BOSTON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
IR/PO 367: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SYLLABUS
Fall 2012
MWF 11am-12pm
Location: COM 213

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Office Hours: M 1:30-3, W 2:30-4, Th 10:30-11:30, and by appointment
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Course Rationale, Goals, and Organization

As its title suggests, this course offers an introduction to Latin American politics and international relations. We will proceed from an overview of the region as a whole to detailed studies of specific countries and issues in U.S.-Latin American relations. In the spirit of interdisciplinary scholarship, we will draw on a variety of methods and sources to seek answers to a number of overarching questions.

How has Latin America’s past shaped its present and future? What common political patterns can we identify across the region? Why do specific countries follow or deviate from those patterns? It what ways has the United States interacted with Latin America over the decades, both to the benefit and detriment of its neighbors?

Our goal in this course is twofold:

1) You will gain knowledge about the historical dynamics and contemporary characteristics of Latin American politics and international relations

2) You will develop reading, writing, and communication skills that will serve you in your college career and beyond

The organization of the course, which does not assume any prior knowledge of Latin America or of U.S. policy, is as follows:

1. We begin with a chronological overview of Latin American history, with an eye toward gaining the knowledge of the past necessary to understand the present and anticipate the future. We will identify and attempt to explain common patterns and processes in regional politics and international relations. As this section of the course predominantly focuses on building your knowledge base, it will culminate in a mid-term exam.
2. Then, in order to present a contrast to our previous analysis from an academic, outside perspective, you will read either a personal testimony or a novel (your choice from the list of five below) and will prepare a two-page paper reflecting on something you learned about Latin American politics from the reading (NOT a book report). I will ask a few of you to comment on your reflections with the rest of the class.

3. Next, we will spend several weeks focusing on six important countries in the region: Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba. We will compare their histories to the general patterns that we observed earlier in the semester, delving into greater detail about their politics, economics, and relations with the United States. In this segment of the course, each of you will choose one of the six countries to research and meet with several other members of the class in groups based on the country. **Each of you will prepare a short research paper** (10 pages maximum) in which you assess the likelihood of full democratic consolidation in that country and provide the empirical and historical bases for this assessment. The paper will be due on the last day your country is discussed in class. Each country group will select one of your members to give a brief summary to the rest of the class that day of some of the papers’ most important points and conclusions.

4. We then turn to an overview of U.S.-Latin American relations, analyzing the main patterns of these relations over time and the degree to which the United States has influenced its neighbors in both positive and negative ways. You will once again form smaller groups to discuss an issue in U.S.-L.A. relations that you would like to explore more deeply (for example, intervention, immigration, pursuit of a market economy, national security, drugs and drug trafficking). Each group will select one of its members to comment to the rest of the class on what the group has found to be the most important elements of the issue.

5. Finally, we conclude by reflecting upon what we have learned in order to make predictions about Latin America’s future.

**Grading**

1. **Mid-Term Exam:** (15%) Short essays covering historical background and novels and testimonies **F 28 Sep**

2. **Short Reflection Paper:** (10%) (2 pages) on a testimony or novel **Due M 1 Oct**

3. **Short Research Paper (30%)** (9-10 pages, not counting separate cover and bibliography pages) Assess the degree to which the country you choose to study in greater depth is likely to achieve full democratic consolidation over the next two decades. **Mexico (due W 10 Oct), Peru (W 17 Oct), Guatemala (W 24 Oct), Argentina (W 31 Oct), Brazil (W 7 Nov), Cuba (W 14 Nov).**
   a. You will have the option to revise this paper and turn it in one week after I return the graded paper if the first submission is complete and on time. Include the original with the revised version.

4. **Participation:** (25%) The quality of your involvement in:
a. student groups (novel or testimony, country, and U.S. policy issues),

b. class presentation when selected by your group, and

c. your commentary on assigned readings when selected by your professor.

d. You are also encouraged to attend Latin American Studies Program events.

5. Final Exam (20%) Short essays on U.S.-L.A. relations and the countries of Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba. **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 12:30 pm**

All assignments should be double-spaced in Times New Roman size 12 font with a one-inch margin on all sides. Use Chicago Style footnote citations for primary and secondary sources (for guidelines on proper citation format, see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)). Turn in your assignments on time—there will be a penalty of 10% for each day that an assignment is late. You will only be allowed to turn in an assignment late without penalty if you have a documented emergency.

**Expectations:**

1. Participation. I expect you to do the readings, bring the readings to class, and participate in discussions.

2. Communication. If you have a question, don’t hesitate to raise your hand and ask or contact me privately. If you have a problem or an emergency arises, let me know and I will be very willing to work with you. If you need an accommodation for any type of physical or learning disability, medical needs, or any other reason, you should meet with the student disability services office and then meet with me privately to discuss the modifications necessary to ensure your full participation in the course.

3. Proper Academic Conduct. It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the College of Arts and Science’s Academic Conduct Code, available at: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/). I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean’s Office.

The college of Arts & Sciences (CAS) Deans’ Office has requested that you be informed of the following:

1. The last day to drop the course without a W grade is **Tuesday, October 9**.

2. The last day to drop the course with a W grade is **Friday, November 9**.

**Required Readings**


3) *Latin American Weekly Report (LAWR)*. Covers current developments in Latin American countries and is available in an online 10-week subscription at a special student rate of $25 (regular cost is $100). Be sure to read and print all articles about Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba, as well as any articles pertaining to issues in U.S.-Latin American relations.

