

Latin American Politics
T-Th, 2:20pm-3:35pm
MLC 0207

Course Instructor: Dr. Mollie Cohen
Office: International Affairs 311
Office Hours: Th, 12pm-1:50pm or by appointment
Email: mj.cohen@uga.edu

Course Description:

“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”
Mark Twain (...maybe)

This is an introductory course on the politics of Latin America. We will discuss the social, economic, and political dynamics that shape Latin American countries. This class’ primary focus is on politics in the 20th and 21st centuries. However, we will spend the first several weeks discussing historical legacies from earlier eras that continue to shape Latin American politics in the present. This is to ensure that we all have shared language with which to discuss more recent political events – so that we can all discern the “rhymes” between political events in the past and the present day. We will pay particular attention to institutional crises, protest politics, and democratic backsliding in the 21st century.

By the end of the semester, students who successfully complete this course will:

- (1) Have a better developed understanding of contemporary Latin American politics, including the
- (2) Be able to critically engage with scholarly literature about Latin American politics, particularly as relates to broad debates in political science.
- (3) Be able to apply general political science theories to current events in Latin American politics.

Course Requirements

Reading: There is no text book for this course. All readings will be available to you on eLC or hyperlinked in this syllabus. You are responsible for reading all required material for each class period. Some of the academic articles we will read are dense. You are not expected to understand all of the technical aspects of these articles. However, you are expected to make a good faith effort to identify the argument, evidence, and conclusions presented by the authors. You are not required to read recommended or further readings. In rare cases, readings may be adjusted during the semester.

Class Participation: Because I anticipate that most of us will be out with Covid-19 at some point during the semester, you will not receive a participation grade for this class. However, your participation in class still matters. Participating actively and respectfully in class is a sign of respect to the instructor and your peers. You may hold strong

opinions about the topics we read about and discuss in this class. I expect you to follow the golden rule during in-class discussions and treat your classmates and their ideas with the same respect you would like to receive.

Weekly Headlines: Most Thursdays, we will dedicate the beginning of class to discussing recent news from Latin America and the Caribbean. For ten weeks during the semester, you should come to class having read and written a one-paragraph summary of a news article, in addition to the week's reading. The summary must include a sentence relating the article to a topic we have discussed in class. Summaries will be due by the start of class each Thursday, starting in Week 3. More details will be provided during Week 2. Each summary is worth 2 points toward your final grade.

Reading Reflections: Twice during the semester, you will write a reading reflection, which you will turn in by the beginning of a chosen class period. All reading reflections must be completed no later than April 28th. Reflections should be no longer than one-page, single spaced, and should (1) describe the main argument(s) of the week's readings, and (2) link the reading to theoretical and/or specific case discussions from class.

Exams: This class includes two exams, a midterm and a final. Both exams can be completed outside of class, and each exam is worth 30% of the final grade.

Attendance: I will not enforce an attendance policy for this class. Lecture notes and slides will not be posted online. If you must miss class due to Covid-19 quarantine, illness, or for any other reason, you should ask a classmate for their notes from lecture and arrange to meet with me about any additional questions or concerns.

Course Grade:

- 20% Weekly Headlines
- 30% Midterm Exam
- 10% Reading Reflections
- 40% Final Exam

Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones:

Laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are allowed in this class. I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand, as research has shown that doing so improves learning and information retention. If students are regularly off task during the semester, I will revise this policy.

Late or Missed Assignments:

If you do not complete an assignment, you will receive a zero for the assignment unless you have a medical excuse, religious obligation, or family emergency. Unless there are exigent circumstances, you must ask to turn in late work *before* the deadline.

Academic Honesty Policy:

The academic honesty policy of the university is supplemented (not replaced) by an Honor Code which was adopted by the Student Government Association and approved by the University Council May 1, 1997, and provides: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." All students agree to abide by this code by signing the UGA Admissions Application.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*

Course Schedule

Readings should be completed *before class* on the day that they are assigned. This syllabus is a “living document”; readings may be adjusted during the semester in response to outside circumstances. However, the structure of this syllabus, particularly the allocation of points to tasks throughout the semester, will not change. All changes will be announced in class and the updated syllabus will be made available online. Always make sure that you are using the most up-to-date version of the syllabus.

Week 1. Introductions

January 11. Introductions

Required Reading:

- None

January 13. A (very brief) regional overview
Latinoamérica (Calle 13)

Required Reading:

- **The syllabus**
- Vanden, Harry E. and Gary Prevost. 2005. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. (pp. 26-40; 42-53; 81-92)
- [Know your liberators](#)
- NPR Weekend Edition, July 4, 2021. "[What The Haitian Revolution Tells Us About The U.S. Movement For Racial Equality](#)".

