

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SYLLABUS (FINAL EDITION)
GRADUATE SEMINAR ON LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS
IR 767 LATIN AMERICAN COMPARATIVE POLITICS
PO 767 INTERPRETATIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN REALITIES
FALL 2007, W 9-12
ROOM IRC 102 (Department of International Relations, 154 BSR)**

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This seminar is designed to broaden and deepen our understanding of Latin American politics. We are particularly concerned with the following core considerations:

1. The distal historical context, particularly the deep-seated patterns of authoritarianism resulting from some three centuries of colonial rule by Spain, Portugal, and France, and their continuation well after independence in the early decades of the 19th century
2. The post-independence patterns of alternation between authoritarianism and democracy and the explanations for them
3. The remarkable and unprecedented transition from generalized authoritarianism to generalized formal democracy based on universal suffrage, respect for electoral outcomes, and the re-introduction of market economies between 1978 and 1991 and how scholars explain this sea change in political and economic dynamics during a period of severe and extended economic crisis
4. The post-transition patterns of electoral politics, with particular focus on explanations for non-electoral modalities used to change presidents, the rise of non-traditional political actors that challenge political elites and their parties, and the erosion of traditional political parties
5. The rise to power of the so-called “pink tide” of party and populist leaders on the left, the implications of their presence for the retention of market economies and the pursuit of social welfare policies, and the special case of Cuba as it faces a post-Castro political future

6. The challenge of moving from routinization of democracy to its consolidation, with special attention to issues of governance and accountability
7. The variety of responses of citizens within civil society as they organize within the spaces opened up at the local and regional level in the post-democratic transition, with special focus on the degree to which their involvement in “informal politics” represent new forms of political representation and whether or not they will strengthen civil society and democratic practice
8. An assessment of the degree to which the variety of democratic regimes now functioning in Latin America, largely as “low-intensity” democracies, can overcome their multiple challenges to become fully operational or will collapse under their weight to produce yet another wave of authoritarian politics in the region.

The seminar will be devoted to an exploration of each of these central concerns, and you will be asked to choose three to prepare 10-15 page research papers in consultation with me. These papers may focus on either/both: a. Specific country cases that reflect specific core concerns; b. More general treatments of the issues in theory and practice.

Examples of paper subjects with a focus on one or another of these basic concerns as they relate to specific countries include (but are certainly not restricted to) the following:

- 1) Peru and the political costs of overcoming Shining Path
- 2) Venezuela and the collapse of parties
- 3) Chile and the challenges of return to democracy
- 4) Ecuador and the indigenous movement
- 5) Argentina and rebuilding from economic collapse
- 6) Mexico and the emergence of competitive parties
- 7) El Salvador and Guatemala and the different outcomes of peace agreements
- 8) Cuba and the future of a communist system
- 9) Colombia and political violence with democratic political stability
- 10) Brazil cf. Uruguay and the different challenges of left parties in power
- 11) Bolivia and the rise to power of new political actors
- 12) Central American democracies and the effects of criminal gangs

Possibilities for paper topics related to the core considerations from a more theoretical perspective and how they play out or have played out in practice (again, topics are not restricted to these) would be the following:

- 1) The weight of the authoritarian past on post-independence political systems
- 2) Explanations for the so-called “waves” of authoritarianism and/or democracy that have swept the region at different points of post-independence political history
- 3) The relationship between economic and political factors and the causal connections between them, with particular focus on the degree to which democratic practice affects or is affected by economic growth and development
- 4) Assessment of the perspective that strong and stable political parties are a necessary condition for democratic routinization and consolidation
- 5) Comparative analysis of political systems experiencing unorthodox changes in elected heads of state since the mid-1990s and the reasons for them in order to formulate a more general explanation for such changes
- 6) Forces contributing to the rise of new social and/or ethnic actors in formal and/or informal politics and the varying degrees of success they have experienced in bringing about favorable political outcomes
- 7) The contributions of new organizations within civil society, as representatives of informal politics, to more democratic political systems and challenges they pose to formal democratic practice
- 8) Assessment of why the “new left” has risen to prominence in some countries, the various ways it has operated in practice, and the degree to which it may or may not be successful as a post-democratic period alternative to “politics as usual”
- 9) Democratic governance, or what elected leaders do once in office to contribute to or erode public confidence in political practice, with special concern for issues of corruption, justice, and social welfare policies.

