

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 146-01: Latin American Politics, Fall 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Sergio Béjar-López
Office Location:	Clark 402C
Email:	Sergio.Bejar@sjsu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office Hours:	TTR 1:30-2:45 pm, and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	TTR 12:00-1:15 PM
Classroom:	HGH 116

Course Description

Latin American nations are endowed with enormous natural wealth. Yet, at the same time, they suffer from persistent poverty, income inequality, and low levels of political development. They have endured colonialism, authoritarianism, and a variety of projects for economic development. Events in the region continue to raise questions about the effect of political institutions like democracy, presidentialism, and political parties; the role of the state in economic development; and how we think about democracy and its benefits.

This class is an introduction to the politics of Latin America. It is framed around the region's struggle for political order and economic development. Part One is a historic overview of Colonial political and economic institutions, the nineteenth-century liberal order, and the political mobilization of disenfranchised sectors that accompanied industrialization efforts during the twentieth century. Part Two analyzes the region's experience with autocracy and democracy, and the challenges that democratic governments face in the region. Part Three adopts an institutional view to further our knowledge of how Latin American democratic systems have worked in the recent past, starting from an analysis of the varied ways in which democratic regimes were eventually rebuilt. We will then look into the main features of presidential regimes, electoral laws, and party systems throughout the region in order to account for differences in the inner workings of Latin American democracies.

No survey of Latin America can claim to cover the ample diversity of historical experiences and contemporary political systems that coexist throughout the region. In order to impose some structure on the vast amount of information potentially available to the student of Latin American politics, we will focus mainly on the political development of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. However, we will devote time to the analysis of circumscribed historical episodes in other countries. These episodes shed broader light upon political phenomena of paramount

importance throughout the region, such as revolution, democratic breakdown, the rise of neoliberalism and the recent re-appearance of a populist left. Hence, our survey will touch upon the 1973 military coup in Chile, the success of revolutionary movements in Cuba and Nicaragua, the turmoil of widespread guerrilla activity in Colombia and Peru, and the recent re-appearance of a populist left in Venezuela and other countries.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

- 1) Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- 2) Application: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- 3) Disciplinary methods: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.
- 4) Communication Skills: Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
- 5) Citizenship: Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

GE Learning Outcomes

- 1) Survey of the political systems of Latin American countries.
- 2) Place Latin American countries in a global perspective.
- 3) Understand major themes in Latin American politics such as civil-military relations, democratization, economic development, social movements, and foreign relations both within and outside Latin America.

Course Workload Expectations: Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments,

and so on. Because this is a **four-unit course**, you can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week, in addition to time spent in class, on scheduled tutorials, assignments, or activities. This additional unit will allow for more in-depth investigation and engagement with course topics. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Policy on Technology in the Classroom

1. This classroom is a tech-free zone. Laptops are not permitted unless you have an accommodation from AEC. If you want to refer to assigned readings during class discussions, bring hard copies of articles to class or notes that you've taken on assigned readings.
2. Students should not use text or use cell phones in class. Violations of this rule will result in a deduction in your participation grade for each observed incident.

Reading Material

The book listed below is required and may be purchased from the campus bookstore.

- (1) Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- (2) *The Massacre at El Mozote (1994)* by Mark Danner

In addition students are expected to read several journal articles listed below, nearly all of which are available through JSTOR and which, when possible, may be posted as PDFs on CANVAS. Students are expected to complete the required readings for each topic by the date of that lecture and be prepared to discuss and ask questions about them.

During the course of the class, students are strongly encouraged to read the online version of the *Latin American Weekly Reports* as a way to supplement the readings with knowledge of current events in the region.

Course Requirements

Grades in the course will be based on the following items:

- **Two midterm exams (20% each).** The two closed-book, in-class midterm exams will take place on **October 5 and November 2**. They will cover material from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam will consist of a series of short identification questions, followed by one essay question. **No make-up exams** will be given, please plan accordingly.

