The reaction paper is due to me via email by 10:00 AM the day of your presentation. If you are having difficulties with the readings you are strongly encouraged to meet with me in office hours BEFORE your assignment is due. A presentation sign-up sheet will be passed around during the first week of class. A schedule of presentations will be posted on Moodle.
3. Current events (4%). Each student will present to the class a brief analysis (one typed page, double-spaced, and a 5-minute presentation) of a news article of his/her choosing concerning a political event in Latin America that he/she finds interesting. Acceptable sources include but are not limited to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Economist*. Students should consult the instructor with questions regarding additional sources. A presentation sign-up sheet will be passed around during the first week of class. A schedule of presentations will be posted on Moodle.
4. Midterm exam (25%). This will be an in-class, closed book exam consisting of short answers and essays. Bring a blue book. Date: October 14.

5. Research paper (25%). Students will write a 7-10 page paper analyzing the origins and consequences of a political event (election, protest, strike, new law, economic/political reforms, etc.) in Latin America, presenting their findings to the class (November 18 & 23). Final draft due: November 23 at the beginning of class. Late papers will be deducted five points each day.
6. Final exam (30%). This will be an in-class, closed book cumulative exam consisting of short answers and essays, designed to evaluate students' understanding of the major issues treated in the course. Bring a blue book. Date: **December 8, 5:30-7:30.**

Make-up policy: Students are expected to complete all assignments and exams on the scheduled dates. There will be no exceptions made for the write-ups. Exceptions for the midterm and final exams will be made only in the event of: 1) extreme emergencies, defined as a serious medical illness (accompanied by a physician's note) or death of a close family member or 2) participation in University-sponsored events (official notification must be presented at least three weeks prior to the scheduled exam).

### **ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Students with documented disabilities requiring accommodations should present their letter from the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to the instructor at the start of the semester to ensure that appropriate accommodations are provided.

### **POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**

Students are expected to conform to University rules regarding scholastic dishonesty. Penalties for violation of these rules will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism and the appropriate citation of sources, see the instructor. *Plagiarized research papers, regardless of intent or degree, will not be tolerated.*

### **RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM:**

1. In class discussions, students are required to be civil and respect a diverse range of perspectives.
2. The use of cell phones or other electronic devices are strictly prohibited. Students may use laptop computers to type notes during lectures, but internet surfing during class time is distracting to other students and therefore unacceptable.
3. Students are to arrive and leave class on time.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS\*

### I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 8/24: Introductory issues
- 8/26: History: Colonialism – 1930s  
➤ O'Toole – Introduction & Chapter 1 (p1-8, 11-36)
- 8/31 & 9/2: History: 1930s-1980s  
➤ O'Toole – Chapter 2 (p37-62)  
➤ CP: O'Donnell – Chapter 1 (p1-38)
- 9/7 & 9/9: Socioeconomic and Political Contexts of the Contemporary Era  
➤ O'Toole – Chapter 3 (p63-97)  
➤ CP: Blake – Chapter 3 (p43-69)

### II. INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES, & ACTORS

- 9/14 & 9/16: Democratization  
➤ O'Toole – Chapters 4-5 (p103-153)  
➤ CP: Hagopian and Mainwaring – Chapter 1 (p14-59)
- 9/21 & 9/23: Economic Reforms  
➤ O'Toole – Chapters 15-16 (p419-468)  
➤ CP: Kingstone – Chapter 3 (p62-110)
- 9/28 & 9/30: Government (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, Parties)  
➤ O'Toole – Chapters 6-7 (p154-208)  
➤ CP: Mainwaring and Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy," *Comparative Politics* (p449-471)  
➤ CP: Cheibub and Limongi. 2002. "Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered," *Annual Review of Political Science* (p151-79)
- 10/5: Parties and Citizens  
➤ CP: Morgan. 2007. "Partisanship During the Collapse of Venezuela's Party System," *Latin American Research Review* (p78-98)
- 10/7: Film/Guest Lecture

- 10/12: Section II wrap-up; exam review
- 10/14: **MIDTERM EXAM**
- 10/19: Film/Guest Lecture
- 10/21: Fall Break (no class)
- 10/26 & 10/28: Established Non-State Actors (labor, military, church)
- O'Toole – Chapter 8 (p209-233)
  - CP: Kingstone – Chapter 4 (p111-146)
- 11/2 & 11/4: Civil Society (women, indigenous, race)
- O'Toole – Chapter 9 (p235-265)
  - CP: Kingstone – Chapter 4 (p147-176)

### III. US-LA RELATIONS

- 11/9 & 11/11: Cold War
- O'Toole – Chapter 11 (p295-312)
  - CP: Smith – Chapters 5-8 (p117-216)
  - CP: Danner – Chapter 5 (p62-84)
- 11/16: Current
- O'Toole – Chapter 11 (p313-321)
  - CP: Kingstone – Chapter 5 (p178-205)
- 11/18: Presentations
- 11/23: Presentations; **PAPER DUE**
- 11/25: Thanksgiving (no class)
- 11/30: Course wrap up
- 12/2: Final exam review
- 12/8: **FINAL EXAM (5:30-7:30)**

\*Schedule of readings is subject to change.