4) **One** of the following five novels or testimonies (**your choice**):

     A Guatemalan novelist and Nobel Laureate describes life and death under caudillo rule

     A Mexican novelist’s view of his country’s 1910 Revolution

     Life in a Brazilian shanty town (*favela*) in the 1950s through the eyes of a resident

     An Argentine journalist narrates his ordeal during his country’s repressive military dictatorship (1976-83)

     A Peruvian novelist and Nobel Laureate depicts the intertwining of myth and reality in a sierra mining town during Shining Path’s “people’s war”

5) **In addition**, there will be some articles and book chapters assigned for specific classes (noted with a *). These may be found on the 367 Blackboard web site under Assignments. This site will also contain important information about assignments and exams under Announcements; other course-related material, such as the syllabus, is under Course Documents.
Classes, Topics, and Reading Assignments (subject to change with advance notice)

Wed, Sept 5:  Introduction
Course overview, details, expectations

Fri, Sept 7:  Historical Overview: The Colonial Legacy
Chasteen, 1-84

Mon, Sept 10:  Historical Overview: Independence
Chasteen, 87-110

Wed, Sept 12:  Historical Overview: Postcolonial Blues and Progress
Chasteen, 117-176

Fri, Sept 14:  Historical Overview: Neocolonialism
Chasteen, 181-215

Mon, Sept 17:  Historical Overview: Nationalism
Chasteen, 217-251

Wed, Sept 19:  Historical Overview: Revolution
Chasteen, 253-283

Fri, Sept 21:  Historical Overview: Reaction
Chasteen, 285-316

Mon, Sept 24:  Historical Overview: Neoliberalism and Illiberal Democracy
Chasteen, 319-340

Wed, Sept 26:  Novels & Testimonies as Windows onto Political Realities
Individual novel or testimony group meetings to discuss what you have read and to pick a member to present next week

Fri, Sept 28:  MID-TERM EXAM

Mon, Oct 1:  Novels & Testimonies, Continued
The selected member of each group provides a brief presentation on something you learned about Latin American political realities from your paper and from the group discussion
SHORT REFLECTION PAPERS DUE

Wed, Oct 3:  Country Cases: Introduction
Country group meetings: Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba
Discussion of expectations for research papers

Fri, Oct 5: Core Countries: Mexico – Politics in Historical Context

Mon, Oct 8: NO CLASS

TUESDAY, Oct 9: Mexico – 20th Century Political Dynamics

Wed, Oct 10: Mexico – Contemporary Developments & Challenges
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Mexico group
Class discussion of Mexican currents events based on LAWR
MEXICO SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

Fri, Oct 12: Core Countries: Peru – Politics in Historical Context

Mon, Oct 15: Peru – 20th Century Political Dynamics

Wed, Oct 17: Peru – Contemporary Developments & Challenges
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Peru group
Class discussion of Peruvian currents events based on LAWR
PERU SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

Fri, Oct 19: Peripheral Countries: Guatemala – Politics in Historical Context

Mon, Oct 22: Guatemala – 20th Century Political Dynamics

Wed, Oct 24: Guatemala – Contemporary Developments & Challenges
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Guatemala group
Class discussion of Guatemalan currents events based on LAWR
GUATEMALA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

Fri, Oct 26: Peripheral Countries: Argentina – Politics in Historical Context
Mon, Oct 29:  Argentina – 20th Century Political Dynamics  

Wed, Oct 31:  Argentina – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Argentina group  
Class discussion of Argentine current events based on LAWR  
**ARGENTINA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

Fri, Nov 2:  A Unique Case: Brazil – Politics in Historical Context

Mon, Nov 5:  Brazil – 20th Century Political Dynamics  

Wed, Nov 7:  Brazil – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Brazil group  
Class discussion of Brazilian current events based on LAWR  
**BRAZIL SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

Fri, Nov 9:  A Revolutionary Case: Cuba – Politics in Historical Context

Mon, Nov 12:  Cuba – The 1959 Revolution and Socialist Consolidation  

Wed, Nov 14:  Cuba – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on alternative future political scenarios by student selected from Cuba group  
Class discussion of Cuban current events based on LAWR  
**CUBA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

Fri, Nov 16:  The Cases Reviewed and Compared: Most Likely Future Scenarios  
*Smith, Democracy in Latin America, 313-344  
Full democratic consolidation?  
Continued low-intensity or interrupted democracy?  
A new wave of authoritarianism and/or instability?  
Class discussion led by a representative selected from each country group, emphasizing comparisons of issues affecting assessments of democratic consolidation or, in the case of Cuba, the possibility of a turn to a democratic alternative
Palmer (DSP) 1-8
Students select issues in U.S. policy and meet in issue groups to begin discussions

Wed, Nov 21: Thanksgiving Break

Fri, Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break

Mon, Nov 26:  Historical Overview of U.S.-L.A. Relations: 1823-1933

DSP, 9-15
*Vanden & Prevost, 285-295

Fri, Nov 30:  U.S.-L.A. Relations during the G.H.W. Bush & Clinton Years
DSP, 16-95
*Vanden & Prevost, 295-298

Mon, Dec 3:  U.S.-L.A. Relations under G.W. Bush & Obama
*Vanden & Prevost, 298-302


Fri, Dec 7:  Issues in U.S.-L.A. Relations, I: Student Presentations
A representative selected by each issue group comments on the key points of the group’s discussions

Mon, Dec 10:  Issues in U.S.-L.A. Relations, II: Student Presentations
Issue group representative comments, continued

Wed, Dec 12:  Conclusions: What Have We Learned about Latin American Politics and U.S.-Latin American Relations?

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 12:30 pm