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Government 302
Wesleyan University
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Office Hours:
By appointment
Online

Class Meetings:
Tues. & Thurs., 11:10 AM - 12:30 PM
Online

Latin American Politics

This course explores democracy, revolution, economic development, and living standards in Latin America. In the first part of the course we analyze the emergence, breakdown, and current state of democracy in Argentina and Brazil. In the second part we examine the causes and consequences of revolution in Cuba and Nicaragua. In each part of the course we assess the progress each country has made toward creating a more affluent, educated, healthy, and equitable society.

The course begins by exploring the concepts of democracy, democratic consolidation, and horizontal accountability. Using case studies and comparative analyses, we investigate: (1) How deeply was democracy implanted in Argentina and Brazil during the first half of the twentieth century? (2) Why did democracy break down in these countries during the 1960s and 1970s, and why was it restored in the 1980s? (3) How stable and democratic were the civilian regimes that emerged in each country in the wake of authoritarian rule? (4) Did the transition from authoritarian rule and the deepening and consolidation of democracy affect the will and capacity of Argentine and Brazilian governments to enact more effective and more just economic and social policies?

The second half of the course examines the character, causes, and consequences of revolution, focusing on the Cuban Revolution, which ousted the Batista government in 1959, and the Nicaraguan Revolution, which overthrew the Somoza dynasty in 1979. We examine the causes of each revolution; debate how to characterize each revolutionary political regime; assess whether each revolutionary government raised living standards; and identify each revolution's recent challenges.

Course Requirements

The course grade will be based on reading quizzes, Moodle posts, and class participation. Daily reading quizzes are weighted 40 percent, weekly Moodle posts 40 percent, and class participation 20 percent. There aren't any exams or papers, although the 13 weekly Moodle posts, which should be about 200-250 words each, add up to the equivalent of about a 12-page paper.

Quizzes

The quizzes are posted on the Moodle segment for each class session. They involve multiple-choice questions on each reading. Most of the class sessions have two readings, although several sessions have either one reading or three readings. The multiple-choice questions have four possible answers, only one of which is correct. The total number of questions you will get on the quiz for each class session varies from 2 to 4, depending on how many readings were assigned and how many good questions I thought up. The quizzes are designed (1) to highlight important issues in the

reading, (2) to acquaint you with the method of multiple working hypotheses, (3) to teach you to mine as well as to read, and (4) to communicate information. The quiz questions can be challenging, but are never deliberately tricky or funny. If you keep up and do the reading attentively, they are doable. You are allowed, indeed encouraged, to see your questions *before* you do the reading, the better to learn how to mine the reading. The quizzes on each class session open up a few minutes after the previous class session ends, and must be completed by noon before the next class session.

You will hardly ever have much luck Googling for the answer to a quiz question, because most of the questions are not about factual matters, but about an author's interpretation of an historical process or event. Also, you are honor-bound not to ask your classmates or anyone else for assistance on the quizzes. "Deception concerning adherence to the conditions set by the instructor for a formal academic exercise" is [Provision 5 of the Wesleyan Honor Code](#). The quiz is a formal academic exercise, and the conditions I am setting for it are that you may neither request assistance from anyone on your quiz questions, nor may you give assistance to anyone else on their quiz questions. That said, asking a classmate for assistance isn't going to do you much good, because the questions you will get on each reading are selected randomly from a much larger pool of questions. There are between 8 and 20 multiple-choice questions in the pool for each class session, and the random process will select only 2 to 4 of them. Accordingly, it is statistically unlikely that whomever you might ask for assistance will have gotten the same questions that you have received.

Class Sessions

The class sessions will be live over Zoom. I'll usually start each session by giving a live online lecture while screen-sharing a Powerpoint presentation. Either right before or soon after the class session, I will post the Powerpoint presentation on the Moodle. I will also record the class session in the Zoom cloud and post a link to the recording on the Moodle segment pertaining to the class session. If you want to ask a question or make a comment during the lecture part of the class, or to intervene in a discussion, please use the "raise hand" function on Zoom. After the lecture, most sessions will transition to discussion. One thing we can do in the discussion is to resolve any questions you might have about the multiple-choice quiz questions, which as I stated earlier are carefully designed to teach you something, rather than to entertain or annoy you.

