POL 230  
Politics of Latin America  

Prof. Fraser  
Fall 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course offers an interpretative survey of selected political systems in Latin America. Its general objective is to provide you with the analytic tools necessary to better understand how Latin American societies organize to accommodate increasingly rapid political, economic, and social change. We will pay particular attention to identifying and assessing the political and economic forces in Latin American countries which have captured the attention of American policymakers, and to consider the broader issues of revolution, democracy, authoritarianism, and populism in the Latin American context.

This course counts toward the completion of the Latin American Studies (LAS) and the Poverty Studies (PVS) Interdisciplinary Minors.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION: Class will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:30 to 11:20 p.m. in JH 101. My office hours are Monday from 3:00-4:30, and by appointment. My office is JH111B. My phone is 294-3185, and my e-mail is cleve.fraser@furman.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS: The following textbooks are required for the course:


Other readings/course materials (especially for the Central America segment) will be provided to you via the course’s Moodle/Box portal.

FURTHER READING: If you find a particular topic or country especially interesting, the "further readings" and references/bibliographies offered in the texts will point you in the right direction. Keeping abreast of the constantly changing political environment in Latin America is a daunting task. Therefore, I would urge you to be--at the very least--regular readers of high quality news sources as the New York Times, or The Economist—either in “hard copy” or online versions.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: In this course, your grade will be determined by your performance on four exercises weighted and dated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam I</td>
<td>Monday, September 30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam II</td>
<td>Monday, October 28</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam III</td>
<td>Monday, November 11</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Monday, December 16 (8:30-11:00)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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The format of all exams will be short-answer/essay. Only the final will be cumulative, although questions will be skewed toward material not covered on previous exams.

A final note: I am a technophile by nature—that is, I usually embrace and use the latest electronic gadgets. I suspect that many of you are technophiles too, but during our class time together please ensure that all of your electronic communications devices are turned off for the duration of the class. The owner of a ringing PDA/cell phone will lose two (2) points per occurrence on his/her final exam.

**COURSE GRADE:** Your written examinations will be assigned both a numeric and alphabetic grade (out of 100 points). Here is the scale: 100-98=A+; 97-92=A; 91-90=A-; 89-88=B+; 87-82=B; 81-80=B-; 79-78=C+; 77-72=C; 71-70=C-; 69-68=D+; 67-62=D; 61-60=D-; 59 and below=F.

Only letter grades will be assigned for the paper, ranging from A+ to F.

Your final grade will be determined by (a) converting your letter grades into the following numerical scale: A+=12; A=11; A-=10; B+=9; B-=8; B=7; C+=6; C=5; C-=4; D+=3; D=2; D-=1; F=0; (b) weighting each score by the percentage that each assignment counts toward your final grade, and then (c) summing the weighted values to arrive at a final score, which ranges from 12 (A+) to 0 (F).

**Academic integrity:**
Academic Integrity standards are important to our Furman community and will be upheld in this class. Students should review the Academic Integrity Pledge posted in the classroom and resources available on [www.furman.edu/integrity](http://www.furman.edu/integrity). In this class, the grade penalty for an academic integrity violation is [describe].

**Additional resources in the Center for Academic Success (CAS; LIB 002):**

The Writing & Media Lab (WML) is staffed by student Consultants who are trained to help you improve your writing and multimodal communication skills. The consultation process is non-directive and intended to allow students to maintain ownership of their work. In addition to helping with the nuts and bolts, WML Consultants also support you in developing your own ideas thoughtfully and critically, whether you’re writing an essay or planning a video or other multimedia project. You may drop into the WML during its regular hours (LIB 002; 9 AM to 10 PM) or visit the Writing and Media Lab website to make an appointment online.

Peer Tutors are available free of charge for many classes and may be requested by dropping by CAS (LIB 002) or on the Center for Academic Success website. Tutors are typically recommended by faculty and have performed well in the class.

Professional Academic Assistance Staff in CAS can provide students assistance with time management, study skills, and organizational skills.
The Writing and ESL Specialist provides professional writing support as well as support for students whose primary language is not English.

**Accommodation Requests:** The Student Office for Accessibility Resources is committed to helping qualified students with disabilities achieve their academic goals by providing reasonable academic accommodations under appropriate circumstances. If you have a disability and anticipate the need for an accommodation in order to participate in this class, please register with the Student Office for Accessibility Resources. They will assist you in getting the resources you may need to participate fully in this class. You can contact the SOAR office at 864.294.2320 or at soar@furman.edu. You can find additional information and request academic accommodations at the [SOAR webpage](#).

**COURSE OUTLINE:** *Note that the instructor reserves the right to add or delete topics/readings at his discretion.*

I. **INTRODUCTION**

**August 28:** Course Introduction

**August 30:** Why Study Latin American Politics?

**READINGS:** Close, chapter 1
         Smith and Green, chapter 1

**September 2:** Labor Day (no class)

**September 4:** The Legacies of History, Part 1

**READINGS:** Close, chapter 2
         Smith and Green, chapter 2

**September 6:** The Legacies of History, Part 2

**READINGS:** Close, chapter 2
         Smith and Green, chapter 2

**September 9:** "Isms" and Democracy in Latin America

**READINGS:** Close, chapter 4

II. **ANALYTIC TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING**

**September 11:** Formal game rules and structures
READINGS: Wynia, via Moodle
Close, chapter 5

September 13: Traditional “players”
READINGS: Close, chapter 4

September 16: Additional “players”
READINGS: Close, chapter 4

September 18: Informal rules
READINGS: Close, chapter 5

September 20: Latin American political games
READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 13

September 23: The democratic reform game
READINGS: Close, chapter 8

September 25: Latin American economic games
READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 12

September 27: Public policy and Latin American development
READINGS: Close, chapter 9

September 30: Midterm Exam 1

III. AMERICAN INFLUENCES

October 2: The American backyard
READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 14

October 4: Twenty-first century challenges
READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 15

IV. CASE STUDIES (revolutionary Legacies)

October 7: Mexico: an introduction
READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 3

October 9:  Mexico: revolutionary and corporatist Legacies

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 3

October 11: Mexico: democratic transition(s)

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 3

October 14: Fall Break (no class)

October 16: Mexico: the way forward

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 3

October 18: Cuba: an introduction

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 5

October 21: Cuba: the Batista era

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 5

October 23: Cuba: revolutionary legacies

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 5

October 25: Cuba: challenges and prospects

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 5

October 28: Midterm Exam II

V. THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CONTEXT

October 30: Central America: an introduction

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 4 (pp.81-33)

November 1: Nicaragua

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 4

November 4: El Salvador
November 6: Guatemala

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 4

November 8: Honduras

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 4

November 11: Midterm Exam III

VI. CASE STUDIES (democratic decay)

November 13: Venezuela: An introduction

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 8

November 15: Venezuela: The democratic experiment

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 8

November 18: Venezuela: Hugo Chavez and Chavismo

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 8

November 20: Venezuela: A canary in the mineshaft

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 8

November 22: Brazil: an introduction

READINGS: Smith and Green, pp. chapter 11

November 25: Vargas legacies

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 11

November 27: Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

November 29: Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

December 2: Brazil: bureaucratic authoritarianism and democracy

READINGS: Smith and Green, pp. chapter 11
December 4: Brazil and Bolsonaro

READINGS: Smith and Green, chapter 11

VII. FINAL REFLECTIONS

December 6: Democracy, authoritarianism, and Latin American politics

READINGS: Close, chapter 11
Smith and Green, chapter 14

December 9: Course wrap-up and review

December 16: Final Exam (8:30-11:00 a.m.)