

Latin American Politics, PLSC 367, CRN 24427

Winter 2016

Eastern Michigan University

T Th 9:30 -10:45 am, 420 Pray Harrold

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Off. Hrs.: T/Th 8:00-9:30 am & 11:00 am–12:00 noon

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Course content and objectives:

Contemporary developments in Latin American politics have challenged old stereotypes about the region, while continuing to bring new surprises and complexity. After a wave of military coups in the 1960s and 70s had installed repressive juntas in many South American countries, the military regimes were confronted from the 1980s onward by new social movements (with women at the forefront), contributing to a wave of transitions to elected civilian government. Elections brought a “pink tide” of left-of-center governments to office in a region once considered the U.S. “backyard.” In Brazil (the world’s 5th most populous country), Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, a factory worker and union activist with a fifth grade education, won landslide elections in 2002, and he was succeeded in 2010 by Dilma Rousseff, the country’s first woman president and a former guerrilla. Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez, who was once jailed for leading a failed military coup, was elected president with widespread support among the poor. He used that position to promote controversial policies of radical redistribution of resources and expansion of executive powers in what he called a “Bolivarian Revolution,” invoking the spirit of the region’s great 19th century independence leader. His successor faces difficulty sustaining that model as oil revenues have dropped. In Central America, wracked by revolutionary upheaval in the 1970s and 80s, rebels lay down arms to negotiate peace accords in the 1990s, but the process of post-conflict reconstruction has been slow and problematical. A peace accord is about to be signed to end Colombia’s long civil war. Mexican elections in 2000 ended the 71-year rule of the PRI party, but authoritarian practices continue and the PRI returned to power in 2012. In Mexico as in Colombia, so-called “drug wars” have been accompanied by widespread human rights abuse by unaccountable military and paramilitary forces. A massacre of 6 students and disappearance of 43 more from a rural teachers’ college in September 2014 has shaken the Mexican political system. Longtime Cuban leader Fidel Castro outlasted nine U.S. presidents, then handed leadership to his brother Raúl in 2008; and in December 2014 the U.S. and Cuban presidents made a surprise announcement of plans to normalize relations, after 50 years of hostilities that continued after the Cold War.

Social and economic patterns in the region have also defied some expectations. The Catholic Church in Latin America, once a partner with the colonizing *conquistadores*, saw the emergence of a radical “Liberation Theology” movement that called on the Church to support a “preferential option for the poor.” Indigenous and Afro-descendant people and other marginalized groups began reclaiming suppressed identities and demanding rights, highlighting the region’s pluriethnic diversity. In the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, Maya peasants rose up in rebellion in 1994 on the day NAFTA took effect, declaring autonomy and implementing their own local forms of self-government. In Bolivia, coca farmer Evo Morales in 2006 became the first indigenous president after 180 years of independence, in a country where 60% of the

population are indigenous. Latin America is still considered part of the developing world, but Mexico and Brazil have become major manufacturing exporters; and Chile, where billionaire businessman Sebastián Piñera was elected president in 2010, has joined the “rich countries club” of the OECD. “Free trade agreements” symbolize the significant opening of Latin American economies in recent decades, but the region has the world’s most unequal distribution of income, and the forces of the global market have provoked social and political upheaval.

An upsurge of social movements in the 2000s, spurred in part by rejection of what had been dubbed the “Washington Consensus” on neoliberal “free market” economics, has overturned governments and reshaped politics in the region. Understanding Latin American politics requires special attention to these bottom-up forms of grassroots mobilization outside the bounds of conventional political institutions.

This course is designed to familiarize students with major concepts, patterns, and trends in Latin American politics, and to develop skills in comparative political analysis. We will take a primarily thematic approach, but will also focus on the political histories of selected countries in order to develop frameworks for explaining similarities and differences. We will pay special attention to the ways in which people at the grassroots, not just elites, have been actively involved in processes of political change. Readings examine not only the formal structures and institutions of government, but also the political implications of a variety of more loosely structured social movements contributing to a "new way of doing politics" in the region. These include the new activism of women in politics, movements organized around indigenous and Afro-Latin American identities, the Liberation Theology movement that has challenged traditional views of religion and politics, and new forms of cross-border organizing in an era of globalization.