Moodle Posts

The lecture and the discussion in the class session, as well as the readings, should inform the Moodle post you will be asked to write each week by Saturday night at 9 PM, which is a little more than two days after the end of the Thursday class session, and a little more than two days before the Tuesday class session. The Moodle posts will involve your writing a single essay of about 200-250 words in response to a broader question about the week's topics you will find on a Moodle forum linked on each Thursday's class session. A normal double-spaced paper has about 250 words per page, so your Moodle post is essentially a one-page paper. I'll usually post 3 to 5 questions on the Forum. You are allowed to discuss your Moodle forum answers with classmates if you wish, but you have to write them yourselves. Asking someone else to write some or all of your post, or offering to write some or all of someone else's Moodle post, is a violation of the honor code. All posts must be in standard English with no [internet slang](#) (no LOL, FWIW, OTOH, and so on).

The Moodle posts will pertain to two class sessions. You can choose the question to which to write a response post; a question will normally pertain to only one of the two class sessions. As soon as you submit your post, you will be able to see what other students have written in response to the same question (unless you are the first to post, in which case, just check back a little later). As noted earlier, your Moodle posts will be worth 40 percent of your grade. This 40 percent is divided into two parts: 30 percent will be based on my evaluation of all your Moodle posts taken together; 10 percent will be based on my evaluation of your three best posts, which I will ask you to cut and paste into a Word document and send me at the end of the semester. I will sometimes, but not always, give you feedback on your posts, either in the Moodle forum itself or by email. Your grade for each Moodle post will be based on evidence of (1) your engagement with the lectures and class discussions; (2) your inclusion of citations, with page numbers, to the assigned readings; and (3) the care you appear to have taken in writing the post (they should be polished, like you are turning in a one-page writing assignment). The Moodle forum will close at 9 PM Saturday night. If you haven't posted by then, you will not receive a passing grade for that week's Moodle post.

Class Participation

Class participation will be worth 20 percent of the final grade. Your class participation grade will be based on (1) your attendance and participation in class sessions, (2) your timeliness in completing quizzes and Moodle posts, and (3) the evidence you provide in your quizzes and Moodle posts of having completed and thought carefully about the reading assignment.

Grading Mode

You may take this course utilizing either the standard A-F grading mode or CR/U (Credit/Unsatisfactory). You start out taking the course either A-F or CR/U, but you may change your grading mode until Tuesday, November 24, 2020, the last day before Thanksgiving break, which is also the deadline for withdrawing from the course.

This semester is taking place in unusual circumstances, but to get credit for this course, you have to do satisfactory work and participate in the class sessions, even if you take the course CR/U. After three missed or unsatisfactory quizzes, three missed classes, or three missed Moodle posts, I will send an Unsatisfactory Progress Report to your Class Dean, and the three of us will work out together where to go from there.

Honor Code

Any instance of cheating or plagiarism will suffice for a grade of "F" or "U" for the entire course.

Obtaining Course Readings

All readings are available on the course Moodle site. No books are required for this course.

Accessibility Services

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodation, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and must provide documentation of the disability.

Accommodation may require early planning, and retroactive requests for accommodation are not usually granted. Accordingly, if you believe that you need accommodation for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Accessibility Services (accessibility@wesleyan.edu), located in North College, Room 021, or call 860/685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and to review the process for requesting accommodation.

Summary of Course Schedule

Tu Sep 1	Introduction to the Course
Th Sep 3	Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy
Tu Sep 8	Democratic Consolidation and Horizontal Accountability
Th Sep 10	Argentina: Distributive Conflict, Political Parties, and Democracy
Tu Sep 15	Argentina: Prelude to Perón
Th Sep 17	Argentina: Peronism and Its Legacy
Tu Sep 22	Argentina: Military Rule and the Transition to Democracy
Th Sep 24	Argentina: Alfonsín to the Kirchners, 1983-2015
Tu Sep 29	Argentina: Contemporary Politics
Th Oct 1	Brazil: Geography and History
Tu Oct 6	Brazil: Social Structure and Politics
Th Oct 8	Brazil: Military Rule and the Transition to Democracy
Tu Oct 13	Brazil: Contemporary Politics
Th Oct 15	Brazil: Democracy and Social Policy
Tu Oct 20	Brazil: Coronavirus Response
Th Oct 22	Revolution: Definition and Causes
Tu Oct 27	Cuba: Causes of Revolution
Th Oct 29	Cuba: Did Life Improve After 1959?
Th Nov 5	Cuba: Is Revolutionary Cuba Democratic?
Tu Nov 10	Cuba: Economy and Society Since 1989
Th Nov 12	Nicaragua: Causes of Revolution
Tu Nov 17	Nicaragua: Was Revolutionary Nicaragua Democratic?
Th Nov 19	Nicaragua: Were Nicaraguans Better Off After the Revolution?
Tu Nov 24	Nicaragua: The Quality of Democracy, 1990-2006
Tu Dec 1	Nicaragua: Dismantling Democracy, 2007-2018
Th Dec 3	Nicaragua: Protest and Pandemic, 2018-2020

