Course Outline

Political Science 357  Professor Salvador Rivera, PhD
Latin American and Caribbean Politics  Fall, 2011

Course description:

This course will examine the political evolution of Latin America and its political institutions. It will also analyze the foreign relations of the region with other states utilizing and interdisciplinary approach from history, international relations and political science.

The course is intended to provide students with the knowledge needed to understand major developments in Latin American society regarding its history, political systems institutions, social, cultural and economic development. It will examine contemporary and future trends, i.e., human rights advances, democracy, and the further incorporation of the region into the global economy. This course fulfills the “Regions Beyond Europe” requirement.

II. Course Objectives.

A. To advance the reconceptualization of Latin America among students.
B. Student should understand the relationship between environment, technology, culture and political and economic development of Latin American societies and civilization.
C. Students should become familiar with Latin American institutions.
D. Students should be able to recognize various ideological perspectives in the academic literature.
E. To allow students the ability to compare and contrast political institutions of Latin America and the United States.
F. The elimination of Hispanophobia

III. Course Plan.

The course will be conducted using a combination of lecture, discussion, a research assignment and exams.

IV. Required Texts/Readings


V. Suggested readings.

The following books are **not required**. They are suggested only for individuals interested in further background material. These text are classics for anyone seeking a keener understanding of Latin America’s political and cultural evolution.


VI. Additional Readings

A few of these articles are required, others are for those interested in further research. *An asterisk denotes required reading.*


Cruz, Consuelo and Rut Diamint (1998) "The New Military Autonomy in Latin American Polity" *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 4: 115-126


Hakim, Peter. (2001, March/April) "The Uneasy Americas" *Foreign Affairs*.


Htun, Mala, (2002) "Women in Political Power in Latin America" *International IDEA* Chapter 1


*Sikkink, Kathryn. (Spring, 2008) “From Pariah State to Global protagonist: Argentina and the Struggle for International Human Rights” Latin American Politics and Society 50. no. 1:1-29


VII. Evaluation

Evaluation of students will be based on exams, a 5 page term paper and participation as explained below.

1) There will be **two exams** weighed at 100 pts each.

2) **Term Paper**: Students are required to prepare a term paper worth 100 points dealing with any particular topic dealing with Latin American institutions/politics. Students may be utilize a topic from the following disciplines; history, economics, business, international relations, or political science. You may use a case study to make a point/or utilize a theory. Students may focus on a foreign policy, a political party, a constitution, a law and the issues that surround it, etc., You need to clear the topic with the instructor. You may do a historical study on the evolution of any particular problem, solution, political institution, movement or policy as well. Your report should focus on 1) the relationship between the subject and the political realm and 2) its significance for a country or the entire region. Your term paper should have a theme/thesis. You should follow this approach with a historical explanation of the topic/issue/problem. You should also discuss some of the leading literature on the matter and discuss differences in approaches or interpretations. No late papers will be accepted. Papers should be double spaced. The **required system of citations for paper** is the Chicago Manual of Style by Kate Turabian.

3) **Oral Report.** Students will be required to do an oral presentation of their term paper worth 40 points. The presentation should be a synopsis of their work that lasts between 5 & 10 minutes. Students will inform the audience of what their paper was about (theme), what is important about the topic, what problems or areas need further investigation, what they wish they could have added to their paper and the sources they used. Students should not read from their paper. You may use notes cards or a regular outline. Preparing the oral outline in advance will help you focus on your point and the overall writing of the term paper. Students should be prepared to answer questions from the professor and fellow students.

3) **Participation** is 100 pts. Student participation involves active discussion in class re: assignments. Students may also participate by bring current event items and sharing them with the class. The determination about the quality of your participation is the sole discretion of the instructor. A total of 400 pts are available. Additional assignments may be given and will be weighed in with the participation grade. Students will be advised of these and any additional changes to grading policy.

**Grading Breakdown**

- Exams 100 points each (200 points total)-45% of grade
- Term Paper 100 pts- 23% of grade
- Participation 100 pts-23 % grade
- Oral Report 40 pts-9% of grade
Grades will be apportioned along the letter grade +/- spectrum based on the number of points accumulated as follows:

- 353-440 = A
- 265-352 = B
- 177-264 = C
- 89-176 = D
- 0-88 = E

VIII. Research Sites.
Research for current events may be gleaned from newspapers whether they are online or in print format. You may also access the embassies of various Latin American countries in the U.S. These embassy sites post the latest developments in economic and political developments. They provide insight into what government projects/agendas are important. The embassies based in the U.S. are available in both English and Spanish/Portuguese. The sites usually provide links to the web sites of other Latin-American political/economic institutions. If you can read Spanish/Portuguese, feel free to utilize these sites.

