

LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS, POLS 322

Prof. Fred Shepherd, Fall 2006

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00, DBH 111; Phone: ext. 2119; Email fmshephe@samford.edu

This course will focus on politics in the region which includes South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. It will begin by focusing on indigenous Americans, and their dispossession by people of European ancestry. It will then examine the process through which nation-states emerged in Latin America. These more historical sections will be followed by a focus on two more current concerns: the rise of a transnational indigenous rights movement in Latin America; and the impact, and legacy, of U.S. policy in the region. Throughout these sections the course will also raise larger themes which are essential to understanding Latin America, including gender, religion, political structures and culture, economics, and revolution. The course will finish with a series of case studies: Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Brazil, Chile Venezuela and Colombia. A central goal of the course will be to have students apply the more general theoretical lessons of earlier sections to these cases.

ASSIGNMENTS

Each assigned reading will be accompanied by a reading quiz. Students will be assigned three papers during the semester; I will provide paper topics, and they will focus on issues raised in class. Toward the end of the semester, students will be expected to craft a literature review: students will first hand in a list of articles and a chosen theme, then, after feedback from me, a completed literature review. There will also be a comprehensive final examination. Finally, each student will receive a class participation grade, reflecting his/her in-class contribution.

Group work will be an important part of this class. I will create five groups at the outset of the course. These groups will become the basis for three separate kinds of activities. First, groups will take quizzes together—they will take the same quizzes that individuals take after the individual quizzes have been handed in. Second, groups will work together on the scheduled “News Days.” Each group will present breaking news stories on previously assigned topics and regions. Third, they will serve as the basis for less formal class activities. I am aware of both the promise and pitfalls of group work. During the semester, I will give students three separate opportunities to evaluate and rate the work of their fellow group members. These ratings will then negatively or positively affect each student’s group grade.

I will not fail any student solely for attendance-related reasons. Yet, this course, in order to succeed, will depend on in-class participation by every student. Class participation grades will suffer as absences accumulate; after three absences, students will lose 1% of their grade with each additional absence. Peer evaluation ratings will also suffer with repeated absences. Please consult the student handbook in regard to issues of academic honesty and plagiarism.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Individual Grades:		Group Grades:	
27 Individual Quizzes, 0.5% each	13.5%	27 Group Quizzes, 0.5% each	13.5%
3 Papers, 12% each	36%	In-Class Performance	8%
Final Examination	12%	(Affected by Peer Ratings)	
Literature Review List and Theme	3%		
Literature Review	7%		
Class Participation	7%		

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their requests

by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall, or call 726-4078 or 726-2105. I will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

BOOKS

Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost, Politics of Latin America: The Power Game, 2006

Ronald Wright, Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes, 2005

Miguel Angel Centeno, Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America, 2002

Alison Brysk, From Tribal Village to Global Village, 1998

Greg Grandin, Empire's Workshop, 2006

I also require that students keep up with world affairs by reading the New York Times (free in dorms), and I will also expect students to take advantage of information available over the web.

COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks 1 and 2: Introduction and Indigenous Latin America

28 August: Introduction

30 August: Pre-Colombian Civilizations

Wright, pp 3-83

1 September: Stolen Continents

Wright, pp 143-199

4 September: News Day

6 September: Cultural Rebirth?

Wright, pp 241-290, Vanden and Prevost, pp 81-103

8 September: No Class, Independent Research

Paper Due 8 September

Week 3: Themes: History and Politics

11 September: Introduction

Vanden and Prevost, pp x-xix, 1-17

13 September: Historical Background

Vanden and Prevost, pp 18-80

15 September: Political Culture and Institutions

Vanden and Prevost, pp 175-235

Weeks 4-5: War and the Nation-State in Latin America

18 September: Introduction

Centeno, pp 1-32

20 September: War in Latin America

Centeno, pp 33-100

22 September: No Class, Independent Research

25 September: War and State in Latin America

Centeno, pp 101-178, 209-215 (skim 178-209)

27 September: War and Nation in Latin America

Centeno, pp 217-280

29 September: No Class, Independent Research

Paper Due 29 September

Week 6: Themes: Society, Economics and Revolution

2 October: Gender and Religion

Vanden and Prevost, pp 104-144

4 October: News Day

6 October: Political Economy and Revolution
Vanden and Prevost, pp 145-174, 237-263

Weeks 7-9: Indigenous Rights and Transnational Movements

9 October: Introduction

Brysk, pp ix-xvi, 1-28

11 October: Tribal Village and Global Village

Brysk, pp 29-105

13 October: News Day

18 October: States and Markets

Brysk, pp 106-187

20 October: No Class, Independent Research

23 October: Indigenous Americans and Global Civil Society

Brysk, pp 188-245

25 October: Conclusions

Brysk: 246-304

27 October: No Class, Independent Research

Weeks 10-11: U.S. Policy and its Impact

30 October: Latin America in Context

Grandin, pp 1-86

1 November: New Imperialism in Latin America

Grandin, pp 87-158

3 November: No Class, Independent Research

6 November: Latin America and the Middle East

Grandin, pp 159-237

8 November: News Day

Paper Due 8 November

Weeks 11-15: Latin American Nations in Context

10 November: Mexico

Nora Hamilton, pp 296-337

13 November: Guatemala

Susanne Jonas, pp 264-295

15 November: Comparing Mexico and Guatemala

17 November: Brazil

Wilber Albert Chaffee, pp 368-395

20 November: Chile

Eduardo Silva, pp 432-467

27 November: Comparing Chile and Brazil

29 November: Cuba

Gary Prevost, pp 336-367

1 December: No Class, Independent Research

Literature Review Theme and List Due 1 December

4 December: Venezuela

Daniel Hellinger, pp 468-495

6 December: Colombia

John Dinges, pp 496-525

8 December: Comparing Colombia and Venezuela, Conclusions

Literature Review Due at Final

Final Examination: 10:30 Wednesday 13 December