Part I of the course will consider the common historical elements that have shaped the notion of a Latin American region, and the distinctive characteristics of the region’s social structures (including class, race, and gender) and political culture. **Part II** examines differences in political paths, contrasting the evolution of various patterns (including political economy, focusing on Guatemala; institutions, focusing on Mexico; what the “drug wars” reveal about power in Bolivia and Colombia; and cycles of populism and military authoritarianism in Brazil and Argentina). **Part III** part of the course analyzes various modes of organizing for political change, focusing on rebellion and reform in Bolivia and Guatemala, revolution in Cuba and Nicaragua, the “Bolivarian revolution” in Venezuela, and challenges of democratization in Brazil, Chile, and Honduras. **Part IV** will concentrate on contemporary social movements and other forms of grassroots resistance to top-down structures of domination in countries such as Mexico and Honduras, as well as transnational social movement organizing in peasant and anti-mining networks.

Requirements, grading, and other policies:

1) **Be prepared and participate** - Students are expected to come to each class prepared to participate in discussion of the assigned reading. That means you will need to plan your schedule to do the readings listed for each date *before* that class.

Students should also follow current political developments in Latin America.

Sources include:

Current events – print media:

New York Times, <http://global.nytimes.com>

Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com>)

Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>)

Miami Herald, <http://www.miamiherald.com>

Christian Science Monitor, <http://www.csmonitor.com>

Broadcast media:

National Public Radio, <http://news.npr.org> or WEMU, 89.1 FM, news on the hour

BBC World Service, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world> or WUOM, 91.7 FM, 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. – 5:00 a.m.

Free Speech Radio News, <http://www.fsrn.org>

Democracy Now!, <http://www.democracynow.org>

Latin Radical, podcasts of current issues relevant to Latin America, <http://vensol.blogspot.com/>

Academic journals:

Other useful sources on Latin America include periodicals which are in Halle Library, or you can access them through Halle's online databases. These include:

NACLA Report on the Americas

Latin American Perspectives

Latin American Research Review

Journal of Latin American Studies

Latin American Politics and Society (formerly the Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs)

Current History (monthly which does a Latin America special issue every February)

Internet resources:

Useful Web sites with links to countries and themes include:

Upside Down World, covering activism and politics in Latin America

<http://upside-downworld.org/>

Americas Program, analysis of current political and social developments in the region

<http://www.cipamericas.org/>

North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), current events/analysis

<https://nacla.org/>

Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC), University of Texas at Austin

<http://lanic.utexas.edu>

Internet Resources for Latin America, directory compiled by Molly Molloy, New Mexico State University

<http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/laguia/>

E-Resources for Latin America, compiled by Rhonda L. Neugebauer, University of California-Riverside

<http://webpages.charter.net/rhondaneu/eresources/eresources1.html>

Sources and General Resources on Latin America, compiled by Steven Volk, Oberlin College

<http://www.oberlin.edu/faculty/svolk/latinam.htm>

Resources on Latin American Studies, compiled by Paula Covington, Vanderbilt University

<http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/latinamericanstudies>

- Political Data Base of the Americas (PDBA), Georgetown University, info on political parties/elections/constitutions in Latin America
<http://pdba.georgetown.edu>
- Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), publisher of the Americas Barometer
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/>
- Information Services Latin America (ISLA), special reports on social/political issues
<http://www.igc.org/isla>
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), focus on human rights/democracy/social justice
<http://www.wola.org>
- Latin America Working Group (LAWG), issues relevant to U.S. policies in Latin America
<http://www.lawg.org>
- Latin American Perspectives, Political Reports
<http://latinamericanperspectives.com/political-reports/>
- Witness for Peace, briefs on issues in U.S.-Latin American relations
<http://witnessforpeace.org/section.php?id=84>
- WOLA Regional Security Research Database, info on Latin America security issues
<http://www.defenseassistance.org/news/>