Grading

Each of the three research papers counts for 25% of the seminar grade. A revise and resubmit option is available for papers submitted on time. The other 25% is based on the quality of participation in the seminar. This includes discussions of readings, questions, and paper presentations.

Books for the Seminar

Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999)

John Peeler, *Building Democracy in Latin America*, 2nd edition (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 2004)

Douglas A. Chalmers, et al. *The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation*. Oxford Studies in Democratization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Howard J. Wiarda, *Dilemmas of Democracy in Latin America: Crises and Opportunity* (Lanham MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2005)

Jorge I. Domínguez and Michael Shifter, eds. *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America*, 2nd edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003)

Alfred P. Montero and David J. Samuels, eds. *Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America* (South Bend: Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, 2004)

Latin American Weekly Report, for current developments in the region, with a special 13-week on-line subscription available for \$26. Sign up during the first week of class.

In addition to these books, a copy of a number of other relevant articles and book chapters are posted on the 767 website, accessible at: **courseinfo.bu.edu/courses/07fallgrsir767_a1**.

These additional readings are specified with their full citations in the Seminar Meetings and Topics section which follows. They are marked with an asterisk (*) to distinguish them from the assigned text readings, which are noted by author(s)/editor(s), chapter number(s), and chapter author(s).

Seminar Meetings and Topics

- W Sep 5 Introduction
Review of the syllabus, introductions, discussion of interests and preliminary areas of focus
- W Sep 12 Latin American Democracy in Its Historical Context
Colonialism and its legacy, alternating patterns of 19th and 20th century politics between authoritarianism and democracy
Wiarda, Chaps 1-2; Peeler, Chaps 2-3 (43-56)
* Paul H. Lewis, *Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America: Dictators, Despots, and Tyrants* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), Chaps 1 and 10
- W Sep 19 Democracy's Third "Wave" in Latin America
The historic generalization of electoral democracy, explanations and patterns
Wiarda, Chaps 3-4, 11, & Conclusion; Peeler, Chaps 3 (56-87)-4
- W Sep 26 Stepping Back: Theories of Democracy and Their Relationship to Recent Latin American Experience
Classical perspectives, typologies, the broader world historical context, and how Latin America compares
Peeler, Chap 1; Diamond, Chaps 1-2
- W Oct 3 Core Issues Affecting Latin American Democracies: Multiple Impediments to Consolidation
Effects of neo-liberal reforms and globalization, "delegative" or "illiberal" democracy, and ineffective governance (e.g., corruption, inadequate responses to poverty, weak judiciaries)
Wiarda, Chap 10; Peeler, Chaps 5-6; Diamond, Chap 3
* Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76:6 (November-December 1997), 22-43
First Research Paper Due

- W Oct 10 Core Issues Affecting Latin American Democracies: Civil Society and New Forms of Citizen Organization
 “Informal” politics at the local and regional levels, with increasingly organized citizens demanding redress and providing alternatives to traditional mechanisms; general perspectives and the case of Ecuador
 Wiarda, Chap 3; Diamond, Chap 6; Chalmers, Chaps on overview (1, Vilas; 22, Chalmers), Chaps on Ecuador (7, Selverston; 20 Segarra)
- W Oct 17 Core Issues Affecting Latin American Democracies: The Rise of the “New Left”
 Where and why; internal, idiosyncratic issues or larger, more systematic ones; a problem, a healthy development, or both?
 Overviews (Read both): Peeler, Chap 7;
 * Jorge Casteñeda & Patricio Navia, “The Year of the Ballot,” *Current History* 106:697 (February 2007), 51-57
 Where the left has won (Select three countries):
 Domínguez & Shifter, Chaps on Chile (13, Agüero), Venezuela (8, Coppedge), Brazil (12, Lamonier), Argentina (11, Levitsky)
 Wiarda, Chap 6 (Venezuela & Argentina)
 * Eduardo A. Gamarra, “Bolivia on the Brink,” Council on Foreign Relations, CSR 241 (February 2007)
 * Catherine M. Conaghan, “Ecuador’s Gamble: Can Correa Govern?” *Current History* 106:697 (February 2007), 77-82
 * Daniel Chávez, “From the Frente Amplio to the Nueva Mayoría: The Uruguayan Left Faces the Prospect of Government,” Latin American Studies Association, Las Vegas, October 7, 2004
 Where the left has strengthened (Select two countries):
 Dominguez & Shifter, Chaps on Mexico (14, Dresser), and Peru (10, Degregori)
 * Christine J. Wade, “El Salvador: The Successful Transformation of the FMLN,” Jeroen de Zeeuw, ed. *Rebel Movements to Political Parties: Reviewing the Role of International Actors* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, forthcoming)

