

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
IR/PO 567 LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS
SYLLABUS
SEMESTER I, FALL 2004
TUESDAYS/THURSDAYS 2:00-3:20
ROOM KCB 106
AUGUST 17, 2004

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The politics of the twenty Latin American countries are complicated, complex, and much more varied than we might expect given their common heritage. Our goals during the semester are to understand more completely their historical and contemporary political dynamics, to explain why they have developed in such distinctive ways, and to assess some of the most problematic current examples of formal democracy in the region. Pursuit of these goals will enhance our ability to predict the likely political trajectories of the Latin American countries, whether toward fuller democracies or a return to one or another of the authoritarian alternatives that have characterized their pasts.

The recent and rapid emergence of electoral democracy in almost every Latin American country – a phenomenon that confounded most analysts' predictions – is unprecedented in the region's long political history. Civilian elections have replaced military coups as the vehicle of choice for political elites. Furthermore, with rare exceptions, these "new" democracies have been able to sustain themselves over time. A central question for us to address in the course, then, is how this happened, and why.

There is almost universal agreement that the "democratic epidemic" that swept Latin America between 1978 and 1991 is both significant and positive. Even so, there is also general recognition that many of these "new" democracies are troubled, some profoundly so. This concern merits our special attention, so we will focus on "democracy and its discontents" as a central theme of the course. What are the most important problems that the

Latin American democracies are facing? Where do the challenges appear to be the most difficult? How do we explain them? Can they be overcome?

Our readings have been selected with this central theme in mind. They represent some of the best recent scholarship on the topic and reflect a wide variety of perspectives and approaches. Using these readings as a foundation, we will explore together the bases of democratic theory and practice, the historical context of alternation between “waves” of authoritarianism and democracy, the key elements of democracy, whether early or late, and the multiple challenges they face. We will also consider in greater depth several cases of democracy in crisis: Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, and Haiti, and a case of democratic success, Costa Rica.

By the time we complete the semester, we should be able to come to some well-grounded conclusions about the staying power and continued viability of Latin America’s most recent democratic experience.

Readings: All books are required reading and may be purchased at the Barnes & Noble Boston University Bookstore in the Course Book Section (Look under both IR 567 and PO 567). Texts listed in the order used in class.

John Peeler, *Building Democracy in Latin America*, 2nd Edition (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004). This second edition is substantially revised from the first, so be sure to purchase this edition.

Felipe Aguero and Jeffrey Stark, Eds. *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America* (Miami: North-South Center Press, 1998).

Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger, Eds. *Venezuelan Politics in the Chávez Era: Class, Polarization, and Conflict* (Boulder: Lynn Rienner, 2004).

David Scott Palmer, Ed. *Shining Path of Peru*, 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994).

Charles Bergquist, et al., Eds. *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000* (Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

Robert Fatton, Jr. *Haiti’s Predatory Republic* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

John A. Booth. *Costa Rica: Quest for Democracy* (Boulder: Westview, 1999). Not in print at the moment. We will substitute if necessary.

Finally, given the focus on contemporary developments in Latin America, you are encouraged to subscribe to *Latin American Weekly Report*, a summary of significant events and developments on the countries of the region. We are able to get a special student rate for an on-line subscription of 12 issues. Sign-up and details provided during the first week of class.

Grading

Undergraduates

1. Map Quiz (5%): **TH Sep 16**
2. Reading Quizzes (15%): Unannounced in 4 or 5 classes during the semester, of which the best three grades count (5% each).
3. Mid-Term Exam (20%): **TH Oct 7**
4. Short Research Paper (10-12 pages) (30%): Discusses a significant challenge to Latin American democracy and assesses the degree to which it is or is not being successfully addressed in one of the cases we are studying. Internet sources acceptable, but may comprise no more than one-half of your bibliography. Due on the day we are discussing that country, as follows:
 - a. Venezuela: **TH Oct 28**
 - b. Peru: **TH Nov 4**
 - c. Colombia: **TU Nov 16**
 - d. Haiti: **TU Nov 23**
 - e. Costa Rica: **TH Dec 2**
5. Attendance and Participation (10%): Attendance will be taken periodically during the semester. Participation is assessed on the basis of the quality of your interventions in class, including your paper presentation.
6. Final Exam (20%): **F Dec 17, 9:00-11:00**. This will be a one-hour final.