TOPICS AND READINGS

Tu Sep 1 Introduction to the Course

No assigned reading

Th Sep 3 Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy

Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
Chapter 4 (35-43), Chapter 8 (83-99).

Coppedge, Michael, et al. "V-Dem Comparisons and Contrasts with Other Measurement Projects." V-Dem Working Paper Series 2017: 45 (April). The Varieties of Democracy Institute, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, 2017. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2951014>. Read pp. 1-30 only.

Tu Sep 8 Democratic Consolidation and Horizontal Accountability

Schedler, Andreas. "What is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy* 9 No. 2 (April 1998), 91-107.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. "Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 9 No. 3 (July 1998), 112-126.

Th Sep 10 Argentina: Distributive Conflict, Political Parties, and Democracy

McGuire, James W. "Political Parties and Democracy in Argentina." In Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, 200-246.

Tu Sep 15 Argentina: Prelude to Perón

Potter, Anne L. "The Failure of Democracy in Argentina 1916-1930: An Institutional Perspective." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13 No. 1 (May 1981), 83-109.

Th Sep 17 Argentina: Perónism and Its Legacy

Winn, Peter. "A Second Independence?" Chap. 4 of *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York: Pantheon, 1992, 123-154.

Tu Sep 22 Argentina: Military Rule and the Transition to Democracy

Graziano, Frank. "The Dirty War in Thematic Context." Chapter 1 of *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, and Radical Christianity in the Argentine "Dirty War."* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992, 15-59.

Th Sep 24 Argentina: Alfonsín to the Kirchners, 1983-2015

Levitsky, Steven. "Argentina: Democratic Survival Amidst Economic Failure." Chapter 2 in Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring, *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*. Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 63-89.

Tu Sep 29 Argentina: Contemporary Politics

Murillo, María Victoria, and Steven Levitsky. "Economic Shocks and Partisan Realignment in Argentina." In Noam Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, and Luis Schiumerini, eds., *Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2019. Chapter 2, 28-52.

Murillo, María Victoria, and Rodrigo Zarazaga, S.J. "Argentina: Peronism Returns." *Journal of Democracy* 31 No. 2 (April 2020), 125-136.

Th Oct 1 Brazil: Geography and History

Bethell, Leslie. "Politics in Brazil: From Elections without Democracy to Democracy without Citizenship." *Daedalus* 129 No. 2 (Spring 2000), 1-27.

Carvalho, José Murilo de. "Dreams Come Untrue." *Daedalus* 129 No. 2 (Spring 2000), 57-82.

Tu Oct 6 Brazil: Social Structure and Politics

Mainwaring, Scott. *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Brazilian Case*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. Chapter 6, "Patronage, Clientelism, and Patrimonialism," 176-218.

Th Oct 8 Brazil: Military Rule and the Transition to Democracy

Skidmore, Thomas. *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Chapter 7, "Rule of the Military: 1964-1985," 159-188.

Tu Oct 13 Brazil: Contemporary Politics

Kingstone, Peter R., and Timothy J. Power. "A Fourth Decade of Brazilian Democracy: Achievements, Challenges, and Polarization." In Kingstone and Power, eds., *Democratic Brazil Divided*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. Chapter 1, 3-23.

Hunter, Wendy and Timothy J. Power. "Bolsonaro and Brazil's Illiberal Backlash." *Journal of Democracy* 30 No. 1 (2019), 68-82.

Th Oct 15 Brazil: Democracy and Social Policy

Wampler, Brian, Natasha Borges Sugiyama, and Michael Touchton. *Democracy at Work: Pathways to Well-Being in Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Chapter 2, "Building Pathways for Change," 58-84.