Recommended:

- Daut, Marlene. 2020, June 30. "[When France extorted Haiti – the greatest heist in history.](#)"

Further Reading:

- Vanden, Harry E. and Gary Prevost. 2006. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. Chs. 1-4
- Truillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

Week 2. Let's Talk About the Economy

January 18. Latin America as a site for extraction
Ojalá que llueva café (Juan Luis Guerra)

Required Reading:

- Galeano, Eduardo. 1971. "Lust for Gold, Lust for Silver" (pp. 11-18). From, *The Open Veins of Latin America*.
 - Or read the original: "Fiebre del oro, fiebre de la plata" (pp. 21-29), *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*.
- Krauss, Clifford. December 6, 2021. "[Green-Energy Race Draws an American Underdog to Bolivia's Lithium.](#)"

Recommended:

- Cardoso, Fernando Henrique. 1977. "The Consumption of Dependency Theory in the United States." *Latin American Research Review*, 12(3): 7-24.

Further reading:

- Galeano, Eduardo. *The Open Veins of Latin America*.

January 21. Industrialization via Import and Export

Required Reading:

- Vanden, Harry E. and Gary Prevost. 2005. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. (pp. 152-166).

- Baer, Warner. 1972. "Import Substitution and Industrialization in Latin America: Experiences and Interpretations." *Latin American Research Review*, 7(1): 95-122. [SKIM pp. 95-108].

Recommended:

- Prebisch, Raul. 1959. "Commercial policy in the underdeveloped countries." *the American economic review* 49(2): 251-273.

Further Reading:

- Love, Joseph L. 1980. "Raúl Prebisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange." *Latin American Research Review* 15(3): 45-72.

Week 3. Let's Talk About the Economy, Part II

January 25. Neoliberalism, Globalization, and Structural Adjustment
Banquero Blues (Pappo)

Watch (in class): *Chicago Boys*

Required Reading:

- Sigmund, Paul E. 1983. "The rise and fall of the Chicago boys in Chile." *SAIS Review* 3(2): 41-58.
- Roos, Jerome. 2018, September 9. "[Argentina's IMF bailout rekindles painful memories of past crises.](#)"

Recommended:

- Pou, Pedro. 2000. "[Argentina's Structural Reforms of the 1990s.](#)" *Finance & Development*.
- Fanelli, José María. 2002. "Growth, instability and the convertibility crisis in Argentina." *Cepal Review*

Further Reading:

- Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox*
- Stiglitz, Joseph. *Globalization and its Discontents*

January 27. Persistent Inequality

***** Weekly Headlines 1**

Required Reading:

- Naím, Moisés. 2015, October 8. "[The Coming Turmoil in Latin America.](#)"
- Zizumbo-Colunga, Daniel, and Iván Flores. 2017. "[Is Mexico a Post-Racial Country?](#)"

Week 4. Dictatorships

February 1. “Electoral” dictatorship in Mexico
Gimme tha power (Molotov)

Required Reading:

- Skidmore, Thomas E. and Peter H. Smith. “Mexico: The Taming of a Revolution.” in *Modern Latin America*.
- Calles, Plutarco Elías. 2003. “Mexico Must Become a Nation of Institutions and Laws.” In *The Mexico Reader*, (pp. 421-425).

February 3. Mexico, cont’d

***** Weekly Headlines 2**

Required Reading:

- Skidmore, Thomas E. and Peter H. Smith. “Mexico: The Taming of a Revolution.” in *Modern Latin America*.
- Calles, Plutarco Elías. 2003. “Mexico Must Become a Nation of Institutions and Laws.” In *The Mexico Reader*, (pp. 421-425).

Week 5. Dictatorships, Part II

February 8. The Cuban revolution
Un son para Cuba (Quilapayún)

Required Reading:

- Skidmore, Thomas E. and Peter H. Smith. “Cuba: Key colony, socialist state.” (pp. XX) in *Modern Latin America*.

February 10. Banana Republics: Civil war in Central America
The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat (Carmen Miranda)

***** Weekly Headlines 3**

Required Reading:

- Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer. 2005. *Bitter Fruit*. Chapter 1 and Chapter 5

Further reading:

- Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer. 2005. *Bitter Fruit*
- Chapman, Peter. 2007. *Bananas*
- Menchu, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchu*.

Week 6. [re-]Democratization

February 15. Operation Condor and bureaucratic authoritarianism
Yo pisaré las calles nuevamente (Pablo Milanés)

Required Reading:

- McSherry, J. Patrice. 2005. *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*. SKIM Chs. 1 and 3.
- Lessa, Francesca. August 1, 2019. "[Argentina's Operation Condor trial opens up new paths to accountability for past atrocities in South America and beyond.](#)" *LSE Blog*.

