

LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

LTAM and POLS 3144-001, T/R, 11:30am - 12:45pm. College of Education 007.

Spring 2024

Professor Fred Batista

(Pronouns: He/Him/His)

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Office: Fretwell 435M

Office Hours: by appointment.

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester. However, the policies, assignments and readings contained in this syllabus are subject to change with advance notice.

1 Course Description

This course introduces students to broad topics in Latin American politics. The course primarily takes on a political science approach by examining the relevant theories and cases by topic, while also taking advantage of historical and developmental perspectives. The biweekly sessions will be held as lectures in which students are expected to actively participate. By the end of the semester students are expected to: (1) understand the conceptual and theoretical foundations in the study of some of the most important topics in Latin American politics; (2) become familiarized with some of the most prominent cases in each topic; (3) develop an argument about a specific political issue in Latin American politics in the form of a policy brief.

2 Course Material

The course will rely heavily on the Open Access book below:

- Weeks, Gregory B. (2015). *Understanding Latin American Politics*. Charlotte: J. Murrey Atkins Library at UNC Charlotte. https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469652252_Weeks

The course will also rely on other book chapters and articles that will be provided to the students through Canvas.

3 Evaluation

14 Weekly Activities on Canvas (5 points each)	70%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Final Policy Brief	20%

3.1 Grading Scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

3.2 Weekly Activities on Canvas

Starting in Week 1 (January 15), there will be 14 Canvas activities posted a weekly basis. The assignments must be completed before Tuesday of the following week. The activities will consist on different types of exercises. Most often, they will be written reflections about one of the readings. Some of the activities will consist of scaffolding the final policy brief, in which students will be asked to provide drafts of different sections of paper. Each activity will be worth 5 points, which will add up to 70 points towards your final grade.

3.3 Class Participation and Attendance

You are expected to come to class, to be on time, and to participate constructively. The instructor will take attendance every class. You will start with 10 points and will lose points based on the number of classes missed. The detailed attendance policy is the following:

- Students missing 0-2 classes by the end of the semester will lose 0 points towards their final grade
- Students missing 3 classes by the end of the semester will lose 2 points towards their final grade
- Students missing 4 classes by the end of the semester will lose 4 points towards their final grade
- Students missing 5 classes by the end of the semester will lose 6 points towards their final grade
- Students missing 6 classes by the end of the semester will lose 8 points towards their final grade
- Students missing 7 or more classes by the end of the semester will lose 10 points towards their final grade

Missing class does not excuse you from whatever graded assignments might be due or material covered that day. In extreme circumstances I may suspend the penalty, but only at my discretion and with the following considerations: (1) the reasons and documentation for all missed classes, (2) the timeliness with which you alerted me of the need for your absence, and (3) your participation in class otherwise.

3.4 Policy Brief

Each student is expected to submit a policy brief (10-15 pages) discussing a political phenomena in a specific Latin American country of their choice. The assignment will be discussed recurringly during the semester, and there will be some weekly activities refered to final policy brief. Students are also encouraged to talk to instructor early in the semester about their proposals. I will post examples to help students understand the task. The written assignment is due on May 7, and students are allowed to submit them before the deadline if they prefer to do so.

4 Administrative Policies

4.1 Course Website and Email

The course website can be accessed through Canvas. Please check this site regularly for readings, assignments, and other updates. Announcements may be sent out via email or posted directly on Canvas. You are responsible for all information disseminated via Canvas and/or email. If you send me an email on a weekday, I will respond to you that same day. If you send me an email on a weekend or holiday, I will respond to you the following business day.

4.2 Absences and Late Work

Missed deadlines will only be rescheduled if you have received prior approval of your absence and you have documentation explaining why you cannot be in class that day. Makeups for assignments will only be granted if you provide documentation explaining why you could not be in class, or under extraordinary circumstances. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.

4.3 Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. In short, this means that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students violating the Academic Honesty Policy in this course will receive a minimum penalty of a grade of zero for the assignment or test in question and may receive an F in the course and referral to Judicial Services.

4.4 Students with Disabilities

UNC Charlotte is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. Students with disabilities who anticipate needing an academic accommodation in this course should provide me with the proper documentation from the Disability Services Center within the first week of class.

4.5 Diversity

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability. In keeping with this commitment, UNC Charlotte actively seeks to promote diversity in its educational environment through its recruitment, enrollment, and hiring practices.

4.6 Courtesy in Classroom

Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, cell phones should be turned off or silenced during class and put away. Do not talk on your cell phone or text message during class. You are permitted to use laptops during class, but I reserve the right to ask you to put your laptop away if you are using it for purposes unaffiliated with my course. Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. Being late to class is a sign of disrespect towards the instructor and your fellow students. Please refrain from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you are in disagreement with them. Repeated disruption of class may lead to your being asked to leave the classroom and/or a reduction of your final grade.

4.7 COVID-19 Policies

It is the current policy of UNC Charlotte that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the 49er community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings in all indoor spaces on campus, including classrooms and labs, **regardless of vaccination status**. Failure to comply with this policy in the classroom or lab may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for charges under the Code of Student Responsibility.