Below are some sites for your consideration.

- Miami Herald
- The Economist
- The Latin America Network Information Center, [www.lanic.utexas.edu](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu)
- The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) [www.focal.ca](http://www.focal.ca)
- FLASCO (This is a consortium of research centers based all over Latin America) Most of their research is in Spanish. You may access their research on line. [www.mercosur.int](http://www.mercosur.int)
- Parliament of MERCOSUR [www.parlamentodelmercosur.org](http://www.parlamentodelmercosur.org)
- Inter-American Dialogue [www.idialogue.org](http://www.idialogue.org)
- Official site of UNASUR [www.pptunasur.com](http://www.pptunasur.com)
- Web sites of various Latin American Embassies in the United States

IX. Attendance Policy and Assignments.

Students will be penalized on letter grade for every three absences. Verification will be required for every absence. Legitimate absences are illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance or auto problems. Three consecutive tardies will constitute an absence. For students who live off campus, they are advised that in poor weather with icy roads, fog, or heavy snow; that they should not attempt coming to class if they feel it is too dangerous. In such cases, every effort will be made to accommodate exams or classes missed. Failure to attend class regularly is a neglect of your responsibility. Students who miss 9 classes for whatever reason will be given
an “F” for the course. There is no point assuming that a student with so many absences can pass the course. Students who anticipate missing class for any length of period should drop the course.

X. Makeup Exams

Students are expected to take exams and complete assignments as scheduled. No student should assume that he/she has an automatic right to a make-up test. The instructor may deny this privilege to any student. These students will receive a zero grade for any test/assignment missed. Students must take makeup within a week after they return.

XI. Incompletes

Incompletes are highly discouraged and will be granted only under extreme conditions. Students must arrange for incompletes ahead of time.

XII. Student Conduct (Prescriptive Norms)

1. Respect your classmates and the professor. Do not talk unless you have been recognized to talk and participate in the classroom discussion. Side comments or conversation are distracting to both students and the professor.

2. Students may bring bottles of water to class. You may not bring food.

3. Do not bring cell phones to class. Keep the vibrators off. Keep them at home where they belong.

4. Don’t read your text while in class. Reading assignments should be read before class. You should take notes from your text so you may participate in discussion.

5. You are responsible for all assignments and their completion on time

6. Any behavior that disrupts the educational process shall be grounds for dismissal from class.

7. Students must be familiar with plagiarism and cheating policies of the college. 

   Students who plagiarize or cheat in this course will receive an “F” for the course.

XIII. Office Hours

Ph# 518- 

e/mail: srivera@albany.edu
XIV: Special Note.

Course outline and assignments and grading may be changed at instructor’s discretion. Students will be notified of any changes.

** Students with special medical needs should inform the instructor.** Students with documented disabilities should inform the professor and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Support Services located in the Campus Center 137 (ph# 518-442-5490).
Assignment Sheet

Week 1-August 30-Sept 1, 2011
Read: Powell Ch 1, Skidmore 1

Week 2-Sept 6-8
Relationship between the Spanish/Portuguese and Americans. The Administration of America by Spain and Portugal.
Read: Powell Chs 2-5, Skidmore 2, 3

Week 3-Sept 13-15
Read: Powell Chs 6-9,

Week 4-Sept 20 & 22
Read: Skidmore, 4, 5

Week 5-Sept 27 (Sept 29-no class)
Read: Skidmore, 4, 5, Video

Week 6-Oct 4-6
Read: Skidmore, 6, 7,

Read: Skidmore, 8, 9,

Week 8-Oct 18-20
Read: Skidmore, 8, 9, 10, 11 Video
Scartascini Ch 1-4
Sikkink: Pariah State

Week 9-Oct 25-27
Read: Scartascini Ch 5, 6, 7

Week 10-Nov 1-3
Read: Scartascini 8-10, Skidmore, 12

Week 11-Nov 8-10
Read: following articles
Rivarola: Gunnar and Myrdal
Gallagher: Concept of Development
De La Reza: Divide between Old and New Regionalism

Week 12-Nov 15-17. Term papers due. (Nov 15) Orals begin (Nov 15)

Week 13-Nov 22- Classes cancelled Nov 23

Week 14-Nov 29-Dec 1
Read: Nov 29, Skidmore, 13, 14

Dec 1, Lecture: The U.S. and Latin America

Week 15-Dec 6  Last Day of Class. Review of final.

Week 16-Dec 13 Final Exam