Further Reading:

- McSherry, J. Patrice. 2005. *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*.

February 17. Democratization through competitive elections
Chile, la alegría ya viene (from the "No!" campaign)

***** Weekly Headlines 4**

Required Reading:

- Karl, Terry Lynn. 1991. "Dilemmas of democratization in Latin America." *Comparative politics* 23(1): 1-21. (pp. 8-17)
- McCoy, Jennifer L. 1991. "Nicaragua in Transition." *Current History* 90(554): 117-132.

Recommended Reading:

- Pribble, Jennifer. 2016, May 6. "[Did Chile ditch its authoritarian government 26 years ago? Not quite.](#)"

Further reading:

- Przeworski, Adam. 1986. "[Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy.](#)" *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Comparative perspectives*: 47-63.
- Watch, *No!*

Week 7. Midterm Exam

February 22. Optional review day
La Guitarra (Los Auténticos Decadentes)

February 24. Exam due

Week 8. Political Institutions

March 1. Democratization by loss of reputation

Required Reading:

- Przeworski, Adam. 1986. "[Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy.](#)" *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Comparative perspectives*: 47-63. (pp. XX)
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2001. "An insurgent path to democracy: Popular mobilization, economic interests, and regime transition in South Africa and El Salvador." *Comparative Political Studies* 34(8): 862-888. (pp. 862-875).

Recommended:

- Munck, Ronaldo. 1992. "The democratic decade: Argentina since Malvinas." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 11(2): 205-216.
- Anderson, Thomas P. 1985. "Honduras in transition." *Current History* 84(I mean, it500): 114-132.

Further Reading:

- Pérez, Orlando J. 2003. "Democratic legitimacy and public insecurity: Crime and democracy in El Salvador and Guatemala." *Political Science Quarterly* 118(4): 627-644.
- Ryan, Jeffrey J. 1997. "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in a Polarized System: The Role of the Center in El Salvador." *Party Politics* 3(2): 169-188.

March 3. Latin America's Political Institutions (in very broad strokes)

*** Weekly Headlines 5

Required Reading:

- Excerpt from Chapter 13 in Clarke, Golder and Golder. "Elections and Electoral Systems." (pp. TBA)
- Levitsky, Steven, and María Victoria Murillo. 2013. "Lessons from Latin America: building institutions on weak foundations." *Journal of Democracy* 24(2): 93-107.

Recommended:

- Linz, Juan. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*, 1(1): 51-69.

Further Reading:

- Horowitz, Donald. L. 1990. "Comparing Democratic Systems" *Journal of Democracy*, 1(4): 73-79.
- Linz, Juan. 1990. "The Virtues of Parliamentarism" *Journal of Democracy*, 1(4): 84-91.
- Pastor, Daniel. 2004. "Origins of the Chilean binominal election system." *Revista de ciencia política (Santiago)* 24(1): 38-57.
- Fornos, Carolina A., Timothy J. Power, and James C. Garand. 2004. "Explaining voter turnout in Latin America, 1980 to 2000." *Comparative political studies* 37(8): 909-940.

Spring Break: March 7-11

Week 9. Political Institutions, Part II

March 15. Parties in Latin America

La Marcha Peronista

Required Reading:

- Morgan, Jana, and Carlos Meléndez. 2016. "Parties under stress: using a linkage decay framework to analyze the Chilean party system." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 8(3): 25-59.
- Mainwaring, Scott, ed. 2018. *Party systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, decay, and collapse* (pp. 17-33)
 - Skim chapter 8: "Deinstitutionalization without Collapse: Colombia's Party System"

Recommended:

- Levitsky, Steven, and Maxwell A. Cameron. 2003. "Democracy without parties? Political parties and regime change in Fujimori's Peru." *Latin American Politics and Society* 45(3): 1-33.

Further Reading:

- Roberts, Kenneth M. 2014. *Changing Course in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott, ed. 2018. *Party systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, decay, and collapse*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lupu, Noam. 2016. *Party brands in crisis: Partisanship, brand dilution, and the breakdown of political parties in Latin America*.
- Morgan, Jana. 2012. *Bankrupt representation and party system collapse*. Penn State University Press.

March 17. Ethnic Parties

Somos Más (Arawi)

*** Weekly Headlines 6

Required Reading:

- De la Madrid, Raúl. 2012. *The rise of ethnic politics in Latin America*. Chapter 1.

Further Reading:

- Yashar, Deborah J. 1998. "Contesting citizenship: Indigenous movements and democracy in Latin America." *Comparative politics*: 23-42.

- Van Cott, Donna Lee. 2005. *From movements to parties in Latin America: The evolution of ethnic politics*.

