

Political Science 233
POLITICS OF THE AMERICAS
Fall 2009

Dr. Dag Mossige

Lecture: Cunningham Theatre Center (Barber Theatre) Room 109, MWF 1030-1120 am

Office: Chambers 3011

Office hours: MWF: 2-3 pm, TR 1-2

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It is almost a miracle that modern teaching methods have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for what this delicate little plant needs more than anything, besides stimulation, is freedom.

-Albert Einstein

Scope and Goals of this Course: This course offers a rather sweeping introduction to the amazingly diverse region we refer to as Latin America. The geographical focus will be on states that fall into the “Iberian tradition,” and main emphasis will be given to events in the latter half of the twentieth century up until the present. Latin America today has evolved from a history of turbulent political institutions, revolutions, and military dictatorships, and special attention will be given to the process of democratization that took place in the past decades. While more attention will be given to a select group of countries – above all Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Cuba – this is not a “country-studies” course. Rather, we will use certain countries as examples to illustrate common themes and developments throughout the region, as we seek to identify the major political processes of the past decades. The course also aims at presenting some of the major findings in political science regarding the stability and quality of current democracy in Latin America, as well as the major debates within recent works in political science. Core political concepts to be examined include: Populism, Dependency Theory, Import-substituting industrialization, Revolution, Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism, Democracy and Democratization, Presidentialism, Neoliberalism, “Delegative” or “Illiberal” Democracies, the recent “Pink” or “Left Wave,” and much more. While some attention will be given to Latin America’s often tumultuous relationship with the United States, our focus will primarily lie with the internal processes, however interconnected, of the region.

Required Texts: You are responsible for keeping up with the assigned readings by the time we discuss them in class, and will be held responsible for them on your exams. Some, particularly the more theoretically oriented readings, may demand more cognitive attention than those more on the empirical or descriptive side. The following required books are available at Davidson book store:

Harry Vanden & Gary Prevost, *Politics of Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009

Stephen Schlesinger & Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005 [1982]

John Dinges, *The Condor Years*. New York: The New Press, 2004

Eduardo Galeano, *The Open Veins of Latin America*. New York Monthly Review Press, 1997 [1973]

Forrest Hylton & Sinclair Thomson, *Revolutionary Horizons*. London: Verso, 2007.

All other readings will be made available in pdf format on Blackboard.

As will become clear, we will address a very broad range of topics in this survey course; the aim is for students to seek out on their own their particular topics of interests, whether covered in class or not. You are highly welcome – and encouraged – to discuss further and supplemental readings with me.

Current Events: Students are expected to pay attention to current events in Latin American politics, and we may well stray off the topic in class to touch upon relevant political developments in “real life.” You are very much encouraged to explore your own news sources; some suggestions in English include:

The New York Times, Americas Section: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/americas/>

The Economist, Americas Section: <http://www.economist.com/World/americas/index.cfm>

The Christian Science Monitor: <http://www.csmonitor.com/world/americas.html>

The Miami Herald, Americas Section: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/americas/>

Yahoo News – Latin America news: <http://news.yahoo.com/world/latin-america>

Relevant “think-tanks” or organizations working on Latin America (roughly from left to right):

North American Congress on Latin America: <https://nacla.org/>

Council on Hemispheric Affairs/ Washington Report on the Hemisphere: <http://www.coha.org/>

The Washington Office on Latin America: <http://www.wola.org/>

Inter-American Dialogue: <http://www.thedialogue.org/>

Center for Strategic and International Studies: <http://csis.org/region/americas>

Cato Institute: http://www.cato.org/subtopic_display_new.php?topic_id=45&ra_id=13

Latin American Information Center (LANIC): <http://lanic.utexas.edu/>

CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Some major journals specializing on Latin America: Latin American Research Review; Latin American Politics and Society; Journal of Latin American Studies; Latin American Perspectives; Bulletin of Latin American Studies; The Americas.

“After-Hours”: Some movies can convey themes and processes better than any lecture, and we will try to watch certain movies over the course of the semester. As this will take place after normal scheduled Davidson hours, this activity will not be considered compulsory. We will seek to work out a common schedule for these movies; those students unable to attend can borrow copies of the movies from me.

Grading Procedures: There will be two reviews, one final paper, and one final exam for this class. General guidelines for the paper topic will be distributed separately in September; all paper proposals must be discussed with me at least one month before the paper is due.

Review 1: 15 percent (Sept. 25)

Review 2: 15 percent (Oct. 30)

Final Paper: 30 percent (Dec. 4)

Final exam: 30 percent

Attendance and participation: 10 percent.

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is mandatory, although up to three absences may be allowed with no penalty for your attendance grade. Further absences may result in an F in this part of the grade.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities. If you are a student with a disability documented by Davidson College who might need accommodations, please 1) Register with the Dean of Students Office, and 2) Identify yourself to me within the first week or two of class. All such discussions will be fully confidential unless you otherwise stipulate.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments: Please note that this syllabus is not carved in stone, and may well be changed. It is the student's responsibility to check for any updated syllabi, which will be posted on Blackboard, although major changes will be noted in class.

Week 1 (Aug. 24- 28): Introduction: The Colonial Legacy

The Power Game, chapters 1 and 2

Start reading *Open Veins of Latin America*. Focus on Introduction, chapters 1 and 2

Week 2 (Aug. 31- Sept. 4) The Colonial Legacy 2: "Open Veins" – or Idiocy?