- W Oct 24 Responding to Democracy's Challenges: Political Leadership
 The degree to which top elected officials engage in effective governance, with illustrative cases of positive and negative approaches and their outcomes, including Menem (Argentina), Fujimori (Peru), Sánchez de Lozada (Bolivia), Alemán (Nicaragua), Lagos (Chile), Zedillo (Mexico), Cristiani (El Salvador), and Arias (Costa Rica). Since there does not seem to be a systematic analysis of recent democratic leadership, we will plumb the readings for examples and analyses of specific leadership dynamics and try to put together a useful framework.
- W Oct 31 Responding to Democracy's Challenges: State Reform
 Visiting Lecture: Professor Carlos Blanco
 How elected governments under duress attempt to overcome their problems by changing state structures and procedures, with particular reference to the case of Venezuela in the early 1990s
 Montero & Samuels, Chap on decentralization in Venezuela (7, Penfold-Becerra)
 * Jennifer McCoy and David Myers, eds. *The Unraveling of Representative Democracy in Venezuela* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), Chaps on decentralization (9, de la Cruz), transition (12, McCoy), & Epilogue (McCoy & Myers)
- W Nov 7 Responding to Democracy's Challenges: Market Reform and Social Welfare Policies
 Initiatives of elected governments, in an economic context of market liberalization, to meet needs of less privileged segments of their citizenry, with examples drawn from the experiences of Mexico, Chile, Peru, Brazil, and Venezuela
 Domínguez & Shifter, Chap on market reforms (4, Corrales); Chalmers, Chaps on Chile (14, Hershberg) & Mexico (19, Piester)
Second Research Paper Due

- W Nov 14 Responding to Democracy's Challenges: Decentralization
 Shifts in the historical concentration of political power in the center towards local and regional governments through elections and resource transfers, giving new alternatives and opportunities for access to citizens at the local level, including Bolivia, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay
 Montero & Samuels, Chaps on overview (1, Montero & Samuels), Bolivia (2, O'Neill), Mexico (7, Beer), and Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay comparisons (5, Eaton)
- W Nov 28 Responding to Democracy's Challenges: Judicial Reform
 The multiple limitations of traditional civil law judiciaries in the context of unprecedented expansion of their responsibilities and initiatives to increase their effectiveness in efforts to establish a rule of law
 * Hugo Fröling and Joseph S. Tulchin, eds. *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy, and the State* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003), Chaps on overview (1, Tulchin & Golding), police reform (2, Fröling), judicial reform (4, Duce & Pérez), and consequences of violence (5 Morrison, Buvenic, & Shifter)
- W Dec 5 The Remaining Outlier in Latin America: Cuba
 The state of "Latin" totalitarianism and alternative assessments of its future in Cuba: retention of a Communist system, transition to a more democratic polity, or turbulence, violence, and chaos
 * "Cuba in the Americas," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 39:4 (January-February 2006), 14-45
 * "Was Fidel Good for Cuba?" *Foreign Policy*, (January-February 2007), 56-64
Third Research Paper Due
- W Dec 12 Conclusions: What Have We Learned?
 Domínguez & Shifter, Chap 15 (Domínguez)