2) Exams and Grading - There will be two exams during the semester (a midterm and a final), and a paper assignment. Exams will cover material from the readings **and** class. Please note that the final exam will be given on the last day of class instead of the scheduled exam date.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Exams, 25% each x 2	= 50%
Outline & bibliography for paper	= 10%
Paper	= 20%
Class participation (including class assignments/quizzes, attendance, and contribution to discussion)	= 20%
	<u>100%</u>

3) Other class requirements & policies:

a) Occasional class assignments may include presentations, quizzes, or short written assignments (which may count as part of your class participation grade).

b) Late work will be reduced one letter grade per day, and missed exams or quizzes will receive a zero, unless there is a legitimate documented excuse.

c) Communications:

You are responsible for regularly **checking your email** account at <http://my.emich.edu>, where you may occasionally receive announcements and materials relevant to the class. (If you prefer to use another email address, you should set up your “my.emich” account to automatically forward to the other address.) Announcements and other material may also be posted to the **course shell** at emuonline.edu, which you can access from your my.emich page.

d) Electronics:

Please turn off cell phones during class. **Sending or receiving text messages during class is rude and distracting, and you may be asked to leave the classroom.** You may use laptops for taking notes, however other uses (such as games, email or Facebook) are inappropriate during class.

4) **Other campus resources** you should be aware of:

*University Writing Center, 115 Halle, <http://www.emich.edu/english/writing-center/>
Available to help you with your academic writing needs

*Academic Projects Center, 116 Halle, <http://www.emich.edu/apc/>
One-on-one writing, research, and technology assistance

*Holman Success Center, G04 Halle Library, <http://www.emich.edu/hsc>
Peer tutoring and other study skills support

*Counseling and Psychological Services, 313 Snow Health Center, <http://www.emich.edu/caps/>
Confidential help with personal difficulties and life coping skills

*Department of Public Safety, 1200 Oakwood St. (former Hoyt Conference Center),
<http://www.emich.edu/publicsafety/>

5) **University policies** (The stuff their lawyers wrote):

a) Special Needs Accommodations

“If you wish to be accommodated for your disability, EMU Board of Regents Policy 8.3 requires that you first register with the Students with Disabilities Office (SDO) in 240 EMU Student Center. You may contact SDO by telephone (734.487.2470). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the SDO promptly as you will only be accommodated from the date you register with them forward. No retroactive accommodations are possible. The Students with Disability Resource Center, 240 EMU Student Center, or at www.emich.edu/disabilities can provide you with detailed guidance.”

b) Student and Exchange VISitor Statement (SEVIS)

“The Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) requires F and J students to report the following to the Office of International Students 244 EMU Student Center within ten (10) days of the event:

- *Changes in your name, local address, major field of study, or source of funding;*
- *Changes in your degree-completion date;*
- *Changes in your degree-level (ex Bachelors to Masters)*
- *Intent to transfer to another school.*

Prior permission from OIS is needed for the following:

- *Dropping ALL courses as well as carrying or dropping BELOW minimum credit hours;*
- *Employment on or off-campus;*

- Registering for more than one ONLINE course per term (F visa only)
- Endorsing I-20 or DS-2019 for re-entry into the USA.

Failure to report may result in the termination of your SEVIS record and even arrest and deportation. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Office of International Students at 734.487.3116, not the course instructor.”

c) Academic dishonesty

“Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty but if you are not sure about whether something you are doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with the course instructor.” You may access the Code online at:

<http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124>

For more detailed information on what is **plagiarism and how to avoid it**, see:

<http://www.emich.edu/library/help/integratingsources.php>

d) Religious holidays

University Policy 6.2.5: *“Current University policy recognizes the rights of students to observe religious holidays without penalty to the student. Students will provide advance notice to the instructor in order to make up work, including examinations, they miss as a result of their absence from class due to observance of religious holidays. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made with the instructor, the student may appeal to the school director or head(s) of department(s) in which the course(s) is / are offered.”*

e) Classroom Management Issues

“Students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code and assist in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and protects the rights of all members of the University Community. Incivility and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may result in a request to leave class and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SJS) for discipline. Examples of inappropriate classroom conduct include repeatedly arriving late to class, using a mobile/cellular phone while in the class session, or talking while others are speaking.”