Finish reading *Open Veins of Latin America*. Focus on chapters 3 and 5

Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza et al (2000), excerpts from *Guide to the Perfect Latin American Idiot*, pp. xiii-xvii, 1-19, 21-36, 175-181 ([Blackboard](#))

The Power Game, chapter 3

Week 3 (Sept. 7-11): Looking Inward: Populism

Michael Conniff (1999), "Introduction," pp. 1-21 ([Blackboard](#))

Joel Horowitz (1999), "Populism and its Legacies in Argentina," pp. 22-42 ([Blackboard](#))

Marysa Navarro (1982), "Evita's Charismatic Leadership," pp. 47-66 ([Blackboard](#))

Alan Knight (1998), "Populism and Neo-Populism in Latin America," pp. 223-248 ([Blackboard](#))

Kenneth Roberts (2007), "Latin America's Populist Revival," pp. 3-15 ([Blackboard](#))

Week 4 (Sept. 14-18) The Political Economy of the Populist Regimes

Robert Alexander (1995[1967]), "The Import Substitution Strategy," pp. 149-158 ([Blackboard](#))

The Power Game, chapter 6

Peter Smith (1998), "The Rise and Fall of the Developmental State in Latin America," pp. 51-73 ([Blackboard](#))

Start reading *Bitter Fruit*

Week 5 (Sept 21-25) Failure of Reform: Golpe de Estado in Guatemala

Finish reading *Bitter Fruit*

The Power Game, chapter 11

→ [Sept. 25: Review 1](#)

Week 6 (Sept. 28-Oct. 2) Revolution and Guerrilla Warfare

The Power Game, chapters 10 and 13

Ernest Guevara (1967), "Message to the Tricontinental" ([Blackboard](#))

Week 7 (Oct. 5-9) The "Bureaucratic Authoritarian" Regimes

Paul Lewis (2006), "Counterrevolutionaries," pp. 209-229 ([Blackboard](#))

David Collier (1979) "Overview of the Bureaucratic Authoritarian Model," pp. 19-32 ([Blackboard](#))

The Power Game, chapters 8, 15 and 16

Week 8 (Oct. 14-16) From Revolution to Reaction: Death Squads and Desaparecidos

Read *The Condor Years*, by Dinges (you may focus on the parts that interests you the most)

Week 9 (Oct. 19-23) Democratization

Huntington (1991), "Democracy's Third Wave," pp. 12-34 ([Blackboard](#))

Paul Drake (1997), "The International Causes of Democratization," pp. 70-91 ([Blackboard](#))

Brian Loveman (1998), "When You Wish Upon the Stars," pp. 115-145 ([Blackboard](#))

Week 10 (Oct. 26-30) Political Institutions

Juan Linz (1990), "The Perils of Presidentialism," pp. 1-19 ([Blackboard](#))

Mathew Soberg Shugart & Scott Mainwaring (1997), "Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America," pp. 12-54 ([Blackboard](#))

Arturo Valenzuela (2004), "Latin American Presidencies Interrupted," pp. 5-19 ([Blackboard](#))

→ [Oct. 30: Review 2](#)

Week 11 (Nov. 2-6) The Nature of the New Democratic Regimes

Guillermo O'Donnell (1994), "Delegative Democracy," pp. 55-69 ([Blackboard](#))

Philippe Schmitter & Terry Lynn Karl (1991), "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," pp. pp. 75-88 ([Blackboard](#))

Evelyn Huber et al (1997), "The Paradoxes of Contemporary Democracy," pp. 323-342 ([Blackboard](#))

John Williamson (1990), "What Washington Means by Policy Reform," pp. 7-20 ([Blackboard](#))

Adam Przeworski (1992), "The Neoliberal Fallacy," pp. 46-59" ([Blackboard](#))

Week 12 (Nov. 9-13) The "Pink Wave": Backlash Against Neoliberalism

Jorge Castañeda (2006), "Latin America's Left Turn," pp. 28-43 ([Blackboard](#))

Hector Schamis (2006), "Populism, Socialism, and Democratic Institutions," pp. 20-34 ([Blackboard](#))

Matthew Cleary (2006), "Explaining the Left's Resurgence," pp. 35-49 ([Blackboard](#))

Mitchell Seligson (2006), "The Rise of Populism and the Left," pp. 81-95 ([Blackboard](#))

Week 13 (Nov. 16-Nov. 20) The "Pink Wave," Liberal Democracy, and a Look at Mexico

Denise Dresser (2008), "Mexico: Dysfunctional Democracy," pp. 242-263 ([Blackboard](#))

Andreas Schedler (2007), "The Mobilization of Distrust," pp. 88-102 ([Blackboard](#))

Peter Smith & Melissa Ziegler (2008), "Liberal and Illiberal Democracy in Latin America," pp. 31-57 ([Blackboard](#))

Week 14 (Nov. 23-24) 21st Century Revolution?

The Power Game, Chapter 20

Revolutionary Horizons. Focus on pages 1-34, and 73-154.

Week 15 (Nov. 30 -Dec. 4) A Look at Venezuela: Democracy or Autocracy?

Required reading: *The Power Game*, chapter 17

Optional readings (depending on your interest in Venezuela vs. how you are doing on your paper!):

David Myers (2008), "Delegative Democracy or Electoral Autocracy?" pp. 285-320 ([Blackboard](#))

Francisco Rodriguez (2008), "The Unfulfilled Promises of Hugo Chávez," pp. 49-62 ([Blackboard](#))

Julia Buxton (2005), "Venezuela's Contemporary Political Crisis in Historical Context," pp. 328-347 ([Blackboard](#))

→ [Paper due Dec. 4](#)

Week 16 (Dec. 7-9) Open Week

Depending on the course progression, this period will either be used to wrap-up loose themes, or as extra studying time for your final exam. No additional readings are required for this week.

Week 17-18 (Dec. 11-17) Final exams