Political Science 340  
Latin American Politics  
Instructor: Professor Sonia E. Alvarez  
Class Time: TTh 4-5:15pm  
Classroom: Machmer W-27  
Office: Thompson 424  
Office hours: Mon. 1:30-3:30pm and by appt.  
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Course Description: This course asks what we can learn about politics and the political by considering a diverse range of historical and contemporary Latin American experiences and, in turn, what we can learn about Latin America if we focus on its politics. Special attention will be given to the interplay of culture and politics, shifting discourses and strategies of domination, and social movements and strategies of resistance among women, workers, indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, and other subaltern groups.

Topics for 2016 include: Poverty and Inequality: Comparative Perspectives on Nationalism, Gender, and the Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Argentina; The Politics of Race, Racism, and Ethnodevelopment in Brazil, Mexico, and the Andes; Revolution, Reform and Reaction: Comparative Insights from 20th and 21st Century Cuba, Chile, and Venezuela; State Terror and Struggles for Indigenous and Human Rights Today: Spotlight on Mexico; and, Beyond Neoliberalism? Social Movements, Latin America’s Left Turn, and Possible “U-Turn,” Reflections on Brazil.

Learning Objectives: 1) Acquire working knowledge of Latin American politics, history, and culture, which is essential for the effective exercise of citizenship in the Americas in the 21st Century; 2) Reconsider core concepts in the study of politics—such as democracy, populism, revolution, social justice, social movements, racial and gender equity—in the light of diverse contemporary and historical Latin American experiences; 3) Critically engage and productively dialogue with a range of empirical materials and theoretical perspectives that may extend beyond your customary political and cultural “comfort zones.”

Course Requirements: Five 200-word reading responses; five in-class group exercises; in-class midterm; and 5-8pp final analytical essay on topic related to course themes; mandatory class attendance (you may not miss more than four class sessions); and attendance at 2 of 3 special events. Grading: 50 percent for reading responses, in-class exercises, class participation, special events attendance, and group work; 25 percent on mid-term exam; and 25 percent on final essay.

House Rules: 1) Be respectful of all political perspectives/points of view represented in course readings and/or expressed by your peers; 2) Always strive to ground your opinions about politics in evidence/examples supplied by course materials; 3) Listen actively to your peers’ contributions to class discussion; and, 4) Please turn off your cell phones at the beginning of class and leave them off.

On Academic Honesty: You are expected to adhere to the university’s regulations regarding academic honesty, which you can find in the university’s Academic Regulations, page 6. Most
importantly, you are expected to refrain from plagiarism, which the AC defines as “knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting without citation, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or the research of another, including but not limited to commercial vendors who sell or distribute such materials.”

Disability Statement: The University of Massachusetts is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you are in need of accommodation for a documented disability, register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. It is your responsibility to initiate these services and to communicate with faculty ahead of time to manage accommodations in a timely manner. For more information, consult the Disability Services website at http://www.umass.edu/disability.

Course Materials: Students are expected to complete the required readings for each class session by the date specified in the Course Outline below. Many required readings are available on Moodle. These are indicated with an “M” in the Course Outline. The following books are available for purchase through the Amazon UMass agreement and are also on 2-hour reserve at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

Required Books:
Course Outline

Part I—Introduction

January 19— Why Study Latin American Politics? Course Overview

Part II—Poverty and Inequality: Comparative Perspectives on Nationalism, Gender, and the Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Argentina

January 21— Evita, ‘The Movie’: Imagining Peronism in Argentina
Films: clips from various filmic representations of Evita and Juan Perón
Required:

January 26 and 28— Evita, ‘The Lecture’: Comparative Perspectives on Peronism and Its Legacies
Required:

Assignment: Jan. 26, In-class group exercise I

February 2— Anti-Peronism and State Terror
Film: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo
Required:
• Kaplan, Temma. Taking Back the Streets, pp. 102-151.