4.8 Title IX Reporting Policy

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with civil protective orders, and more. Please be aware that all UNC Charlotte employees, including faculty members, are expected to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I am expected to report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I am expected to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you

wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); or (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.uncc.edu, 7-7400). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the “Students” tab.

4.9 FERPA Notification

In establishing University Policy 402, Student Education Records, UNC Charlotte adheres to a policy of compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as FERPA, a federal law that affords students the following rights with respect to their education records. For details, see the FERPA Annual Notification posted on the Office of Legal Affairs website. All questions concerning this FERPA Annual Notification may be directed to the attention of the Office of the Registrar.

4.10 Food Insecurity Statement

Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Food insecure categories include: reduced caloric intake, reduced food quality, lack of variety in diet, disrupted eating patterns, and hunger. Research shows that college students experience food insecurity at higher rates than the American household rate, and that food insecurity can negatively impact academic performance and persistence. In recognition of this problem, UNC Charlotte offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The Jamil Niner Student Pantry (JNSP) is located on the east edge of campus at 1224 John Kirk Road. It has regular hours which may change from semester to semester; please see the website at <https://ninerpantry.uncc.edu/> for schedule and details on its services, as well as resources about hunger and food insecurity among college students.

5 Course Schedule

This schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change at my discretion with appropriate notice. Please read or listen to the assigned readings or podcasts before the session for which they are listed below.

WEEK 0: INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Thursday, January 11: INTRODUCTIONS AND COURSE PRESENTATION

No Readings

WEEK 1: LATIN AMERICA IN FACTS AND THEORIES

Tuesday, January 16: WHAT DEFINES LATIN AMERICA?

Readings:

- Bodenheimer, R. (2019). What Is Latin America? Definition and list of countries. *Thought Co.*[<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-latin-america-4691831>]
- Galeano, E. (1997). *Open veins of Latin America: Five centuries of the pillage of a continent.* NYU Press. [Introduction, pages 1-8]

Thursday, January 18: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 1 [pages 1-12]

Due on Tuesday (January 16), before class: Weekly Activity 1.

WEEK 2: COLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE

Tuesday and Thursday, January 23 and 25: BUILDING A REGION

Readings:

- Mahoney, J. (2010). *Colonialism and postcolonial development: Spanish America in comparative perspective.* Cambridge University Press. [Introduction, pages 1-34]
- Weeks' Chapter 2 [pages 13-33]

Due on Tuesday (January 23), before class: Weekly Activity 2.

WEEK 3: DICTATORSHIPS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Tuesday and Thursday, January 30 and February 1: CAN LATIN AMERICA HAVE DEMOCRACY?

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 3 [pages 35-53]

Due on Tuesday (January 30), before class: Weekly Activity 3.

WEEK 4: POLITICAL ECONOMY

Tuesday and Thursday, February 6 and 8: MODERNIZATION AND DEPENDENCY

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 4 [pages 55-78]

Due on Tuesday (February 6), before class: Weekly Activity 4.

WEEK 5: AROUND THE REGION (PART 1)

Tuesday, February 13: MEXICO

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 5 [pages 79-104]

Thursday, February 15: CUBA

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 7 [pages 139-165]

Due on Tuesday (February 13), before class: Weekly Activity 5.

WEEK 6: AROUND THE REGION (PART 2)

Tuesday, February 20: VENEZUELA

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 10 [pages 225-251]

Thursday, February 22: BRAZIL

Readings:

- Weeks' Chapter 11 [pages 253-279]

Due on Tuesday (February 20), before class: Weekly Activity 6.

WEEK 7: ELECTIONS AND PARTIES

Tuesday, February 27: LATIN AMERICAN ELECTIONS

Readings:

- Overview of Latin American Electoral Systems. *Inter-American Dialogue*. Georgetown University. [<https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/systems.html>]

Thursday, February 29: PARTY SYSTEMS

Readings:

- Levitsky, S., Loxton, J., Van Dyck, B., & Domínguez, J. I. (Eds.). (2016). *Challenges of party-building in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press. [Introduction, pages 1-34]
- Lupu, N. (2015). Partisanship in Latin America. *The Latin American voter: Pursuing representation and accountability in challenging contexts*, 226-245.

Due on Tuesday (February 27), before class: Weekly Activity 7.

March 5 and 7, 2024: **NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

WEEK 8: LATIN AMERICAN VOTERS

Tuesday, March 12: IT'S THE ECONOMY, ESTÚPIDO!

Readings:

- Murillo, M. V., & Visconti, G. (2017). Economic performance and incumbents' support in Latin America. *Electoral Studies*, 45, 180-190.
- Campello, D., & Zucco Jr, C. (2016). Presidential success and the world economy. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(2), 589-602.

Thursday, March 14: NOT JUST THE ECONOMY, ESTÚPIDO!