Wong, Joseph. "Reaching the Hard To Reach: A Case Study of Brazil's Bolsa Família Program." University of Toronto, Munk School of Global Affairs, December 2015.

Tu Oct 20 Brazil: Coronavirus Response

Ortega, Francisco, and Michael Orsini. "Governing COVID-19 Without Government in Brazil: Ignorance, Neoliberal Authoritarianism, and the Collapse of Public Health Leadership." *Global Public Health*, Online before print, 14 July 2020.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2020.1795223>

Th Oct 22 Revolution: Definition and Causes

Crahan, Margaret E., and Peter H. Smith. "The State of Revolution." In Alfred Stepan, ed., *Americas: New Interpretive Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 79-108.

Tu Oct 27 Cuba: Causes of Revolution

Wolf, Eric. "Cuba." In *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper Colophon, 1969, 251-273.

Domínguez, Jorge. "Cuba Since 1959." In Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cuba: A Short History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 95-124.

Th Oct 29 Cuba: Did Life Improve After 1959?

Domínguez, Jorge. "Cuba Since 1959." In Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cuba: A Short History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 124-148.

Th Nov 5 Cuba: Is Revolutionary Cuba Democratic?

Ritter, Archibald R. M. "The Organs of People's Power and the Communist Party: The Nature of Cuban Democracy." In Sandor Halebsky and John M. Kirk, eds., *Cuba: Twenty-Five Years of Revolution, 1959-1984*. New York: Praeger, 1985, 270-290.

Grant, Julianne E. "¿Qué Bola?: What's New (and What Isn't) in Cuba." *International Journal of Legal Information* 47 No. 3 (2019), 141-148.

Tu Nov 10 Cuba: Economy and Society Since 1989

Torres Pérez, Ricardo, and Claes Brundenius. "Cuban Socialism at 60: Old Aspirations and New Realities." In Claes Brundenius, ed., *Reflections on Socialism in the Twenty-First Century*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020. Chapter 8, 167-188.

De la Fuente, Alejandro. "Recreating Racism: Race and Discrimination in Cuba's Special Period." In Philip Brenner et al., eds., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader: Recreating the Revolution*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008, 316-325.

Th Nov 12 Nicaragua: Causes of Revolution

Dix, Robert. "Why Revolutions Succeed and Fail." *Polity* 16 No. 3 (Spring 1984), 423-446.

Booth, John A., Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker. Chapter 5 ("Nicaragua") of *Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change*. 6th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014, 97-136.

Tu Nov 17 Nicaragua: Was Revolutionary Nicaragua Democratic?

LASA (Latin American Studies Association). "The Electoral Process in Nicaragua: Domestic and International Influences." In Peter Rosset and John Vandermeer, eds., *Nicaragua: Unfinished Revolution*. New York: Grove Press, 1986, 73-107.

Kinzer, Stephen. "Action Democracy." In Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1991. Chapter 15, 222-250.

Th Nov 19 Nicaragua: Were Nicaraguans Better Off After the Revolution?

Linfield, Michael. "Human Rights." In Thomas Walker, ed., *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, 275-294.

Lancaster, Roger N. *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 1-21.

Tu Nov 24 Nicaragua: The Quality of Democracy, 1990-2006

McConnell, Shelley A. "Nicaragua's Pacted Democracy." Chapter 5 in Cynthia Arnson, ed., *In the Wake of War: Democratization and Internal Armed Conflict in Latin America*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012, 139-173.

Tu Dec 1 Nicaragua: Dismantling Democracy, 2007-2018

Close, David. "Dominant Power and Personalistic Rule, 2011-Present." Chapter 7 in Close, *Nicaragua: Navigating the Politics of Democracy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2016, 135-161.

Morris, Courtney Desiree. "Ortega Faces a New Nicaraguan Opposition Movement." *Current History* 118 No. 805 (February 2019), 62-67.

Th Dec 3 Nicaragua: Protest and Pandemic, 2018-2020

Pearson, Andy A., Andrea M. Prado, and Forrest D. Colburn. "Nicaragua's Surprising Response to COVID-19." *Journal of Global Health* 10 No. 1 (June 2020), 1-5.

Thaler, Kai. "Nicaragua is Stumbling into Coronavirus Disaster." Argument, *Foreign Policy*, April 17, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/17/ortega-virus-murillo-nicaragua-is-stumbling-into-coronavirus-disaster/#>