February 4— Performing Evita in Neoliberal Times
Required:
• Weyland, Kurt. 2012. Populism in the Age of Neoliberalism (Chapter 9). In Populism in Latin America, Second Edition (M)

Assignment: Reading Response I

February 5— Special Event I: Mass Violence and Human Rights: The Global Politics of Truth and Justice (details to be announced)
February 9 and 11—Neoliberalism’s Decline, Populism’s Resurgence? Crisis, Political Mobilization, and the Return of the National-Popular

Film: The Take

Required:

For Feb. 11—Argentina’s “Right Turn” in Comparative Perspective

Required:
- Serman, Ernesto. 2015. The Taming of the Argentine Right? NACLA, 2 December (M, web link)

Assignment: Feb. 11, In-class group exercise II

Part III: The Politics of Race, Racism, and Ethnodevelopment in Brazil, Mexico, and the Andes

February 16—No class (Monday class schedule)

February 18 and 23—(Re)Making the Nation: Race, Class, and Populist Politics in Brazil

Films: Quando o Crioulo Dança (about racial politics in Brazil, English subtitles); Brazil: A Racial Paradise (from PBS Series “Black in Latin America.”)

Required:

Assignment: Feb. 23, In-class group exercise III

February 25—Unmaking “Racial Democracy” and Reimagining the Brazilian Nation

Film: Brazil in Black and White

Required:

Assignment: Reading Response II
March 1—*The Indigenous Turn in Latin American Politics: the Zapatista Rupture in Mexico*

**Films:** Zapatista and other short films

**Required:**


March 3 and 8—*Ethnopolitics and Indigenous Movements in the Andes: Bolivia in Comparative Perspective*

**Film:** *Even the Rain* (to be streamed)

**Required:**


**Assignments:** March 8, In-class group exercise IV

March 7—*Special Event II: Indigenous Women’s Movements in Latin America* (details to be announced)

March 10—*State Terror and Struggles for Indigenous and Human Rights Today: Spotlight on Mexico*

**Guest lecture:** Martha Balaguera, UMass Ph.D. candidate and Mexico specialist

**Required:**


March 15 and 17—SPRING BREAK

Part IV: Reform, Revolution, and Reaction in the 20th and 21st Centuries

March 24—IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

March 22, 29, and 31—Cuba: Past, Present and Future
   Film: *Cuba: The Next Revolution*, from PBS Series “Black in Latin America.”
   Required:

Assignment March 31: Response III

April 5 and 7—Chile: The Making, Unmaking and Remaking of the Chilean Road to Socialism
   Film: *In Women’s Hands*
   Required:

Assignment April 7: In-class group exercise V

April 15—Special Event III: Gender and Race Movements and Politics in Brazil, lecture by former Minister of Racial Equality, Luiza Helena Bairros.

April 12, 14 and 19—Venezuela: Radical Neopopulism or 21st Century Socialism?
   Film: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*
   Required:
   • Corrales, Javier. 2006. Hugo Boss. *Foreign Policy* 152 (Jan.-Feb.): 32-40. (M)
• Panizza, Francisco. 2012. What Do We Mean When We Talk About Populism? In Latin American Populism in the Twenty-First Century, Chapter 4.
• To be determined. Analyses of Venezuela’s December 2015 parliamentary elections and beyond. (M)

Assignment: April 19, Response IV

Part V: Beyond Neoliberalism? Social Movements, Latin America’s Left Turn, and Possible “U-Turn”: Reflections on Brazil
April 21 and 26
Required:
• On Contemporary Brazil
  o Levitsky and Roberts, eds., The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America, chapter 13
• On the Left Turn
  o Levitsky and Roberts, eds., The Resurgence of the Left in Latin America, Introduction and Conclusion [recommended: Chapters 1, 3, 7, 8]
• On the “U-Turn”
  o Baiocchi, Gianpaolo and Marcelo K. Silva. 2015. Brazil’s Elites are Revolting, Al-Jazeera America, 22 March. (M, web link)

Assignments: April 26, Response V

May 3—Individual Final Papers and Group Work Self- and Peer-Evaluations due by noon