Graduate Students

1. Two research papers (40% each). Internet sources acceptable, but may comprise no more than one-half of your bibliography: **TU Oct 26** and **TU Dec 7**, to be selected from the following three topics:
 - a. The key factors explaining the democratic transition in Latin America between 1978 and 1991.
 - b. How do we explain the array of discontents experienced by contemporary Latin American democracies? Are the main explanatory factors primarily internal or external?
 - c. A paired comparison between a reasonably stable and successful Latin American democracy and one beset by crisis – What keeps the latter from being more like the former?
2. Attendance and Participation (20%): In addition to regular classes, there will be a graduate student seminar scheduled at a mutually convenient time to pursue course themes and your papers.

All Students

There will be some optional Latin American Studies related activities during the semester, including the New England Council of Latin American Studies (NECLAS) annual meeting at Boston University on Saturday, November 6. You will be given extra credit for any of these events that you are able to attend.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Deans' Office has requested that you be informed of the following:

1. The last day you may drop the course without a W grade is F Oct 8.
2. The last day you may drop the course with a W grade is F Oct 31.
3. You are responsible for knowing the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. Copies are available in CAS 105.
4. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Deans' Office.

Classes, Topics, and Reading Assignments

- TU Sep 7 Introduction – Themes, Goals, Details
- TH Sep 9 Foundations of Democratic Theory and Practice
Peeler (P) ix-xiv and 1-42.
- TU Sep 14 A Central Theme: Democracy and Its Discontents
Aguero & Stark (A&S) (Aguero, Lechner) 1-40.
Palmer, “Democracy and the Military: Redefining Missions amidst Multiple Challenges,” *Revista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, 2:1 (Fall 2002), 9-12.
- TH Sep 16 Political History: Waves of Authoritarianism and Democracy
P 43-92
Palmer, “The Military in Latin America,” in Jack Hopkins, ed., *Latin America: Perspectives on a Region* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1998), 320-337.
- TU Sep 21 Stabilizing and Consolidating Democracy
P 93-130.
- TH Sep 23 Destabilization, Deconsolidation, and Decay of Democracy
P 131-167.
- TU Sep 28 Key Elements of Democracy: Participation and Representation
P 169-190
A&S (Hagopian, Varas) 99-174.
- TH Sep 30 Key Elements of Democracy: Empowerment and Accountability
P 191-208
A&S (Navarro & Bourque, Degregori) 175-236.
- TU Oct 5 Review and Discussion
- TH Oct 7 **MID-TERM EXAM**

- TU Oct 12 Democracy and Its Challenges: Economic
A&S (Borón, Stark) 41-98.
- TH Oct 14 Democracy and Its Challenges: Justice, Law, and Violence
A&S (Fruling, Holsten & Caldeira) 237-298.
- TU Oct 19 Democracy and Its Challenges: The Military
A&S (Hunter, Desch, Bustamante) 299-370.
- TH Oct 21 Introduction to the Cases
- TU Oct 26 A Case of Democratic Crisis: Venezuela and the Rise of
Populism
Ellner and Hellenger (E&H).
First Graduate Student Research Paper Due
- TH Oct 28 Venezuela: Presentations and Discussion
E&H
Venezuela Research Papers Due
- TU Nov 2 A Second Case of Democratic Crisis: Peru and Democracy with
“People’s War”
Palmer (DSP).
- TH Nov 4 Peru: Presentations and Discussion
DSP
Palmer, “Democracy and its Discontents in Fujimori’s
Peru,” *Current History* 99:634, 60-65
Carmen Rosa Balbi and Palmer, “‘Reinventing’
Democracy in Peru,” *Current History* 100: 643, 65-72.
Peru Research Papers Due
- TU Nov 9 A Third Case of Democratic Crisis: Colombia and Endemic
Political Violence
Bergquist, et al. (B).
- TU Nov 16 Colombia: Presentations and Discussion
B.
Colombia Research Papers Due

TH Nov 18 A Case of a Failed State? Haiti, Intervention, and Immobilism
Fatton (F).

TU Nov 23 Haiti: Presentations and Discussion
F.

Haiti Research Papers Due

TU Nov 30 A Case of Democratic Success: Costa Rica as a Model?
Booth (JAB).

TH Dec 2 Costa Rica: Presentations and Discussion
JAB.

Costa Rica Research Papers Due

TU Dec 7 Class Discussion of Country Comparisons
Second Graduate Student Research Paper Due

TH Dec 9 Summing Up: Democracy's Future?
P 189-202
A&S 371-382.

F Dec 17, 9:00-10:00 FINAL EXAM