

G53.2621 Government and Politics of Latin America

Professor Christopher Mitchell
Spring, 2006

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Course requirements: (1) **Reading:** Reading is assigned for each week, and will be discussed and referred to in class. Books will be available at the NYU Bookstore and on Reserve in Bobst Library, on Lower Level 2. For most weeks, questions for discussion will be distributed in advance, to focus reading and in-class dialogue. (2) **Research Paper:** A paper of 15 pages will be due in class on April 24. Each student will choose, by February 27, a topic that analytically compares aspects of politics in two Latin American nations. A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class on February 27; each student should write on a separate subject, to spread the library's research capabilities. (3) **Oral presentation:** Between March 27 and April 10, each student will make a twenty-minute oral presentation on her/his subject, setting forth the key elements of the analysis to be presented in the paper. These working presentations will be discussed in class, to aid students in completing the research and analysis. (4) **Final exam:** A two-hour in-class bluebook exam will be held at the last scheduled class session, on May 1. Exams may be written in English or Spanish. In calculating course grades, the paper will be assessed at 50%, the final exam at 35%, and in-class participation at 15%.

Office hours: Professor Mitchell's office hours are Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon, at the Politics Department, 726 Broadway, Rm. 767. Office-hour appointments may be made via e-mail, by writing to <cm3@nyu.edu>. There is also a sign-up sheet posted at the office; please call (212) 998-8508 if you are unable to come at a time you have reserved. If Tuesday afternoons are impossible for you, please consult and we will find a different and workable time.

TOPICS AND READINGS

January 23 -- Introduction to Latin America and the region's politics

January 30 -- Contrasting societies of Latin American nations

Reading: Joe Foweraker, Todd Landman, and Neil Harvey, Governing Latin America (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), Chapters 1, 2, 3

Optional reading: Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, Modern Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 6th edition 2005), Chapters 1 and 2

February 6 – A broad overview of democratic transitions

Reading: Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy*, January 2002 (to be distributed in class)

Guillermo O’Donnell et al., “Debating the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy*, July 2002 (to be distributed in class)

Foweraker, et al., Governing Latin America, Chapter 10

February 13 – Inequality and injustice in Latin America

Reading: Susan Eckstein and Timothy Wickham-Crowley, eds., What Justice? Whose Justice?: Fighting for Fairness in Latin America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6.

February 20 – Presidents Day – NYU holiday – no class

February 27 – Institutions, tensions and political change

Reading: Jorge I. Domínguez and Michael Shifter, eds., Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edition 2003), pp. 3-99, 137-161.

Paper topics will be chosen at this session

March 6 – Civil society and politics in contemporary Latin America (stressing mobilization of indigenous groups)

Reading: Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley, What Justice?, Chapters 10, 11

Foweraker, et al., Governing Latin America, Chapters 8, 9

March 13 – NYU Spring break – no class

March 20 – Democratic politics in late-modernizing nations: El Salvador in the Central American context

Reading: Elisabeth Jean Wood, Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador (Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapters 1 through 4 (pp. 3-107)

Skidmore and Smith, Modern Latin America, Chapter 11

March 27 – Student research presentations

April 3 -- Student research presentations

April 10 -- Student research presentations

April 17 -- Democratic politics in nations at an intermediate level of modernization:
Venezuela

Reading: Harold Trinkunas, Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005),
Chapters 4, 5, 6

Domínguez and Shifter, eds., Constructing Democratic Governance, Chapter 8

April 24 – Democratic politics in complex nations: Argentina

Reading: Skidmore and Smith, Modern Latin America, Chapter 3
Domínguez and Shifter, eds., Constructing Democratic Governance,
Chapter 11

Papers are due at this session

May 1 – **Final exam**