Readings:

- Smith, A. E., & Boas, T. C. (2020). Religion, sexuality politics, and the transformation of Latin American electorates. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-20.
- Haime, A., & Cantú, F. (2022). Negative Partisanship in Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 64(1), 72-92.

Due on Tuesday (March 12), before class: Weekly Activity 8.

WEEK 9: LATIN AMERICAN POLITICIANS

Tuesday, March 19: WHO ARE THEY?

Readings:

- Latin America and the Caribbean is Very Far from Achieving Parity Democracy, Authorities and Experts Warned at a CAF-ECLAC Event. *ECLAC*. [<https://www.cepal.org/en/news/latin-america-and-caribbean-very-far-achieving-parity-democracy-authorities-and-experts>]
- Carnes, N., & Lupu, N. (2015). Rethinking the comparative perspective on class and representation: Evidence from Latin America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), 1-18.

Thursday, March 21: WHY THEY MATTER

Readings:

- Mainwaring, S., & Pérez-Liñán, A. (2013). Lessons from Latin America: Democratic breakdown and survival. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2), 123-137.

- Batista Pereira, F., & Nunes, F. (2022). Presidential Influence and Public Opinion During Crises: The Case of COVID-19 in Brazil. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 34(2), 1-10.

Due on Tuesday (March 19), before class: Weekly Activity 9.

WEEK 10: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA

Tuesday and Thursday, March 26 and 28: DRAMATIC SHIFTS

Readings:

- Cuadros, J. D. R. (2018). The religious shift in Latin America. *Hérodote*, 171(4), 119-134.
- Boas, T. C. (2021). Expanding the public square: Evangelicals and electoral politics in Latin America. In: *The inclusionary turn in Latin American democracies* (pp. 425-469).

Due on Tuesday (March 26), before class: Weekly Activity 10.

WEEK 11: CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Tuesday, April 2: A VIOLENT REGION

Readings:

- Ley, S. (2013). An Overview of the Political Consequences of Crime and Insecurity in Latin America. *Latin America Policy Journal*, 2, 21-26.
- Trejo, G., & Ley, S. (2021). High-profile criminal violence: Why drug cartels murder government officials and party candidates in Mexico. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 203-229.

Thursday, April 4: **NO CLASS**: INSTRUCTOR AT CONFERENCE

Due on Tuesday (April 2), before class: Weekly Activity 11.

WEEK 12: CORRUPTION

Tuesday and Thursday, April 9 and 11: WHY SO CORRUPT?

Readings:

- Berthin, G. (2015). Democratic Governance and Corruption in Latin America. In: *Latin American Democracy: Emerging Reality or Endangered Species* (pp. 244-263).
- Pavão, N. (2018). Corruption as the only option: The limits to electoral accountability. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(3), 996-1010.
- Corbacho, A., Gingerich, D. W., Oliveros, V., & RuizVega, M. (2016). Corruption as a self-fulfilling prophecy: Evidence from a survey experiment in Costa Rica. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4), 1077-1092.

Due on Tuesday (April 9), before class: Weekly Activity 12.

WEEK 13: MIGRATION

Tuesday, April 16: CAUSES

Readings:

- Steele, A., Lacarte, V. Ruiz Soto, A. G., Chávez-González, D., More, M. J., Tanco, A. (2023). In a Dramatic Shift, the Americas Have Become a Leading Migration Destination. *Migration Information Source*. [<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/print/17679>]
- Hiskey, J. T., Córdova, A., Malone, M. F., & Orcés, D. M. (2018). Leaving the devil you know: Crime victimization, US deterrence policy, and the emigration decision in Central America. *Latin American Research Review*, 53(3), 429-443.

Thursday, April 18: CONSEQUENCES

Readings:

- Vega-Mendez, C., & Visconti, G. (2021). Does Immigration Increase Concerns about the Provision of Public Services? Evidence from Colombia. *Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública*, 10(1), 79-98.
- Lehmann, P. S., Chouhy, C., Singer, A. J., Stevens, J. N., & Gertz, M. (2020). Out-group animus and punitiveness in Latin America. *Crime & Delinquency*, 66(8), 1161-1188.

Due on Tuesday (April 16), before class: Weekly Activity 13.

WEEK 14: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Tuesday, April 23: TELEVISION

Readings:

- Lubianco, J. (2022). Proportion of Latin Americans who avoid the news increases, says Reuters Institute survey. *LatAm Journalism Review*. The University of Texas at Austin, Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. [<https://latamjournalismreview.org/articles/reuters-digital-news-report-2022/>]
- Orozco, G., & Miller, T. (2017). Television beyond itself in Latin America. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, (30), 107-127.

Thursday, April 25: SOCIAL MEDIA

Readings:

- Mitchelstein, E., Matassi, M., & Boczkowski, P. J. (2020). Minimal effects, maximum panic: Social media and democracy in Latin America. *Social Media + Society*, 6(4), 1-11.

Due on Tuesday (April 23), before class: Weekly Activity 14.

May 7 (Tuesday): FINAL POLICY BRIEF DUE ON CANVAS, From 11:00am to 1:00pm