Week 10. Corruption

March 22.

March 24.

***** Weekly Headlines 7**

Week 11. Choose your own adventure

March 29.

March 31.

***** Weekly Headlines 8**

Week 12. Protest and Social Movements

April 5. Protest as “regular” politics
#Cacerolazo (Ana Tijoux)

Required Reading:

- Moseley, Mason W. 2015. "Contentious engagement: Understanding protest participation in Latin American democracies." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 7(3): 3-48.

Further Reading:

- Moseley, Mason W. 2018. *Protest State: The Rise of Everyday Contention in Latin America*.
- Boulding, Carew. 2014. *NGOs, Political Protest, and Civil Society*.
- Pérez-Liñán, Aníbal. 2007. *Presidential impeachment and the new political instability in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Corrales, Javier. 2018. *Fixing democracy: Why constitutional change often fails to enhance democracy in Latin America*. Oxford University Press.

April 7. Recent mass protests in Chile and Guatemala
El baile de los que sobran (Los Prisioneros)

[\[see also\]](#)

*** Weekly Headlines 9

Required Reading

- Associated Press. 2015, June 12. "[Thousands of protesters demand resignation of president in Guatemala.](#)" *The Guardian*.
- Taub, Amanda. 2019, November 3. "['Chile Woke Up': Dictatorship's Legacy of Inequality Triggers Mass Protests.](#)" *The New York Times*.
- Human Rights Watch. 2020, April 6. "[Ecuador: Lessons from the 2019 Protests.](#)"

Further Reading:

- Roberts Kenneth M. 2016. "(Re)Politicizing Inequalities: Movements, Parties, and Social Citizenship in Chile." *Journal of Politics in Latin America*. 8(3):125-154.
doi:[10.1177/1866802X1600800305](https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X1600800305)

Week 13. Protest II, An Introduction to Democratic Backsliding

April 12. Protest voting

Patria y Vida (Yotuel, Gente de Zona, Descemer Bueno)

- Cohen, Mollie J. "Campaigning for No-One: Invalid Vote Campaigns in Latin America." Book chapter.
- Alvarez, R. Michael, D. Roderick Kiewiet, and Lucas Núñez. "A taxonomy of protest voting." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 135-154.

April 14. What is Democratic Backsliding?

*** Weekly Headlines 10

Required Reading:

- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On democratic backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5-19.
- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. *How Democracies Die*. Chapter 1.

Further Reading:

- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. *How Democracies Die*
- Waldner, David, and Ellen Lust. 2018. "Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 93-113.

Week 14. Democratic Backsliding, Part II

April 19. Backsliding via Executive Aggrandizement

Required Reading:

- Weyland, Kurt. 2013. "Latin America's Authoritarian Drift: The Threat from the Populist Left." *Journal of Democracy* 24(3): 18-32.
- Thaler, Kai M. 2017. "Nicaragua: A Return to Caudillismo." *Journal of Democracy* 28(2): 157-169.
- Paarlberg, Michael Ahn. 2020, February 17. "[El Salvador's president sent troops to occupy the legislature. Here's what's going on.](#)" *The Monkey Cage Blog*.

April 21. Voting for backsliders

Required Reading:

- Cohen, Mollie J. and Amy Erica Smith. "Do Authoritarians Vote for Authoritarians? Evidence from Latin America." *Research & Politics*, 3(4). DOI:10.1177/2053168016684066

Further Reading:

- Cohen, Mollie J., Amy Erica Smith, Mason W. Moseley, and Matthew L. Layton. Forthcoming. "Winners' Consent? Democratic Legitimacy when Illiberal Candidates Win Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*

Week 15. Democratic Backsliding, Part III

April 26. Halted Partway?: Bolivia

Required Reading:

- Anria, Santiago, and Jennifer Cyr. 2019, October 30. "[Is Bolivia's democracy in danger? Here's what's behind the disputed presidential election.](#)" *The Monkey Cage Blog*.
- Guachalla, V. Ximena Velasco, et al. 2021. "Latin America Erupts: When Does Competitive Authoritarianism Take Root?." *Journal of Democracy* 32(3): 63-77.

April 28. Because of Covid-19

Required Reading:

- Lührmann, Anna, Jean Lachapelle, Sandra Grahn, and Amanda B. Edgell. 2020. "Pandemic Backsliding: Democracy and Disinformation Seven Months into the Covid-19 Pandemic." *V-Dem Institute*.
- Skim: Lupu, Noam, Mariana Rodriguez, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (eds.). 2021. [Pulse of Democracy](#). Nashville, TN: LAPOP.

Week 16. Loose Ends

May 3. Last Class

Todo cambia (Mercedes Sosa)

May 5-11: Final Exam Due