Political Science 322

The Political Economy of Latin America

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Course Description

The recent history of Latin America has been consumed by one dominating paradox: the region is more developed economically, technologically, and more democratic now than ever; yet Latin American society is today more unequal and the region's economic crises are deeper than they have ever been in the past. This research seminar is designed to train students in the investigation of issues emerging from this persistent paradox in the political economy of Latin America.

The seminar begins with a thorough review of the developmentalist period of Latin America and its crisis during the 1980s and 1990s. Students will assess the political, economic, and social impact of the crisis while they review competing theories in the literature to explain the causes. In the second section, students will examine in greater depth a number of critical issues in the study of Latin American political economy in recent years: globalization and regionalization of trade and production, decentralization and state reform, and poverty alleviation. During the final section of the course, students will perform oral presentations of their research.

Students who complete this course successfully are encouraged to pursue further study of Latin America in independent studies and comps projects. This course will also serve to prepare students for a regional concentration in Latin American politics in any graduate school work they wish to pursue in the future.

What is Expected of Students

Students will be expected to read, think, criticize, and form arguments. That means that students must keep up in their reading assignments and attend class regularly. Since the research seminar is organized around structured discussions, all students must be fully prepared at all times to discuss the readings and concepts in the course. The best students will be critical but balanced in their assessments, and will develop coherent arguments that they can defend in their writing and their in-class discussion.

Reading Materials

The three required books for this course have been ordered and are presently on sale at the college bookstore. All are paperbacks. The texts are:


In addition to these texts, this course requires your study of a number of other readings from diverse sources. In order to facilitate your access to these materials, I have placed multiple copies on closed reserve at the library. Also, in order to reduce your costs, I have placed the required books on closed reserve. Students are advised to make readable copies of these materials early during the course.
Some students may not be as familiar with Latin American political or economic history or theory as others might be in this seminar. To assist these students, I have placed four important reference works on reserve at the library. All students are free to consult these works if they need a primer on certain concepts or historical events and figures. The recommended works are:


In addition to the readings, this course requires your use of select audio and video materials. These items include assorted National Public Radio reports on audio tapes, videos in the Annenberg/CPB "Americas" Collection, and a couple of feature-length films. Brief portions of these multimedia items will be presented during class as a part of the seminar discussions, but you will be required to view and listen to some of these materials in their entirety during off-class hours.

I will occasionally distribute handouts and clippings from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist*, the *Miami Herald*, the Minneapolis/St. Paul newspapers, and the internet at the beginning of class. Students are also invited to check out links to course relevant web pages on the professor’s web page. Students will be invited to reference these resources during the course.

**Grading**

As a true research seminar the assessment of students’ performance will focus on the composition and completion of a 20-25 page research paper due at the end of the course. The first draft of this paper will be graded. Additionally, students will complete an oral comprehensive exam. Most important, each student will be called upon during the course of the semester to present on the readings in structured critiques that will initiate all seminar discussions on the literature. The grade breakdown follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Comprehensive Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Draft</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Research Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**The Oral Exam**

The oral exam will consist of a 30-minute meeting with me during the exam week. During the exam, I will ask the student questions based on the readings and the seminar discussions to that point. Students will be signed up
for the oral exams no later than one week before the exams are held. A handout and a discussion in class regarding the oral exam requirement will outline additional aspects of this assignment.

The oral exam has been designed to not only test the students’ knowledge of the literature, but also their ability to make clear oral arguments during an interview-like process. Students should study comprehensively for the oral exam and practice their interview skills in small groups. If you cannot attend the oral exam, you must notify me no later than two days before your exam is scheduled.

The Seminar Paper

The culmination of student work in this seminar will be the composition of a seminar paper of 20-25 pages of text (typed, double-spaced, 12cpi, one-inch margins, paginated) and a research bibliography of a minimum of three pages. The composition of the seminar paper will be broken down into the following steps:

1. By Sept. 21, students will have decided upon a research topic in consultation with me.
2. By Oct. 1, students will hand in a copy of a research bibliography of no less than 3 pages. A handout will define the proper citation and reference format for the paper.
3. By Oct. 29, students will hand in a first draft of the argumentative section of their paper.
4. On Nov. 1, 6, 8, or 13, each student will orally present their research for no less than 15 minutes in the research seminar. All colleagues will offer their input. If possible, we will schedule a couple of early presentations to free up the schedule at the end of the course.
5. On Nov. 19, the final draft of the seminar paper will be due.