In addition to the articulated course specific policies and expectations, students are responsible for understanding all applicable University guidelines, policies, and procedures. The EMU Student Handbook is the primary resource provided to students to ensure that they have access to all University policies, support resources, and students' rights and responsibilities. Changes may be made to the EMU Student Handbook whenever necessary, and shall be effective immediately, and/or as of the date on which a policy is formally adopted, and/or on the date specified in the amendment. **Please note:** Electing not to access the link provided below does not absolve a student of responsibility. For questions about any university policy, procedure, practice, or resource, please contact the Office of the Ombuds: 248 Student Center, [734.487.0074](tel:734.487.0074), emu_ombuds@emich.edu, or visit the website: www.emich.edu/ombuds

To access the University Course Policies, click this link:

<http://www.emich.edu/studenthandbook/policies/academic.php#univ>

You may access the Student Conduct Code online at:

<http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124>

Readings/Course materials:

All **required readings** are contained in the following books, available at any of the bookstores that serve the campus or you can order them online:

Stahler-Sholk, Richard, Harry E. **Vanden**, and Marc **Becker**, eds. Rethinking Latin American Social Movements: Radical Action from Below. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. ISBN 978-1-4422-3568-7

Vanden, Harry E., & Gary **Prevost**. Politics of Latin America: The Power Game. 5th ed. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-19-934025-5

Wilkinson, Daniel. Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8223-3368-6

Updates: The schedule, readings and other course material, and assignments are subject to change. Please check your emich.edu email regularly for updates.

PART I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Th Jan. 7

SOCIAL STRUCTURES, COLONIALISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM

T Jan. 12 -Vanden & Prevost, Introduction, “An Introduction to Twenty-First Century Latin America” (Ch. 1), “Early History” (Ch. 2), and “Democracy and Dictators: A Historical Overview” (Ch. 3), pp. 1-81

Th Jan. 14 -Vanden & Prevost, “U.S.-Latin American Relations” (Ch.11), pp. 286-313
-Wilkinson, pp. 3-47

RACE, ETHNICITY AND CLASS

T Jan. 19 -Wilkinson, pp. 48-79

-Vanden & Prevost, “The Other Americans” (Ch. 4), pp. 82-106

Th Jan. 21 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Correa, Indigenous Movements, and the Writing of a New Constitution in Ecuador” (Ch. 14), pp. 267-83

-Stahler-Sholk, Vanden & Becker, eds., "The Contradictions of Black Cultural Politics in Salvador da Bahia: 1970s to the Present" (Ch. 9), pp. 167-86

GENDER, RELIGION AND COMMUNITY

- T Jan. 26 -Vanden & Prevost, "Society, Family, and Gender" (Ch. 5) and "Religion in Latin America (Ch. 6), pp. 107-53
- Th Jan. 28 Wilkinson, pp. 83-156
-Stahler-Sholk, Vanden & Becker, eds., "Popular Feminism in Contemporary Brazil: Lineage and Alliances" (Ch. 8), pp. 147-65

PART II: PATTERNS IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

POLITICAL ECONOMY: DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

- T Feb. 2 -Vanden & Prevost, "The Political Economy of Latin America" (Ch. 7), pp. 154-87
-Wilkinson, pp. 157-98
- Th Feb. 4 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., "Praxis of Empowerment: Mística and Mobilization in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement" (Ch. 5), pp. 85-100

"DRUG WARS" AND POWER STRUGGLES: BOLIVIA & COLOMBIA

- T Feb. 9 -Vanden & Prevost, "Colombia" (Ch. 16), pp. 433-57
-Vanden & Prevost, "Bolivia" (Ch. 18), pp. 481-513
-Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Becker, eds., "Bolivia's MAS and Its Relation with the Movements That Brought It to State Power" (Ch. 15), pp. 285-305
- Th Feb. 11 **EXAM #1 - in class**