- **Final exam (35%)**

The final exam will be cumulative. It will take place on **December 13**. The format of the final exam will be discussed in class. No exceptions.

- **Country Research Paper (15%)**

Each student will each write a three-to-four page research paper on a Latin American country. The research paper assignments will be explained more thoroughly in a separate handout. This will include guidelines on how to write the papers, with specific questions to answer about the countries and hints on sources of information. This assignment is due on **November 16**.

- **Participation (10%).**

Your participation in class discussions is expected. Students are required to read all of the assigned readings and be prepared to speak about the main arguments/points in the readings. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your participation in class discussions and demonstrated familiarity with the readings. You should feel free to express your opinions and make comments during class discussions, but students who score highly in this realm are able to effectively reference information presented in the readings. If you come to class every day but never participate in class discussions, you will receive a “C” for your participation grade.

Political Science Departmental Writing Policy

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm. For assistance with writing, please see me or visit the SJSU Writing Center located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

Policy on Submitting Written Work in this Course

I expect my students to submit written work that fits the grammatical, stylistic and citation expectations for college-level work in English. All written assignments in this course are therefore graded in two ways: both in terms of content (information in terms of logic, quality of evidence, etc.) and in terms of writing. If you are at all uncomfortable with writing at the college level, you need to take steps to rectify this.

Late Paper Policy

Hard copies of all papers are to be turned in to me personally on the announced due date during the first 10 minutes of class. Any paper turned in after this period expires will be considered one day late. I will deduct one letter grade for each day that the paper is late. **No exceptions.**

Grading and Written Work Policies

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96.9%; A- = 90-92.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%; C = 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%
F = 59.99% or lower

University Policies

Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs **maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.**”

You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP’s Syllabus information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus may be subject to change with fair notice by the instructor, the Department of Political Science or San Jose State University.

Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 Aug. 29 and 31

Panorama of Latin American • pp. xiv-18 (VP)

1. POLITICAL INSTABILITY, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Week 2 Sept. 5 and 7

(1) Colonial Legacy • pp. 18-53, 82-113 (VP)

Week 3 Sept. 12 and 14

(1) Dependency Theory • Valenzuela and Valenzuela (CANVAS)

(2) Modernization Theory • pp. 164-167 (VP)

Week 4 Sept. 19 and 21

(4) U.S. Intervention • pp. 286-311 (VP)

Film: Missing

Week 5 Sept. 26 and 28

Example: The Case of El Salvador • pp. 261-266 (VP)

• pp. 3-162 (Massacre)

Film: Romero

Week 6 Oct. 3 and 5

Review and Exam.

Exam is October 5 in class

2. ISSUES IN DEMOCRATIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Week 7 Oct. 10 and 12

Democracy and Democratization • Huntington (CANVAS)

(1) Religion • pp. 135-152 (VP)

• “Lighting on new faiths...” in Economist (CANVAS)

Week 8 Oct. 17 and 19

(1) Market Liberalization • pp. 172-186 (VP)

• “Adios to Poverty ...” in Economist (CANVAS)

Week 9 Oct. 24 and 26

(1) The Military Legacy • “Slaking a thirst for justice” in Economist (CANVAS)

(2) “Delegative” Democracy • O’Donnell (CANVAS)

Week 10 Oct. 31 and Nov. 2

Review and Exam.

Exam is November 2 in class

3: HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND AND INTERPRET THE NEW LATIN AMERICAN LEFT?

Week 11 Nov. 7 and 9

Understanding Latin American Political Institutions • pp. 210-244 (VP)

Populism • “The Return of Populism” in Economist (RES)

Week 12 Nov. 14 and 16

The Left Turn • TBD

Research Paper Due November 16

Week 13 Nov. 21 and 23

Thanksgiving Week. No readings.

Week 14 Nov. 27 and 29

The Face of the New Left: • pp. 469-495 (VP)

Week 15 Dec. 5 and 7

Competing Perspectives on the December 6 is in-class debate.

FINAL EXAM

Wednesday, December 13 (9:45 am – 12:00 pm)