Consultation with me during each of these steps is crucial. We will also discuss the format and direction of paper topics and issues as part of the normal discussion of the research seminar. One of the most important lessons of the seminar is that good research depends upon the input and support of colleagues. Each student will be expected to contribute their share to this effort.

Class Participation

As a research seminar, the in-class discussions play a pivotal role in this class. Prior to each meeting, a selected number of students will be assigned the task of preparing "talking points" on the readings. These talking points should form the basis for both descriptive and critical points about the readings. Each student will present these arguments to lead off general discussion in the seminar. Each student will present at least twice.

Typically, I will begin each class session by offering a general overview of the issues to be discussed. I will also present you with a set of critical questions to structure discussion. For certain sessions, I will lead off with a video or audio presentation. After the overview portion, the seminar will proceed to student presentations, and then general discussion. I will conclude each class session with a brief review of the authors and readings for the next meeting. The seminar will include a brief break of about 5-10 minutes in the middle of each class session. Whenever feasible, refreshments will be served.

The Grading Scale

I will be using the following grading scale in this course:

98-100 A+
94-97 A
91-93 A-
88-90 B+
83-87 B
79-82 B-
Academic Misconduct

Given the fact that academe relies upon the ethical conduct of scholars, students are held to the same standards in their own work. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see Carleton College’s Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers and the section on "academic honesty" in Academic Regulations and Procedures, 2001-02. Both are available in Laird 140.

Special Needs

Students requiring access to learning tools/special schedules approved by Student Support Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

NOTE: Readings must be completed for the dates assigned below.

SECTION I

LIBERALISM, DEVELOPMENTALISM, AND NEOLIBERALISM

Introduction (Sept. 11, Tuesday)

Liberalism, the Crisis of the 1930s, and Structuralism (Sept. 13, Thursday)


Carlos F. Diaz Alejandro, "Latin America in the 1930s," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.


Anne O. Krueger, "Government Failures in Development," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.

Developmentalism and Its Critics (Sept. 18, Tuesday)

Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege, "Import Substitution Industrialization," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.


James Mahon, "Was Latin America Too Rich to Prosper? Structural and Political Obstacles to Export-Led Industrial Growth," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.

Jeffrey D. Sachs, "External Debt and Macroeconomic Performance in Latin America and East Asia," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.

Neoliberalism and Its Critics (Sept. 20, Thursday)

Rudiger Dornbusch, "The Case for Trade Liberalization in Developing Countries," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.


The Politics of Implementing Neoliberal Reform (Sept. 25, Tuesday)


SECTION II

CRITICAL ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Issue 1: Inequality

Addressing Poverty in the Neoliberal Era (Sept. 27, Thursday)


Interamerican Development Bank, "Facing Up to Inequality in Latin America," in Frieden, Pastor, and Tomz, eds.


The Failures of the State and Social Reform (October 2, Tuesday)


Film: "Central Station" (Brazil) (Showing time and place TBA).

Popular Responses to Neoliberalism Without Equity (October 4, Thursday)
Choose two of the following four:


Debate #1

Issue 2: Globalization and Regionalization of Trade and Production

The Structure of Regionalization (October 9, Tuesday)


NO CLASS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11.

A Case Study of The U.S.-Mexico Border (October 16, Tuesday)


Video: "The Border" and "Nightline: The New Frontier."

Prospects for the FTAA (October 18, Thursday)


Handout: Economist articles.

Debate #2
Issue #3: Decentralization and State Reform

The Politics of Decentralization (October 23, Tuesday)


Grindle, chs. 1-2.

Policy Issues and Cases (October 25, Thursday)


Grindle, chs. 3-4.

Is Decentralization Good for Democracy and Development? (October 30, Tuesday)

Grindle, chs. 5-6 & 9.

ORAL EXAM: Nov. 5 - 9.

SECTION III

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Oral Research Presentations:

November 1, Thursday; 6, Tuesday; 8, Thursday, and 13, Tuesday.

Final Draft of Seminar Paper Due November 19.