POLITICAL CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS: MEXICO'S "PERFECT DICTATORSHIP"

- T Feb. 16 -Vanden & Prevost, "Democracy and Authoritarianism: Latin American Political Culture" (Ch. 8) and "Politics, Power, Institutions, and Actors" (Ch. 9), pp. 188-245
- Th Feb. 18 -Vanden & Prevost, "Mexico" (Ch. 12), pp. 315-41
-Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., "Challenges and Difficulties of Urban Territories in Resistance" (Ch. 3), pp. 49-65

[winter recess]

FROM POPULISM TO BUREAUCRATIC-AUTHORITARIANISM: BRAZIL & ARGENTINA

- T Mar. 1 -Vanden & Prevost, "Brazil" (Ch. 14), pp. 381-407
- Th. Mar. 3 -Vanden & Prevost, "Argentina" (Ch. 13), pp. 343-79

PART III: ORGANIZING FOR POLITICAL CHANGE

REDEFINING POLITICS FROM BELOW

- T Mar. 8 -Vanden & Prevost, “Struggling for Change: Revolution, Social and Political Movements in Latin America” (Ch. 10), pp. 254-85
 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Introduction” (Ch. 1), pp. 1-17
- Th Mar. 10 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Reinventing Revolutions in Latin America: An “Other” Politics in Practice and Theory” (Ch. 2), pp. 21-42
 -Vanden & Prevost, “Guatemala” (Ch. 20), pp. 539-67

REVOLUTIONARY OPTIONS: CUBA, NICARAGUA, AND VENEZUELA

- T Mar. 15 -Vanden & Prevost, “Cuba” (Ch. 19), pp. 515-37, and “Nicaragua” (Ch. 21), pp. 571-99
- Th Mar. 17 -Vanden & Prevost, “Venezuela” (Ch. 17), pp. 459-79
 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Bolivarianism and the Venezuelan Commune” (Ch. 13), pp. 251-65

[Outline & bibliography for final paper due Th., Mar. 17 in class]

TRANSITIONS FROM MILITARY AUTHORITARIANISM: GUATEMALA

- T Mar. 22 -Wilkinson, pp. 199-251
- Th Mar. 24 -Wilkinson, pp. 252-306

PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRATIZATION: CHILE, BRAZIL, AND HONDURAS

- T Mar. 29 -Vanden & Prevost, “Chile” (Ch. 15), pp. 409-31
 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Taking the Streets, Swarming Public Spaces: The 2013 Popular Protests and Social Movements in Brazil” (Ch.12), pp. 233-49
- Th Mar. 31 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “*Por la refundación de Honduras: Building a New Kind of Social Movement*” (Ch. 7), pp. 121-45

PART IV: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

STRUGGLING TO DEMOCRATIZE THE STATE AND SOCIETY

- T Apr. 5 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Autonomy, Collective Identity, and Social Movement Strategies: The Zapatistas and Beyond” (Ch. 10) and “Argentina: Against and Beyond the State” (Ch. 11), pp. 187-207
- Th. Apr. 7 -Wilkinson, pp. 307-49
 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Building Horizontal Political Cultures: Youth Activism and the Legacy of the Oaxacan Social Movement of 2006” (Ch. 4), pp. 67-83

**** FINAL PAPER DUE Th., Apr. 7, IN CLASS ****

GLOBALIZATION AND NEW POLITICAL RESPONSES

- T Apr. 12 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Network Politics in the Mesoamerican Movement against the Plan Puebla-Panamá” (Ch. 6), pp. 101-19; and “Horizontalism and the Anti-Mining Movement in El Salvador” (Ch. 16), pp. 311-30
- Th Apr. 14 -Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, & Becker, eds., “Horizontal Dialogue in the Construction of Agroecology by CLOC/Vía Campesina” (Ch. 17), pp. 331-43 and “Conclusion,” pp. 345-7
-Wilkinson, pp. 350-9

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

- T Apr. 19 **** FINAL EXAM (in class)****