Political Science 777
Latin American Politics
Instructor: Sonia E. Alvarez
Office: Thompson 424
Office hours: Mon. 1:30-3:30pm and by appt.
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Course Description:
Interdisciplinary analysis of core issues and contemporary problems in Latin American politics. Special attention to governance, governability and governmentality, the politics of inequality, cultural politics and cultures of politics, social movements, and class, race, gender, sexuality, and other vectors of power and identity.

Theme for Fall 2015: Social Movements in Latin America’s Left Turn: Conflict and Collaboration. We will develop an historical, comparative, and transnational approach to assessing the manifold tensions and paradoxes confronting the region’s social movements in their relationship to the post-1998 Left and Center-Left governments they helped bring to power. In Parts I and II of the class, we will frame our analyses historically, examining Left-social movement relations before, during, and after/beyond neoliberalism. In Part III, we will delve more deeply into particular case studies, developing comparative analyses of how today’s “post-neoliberal” or “neodevelopmentalist” Progressive/Left/Center-Left parties and governments have dealt with movement mobilizations, popular participation, socio-economic and ethno-racial inclusion, socio-environmental struggles, and gender and sexual politics.

Course Requirements: Class participation, which will count for 60 percent of the grade for this course, will be assessed on the basis of: 1) participation in seminar discussions; 2) online critical responses to seminar readings for 8 of our 11 class meetings (graded on Moodle simply as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory); and, 3) organization and facilitation of seminar discussion, working with one or more partners, at least twice during the semester (also graded S or US).

Each week, self-selected facilitation teams of 2-4 students will prepare discussion questions and brief annotations/synopses of all required readings. These should be posted to Moodle no later than 6pm on Monday evening before our Tuesday class. Facilitators also will prepare brief oral presentations—no longer than 10 minutes each—that pull together the readings into some kind of critical framework, relate them to previous weeks’ readings, and raise questions for class discussion. Teams will meet with one another during the week preceding seminar to plan their collaborative presentations and will co-facilitate discussion with the instructor during class. Discussion techniques may include small group breakouts, role-plays, games, or debates or other creative formats, but at least part of the seminar time should be spent in whole group discussion.

The final paper will count for the remaining 40 percent of the grade and will be graded on a conventional A-F scale. It should be no longer than 8000 words and may take one of the following forms: A) a research paper, drawing on course materials and original research; B) a research proposal or dissertation prospectus; C) a “rehearsal” of imagined comprehensive exam questions (two or more); D) a paper that is a draft comp for either the inter/intra-disciplinary field or contemporary theory; or E) a dissertation chapter on a relevant topic. Due dates for
periodic installments on the writing requirement are posted in CAPS in the Course Outline below.

**Course Materials:** Students are expected to complete the required readings for each class session by the date specified in the Course Outline. Chapter- or article-length required readings will be available on Moodle. These are indicated with an (M) in the Course Outline below. The following books are available for purchase through the Amazon UMass Agreement (or your preferred virtual or real book purchasing venue) and are also on 2-hour reserve at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

**Required Books:**


Course Outline

September 8—Introductory Overview

Recommended:

- Castañeda, Jorge G. 2006. Latin America’s Left Turn. Foreign Affairs 85, 3: 28-43. (M)*
- Cameron, Maxwell. 2009. Latin America’s Left Turn: Beyond Good and Bad. Third World Quarterly 30, 2: 331-348. (M)

*Try to glance through these essays, if you get a chance, before our first session (no worries if your don’t); readings in this section can serve as general references throughout the semester.

Part I—Before Neoliberalism: Politics, Cultures, Histories and/of the Left and Social Movements in Latin America

September 15—(Re)Reading Latin American Political History from the Left

Required:


September 22—Lessons from Revolutions Past, Cuba on My Mind…

Required:

September 29—Revolution or Democracy? Redirecting and Refashioning “the Struggle”
Required:

Part II—Neoliberalism and Its Others: Recombinant Movements, Resurgent Lefts

October 6—Neoliberalism Interrupted
Required:

October 13—NO CLASS, TUESDAY “BECOMES” A MONDAY

October 20—Challenging Neoliberalism Head On

RESEARCH TOPIC STATEMENT DUE (250-400 words), due on Moodle by noon, presented and discussed in class

Part III—Beyond Neoliberalism? Radicalized Movements, the Pink Tide, its Currents and Receding Tides

October 27—The Original “Party of Social Movements”: Roots, Dynamics and (Re)Conversions of the Workers’ Party of Brazil
Required:
November 3—Bolivarianismo: Smashing the (Neoliberal) Consensus, Crafting 21st Century Socialism?

Required:

November 10—Bolivia and Ecuador: (Left Government) Politics against Nature and Indigenous Peoples?

Required:

NARRATIVE OUTLINE AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (3-5 pp), Please submit on Moodle by 6pm November 9

November 17—NO CLASS due to Professor’s research-related travel; make-up session scheduled for Friday, Dec. 5)

November 24— NO CLASS, READING WEEK

- DRAFT OUTLINES OR PARTIAL OR COMPLETE DRAFTS DUE ON MOODLE ON NOVEMBER 30, BY NOON; draft papers will be assigned to a peer, to be reviewed for substantive feedback by December 8, also to be posted on Moodle]

December 1—Strained Bedfellows: Feminisms, Queer Activisms, and the Left(s?)

*Guest speaker*: Professor Marco Aurelio Máximo Prado, Federal University of Minas Gerais, and Fulbright Chair in Brazilian Studies at the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies, UMass

Required:
• Olukonee, Lugnona. Forthcoming. “The Emergence of Queer Activism in Cuba.” Feminist Studies, special issue on “Queer Latin America.” (M)
• De la Dehesa, Rafael. 2010. Queering the Public Sphere in Mexico and Brazil: Sexual Rights Movements in Emerging Democracies. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (M selections tbd)
• Paredes, Julieta. 2015. Hilando Fino, translated by Margaret Cerullo and Antonia Carcelen. (to be posted on Moodle).

December 5—Comparative Perspectives on Afro-Latin America on/off the Left: Historicizing Enduring Tensions
Required:

December 8—The Indigenous Turn and Beyond? Lefts as/for/against Indian peoples
Guest speaker: Professor Angélica Bernal, Political Science, UMass-Amherst
Required:

**FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 15, BY NOON, ON MOODLE**