Politics of Latin America  Autumn 2019

Instructor:  Professor Paul Haber
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Meets: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 – 3:20 in Liberal Arts 201
Office hours in LA 349: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 – 12:30 and happily by appointment.

Course Overview
This course is designed to introduce students to contemporary politics in Latin America. No assumptions are made regarding students’ familiarity with Latin America. I do, however, assume a willingness on the part of students to spend considerable time engaging the intricacies and nuances of the region by reading carefully, preparing in advance to participate in class discussions, and then following through with class participation.

All students are required to read, listen, or watch all the assigned before the morning we are scheduled to discuss them, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. It is not possible to do well in this class without a willingness to participate thoughtfully in our conversations. I am happy to help students to develop strategies to improve your class participation, and may come to you with suggestions. However, you are ultimately responsible for developing your voice.

All readings and other course materials to be studied outside of class are either available via links or will be emailed to students. I regularly communicate with students by email. Students are strongly advised to check their email regularly for messages from me. If you do not you are likely to miss important information.

Students are expected to attend all classes unless ill or in case of emergency. Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you are absent or late, send me an email explaining it. Do not explain it to me on the phone, in class, before class or after class.

Grades
There will be two exams, each accounting for 1/3 of total grade. 1/3 of your grade will be based on your class attendance and participation and also homework assignments.

D:  Poor performance on most if not all fronts.

C: demonstrates moderate understanding of the material and thus is unable to demonstrate quality analysis of the material in writing and/or oral argument.

B:  demonstrates solid understanding of the material but does not demonstrate quality analysis on a regular basis.

A: demonstrates a high level of comprehension of the material on a regular basis and also demonstrates, at least on occasion, high quality analysis via comments and especially generative questions in oral and written argument.

Observations regarding grading:

1. My sense is that many students find me to be a “tougher” grader than many of my colleagues because I actually adhere to the standards above and in many instances, students are not required to actually demonstrate a high level of comprehension of challenging material let alone demonstrate critical thinking in their classes in order to earn a B or A in the class.

2. I appreciate that many students find it difficult to participate in class discussions. So, I allow students a variety of ways to demonstrate this to me. Of course, I appreciate students who are comfortable with speaking in class or muster the courage to participate in class despite it being scary, in part because it contributes to the quality of the
classroom learning environment (quality is valued over quantity). However, I allow students to raise their grade by having conversations with me in office hours, by email, or by the phone.

3. I expect students to participate in class discussions. Clarifying questions are welcome as are thoughtful comments and substantiated arguments. Perhaps most prized of all are probing questions that get us all thinking together in class. In addition, I allow students who make significant contributions outside of class or take on class projects that are presented to the class at the end of the semester and make a real contribution to our collective learning to elevate their grade. Individual and group projects welcome (see note below on Weeks 13-15).

Accessibility
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, contact me at the beginning of the semester so that proper accommodations can be provided. Please contact Disability Services for Students if you have questions, or call Disability Services for Students (DSS) for voice/text at 406.243.2243. You may also fax the Lommasson Center 154 for more information at 406.243.5330.

Schedule of readings and assignments (subject to change):
Week 1: Introduction and Day 1 of Historical Overview
August 27  Introduction to class. No reading, however you might want to begin the assignment for August 29, which includes reading and watching a film.

August 29  The First Encounter Between Europeans and Indigenous People in the Americas
Required Viewing: The 1.5 hour video, When Worlds Collide:  https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ietuPzq4N_o
Suggested: For those with time and inclination, take a look at these web sites and bring comments/questions to class. Many of you might find the second one, on US interventions over time, of particular interest. Seeing the large number can be helpful in understanding why so many Latin Americans are wary of US involvement in the region.
https://www.yachana.org/teaching/resources/chron.html
A chronology of historical events.
https://www.yachana.org/teaching/resources/interventions.html
A chronology of 56 U.S. military and CIA interventions in Latin America.

Week 2: Day 2 of Historical Overview and Days 1 and 2 Neo-Modernization Lens on Latin American Development
September 3  The Colonial Period, Independence, and 19th Century Nation Building
Required Reading: Chapter 2 and 3 in Chasteen, pp. 49-80 and 87-114.
Supplemental Reading (meaning not required, only for those with time and inclination):  Chapter 1 in Alexander Dawson, Latin America Since Independence: A History with Primary Sources. Routledge, Second Edition, 2015, pp. 11-42. Available from Professor upon request.

September 5  Latin American Development Through a Neo-Modernization Theory Lens Day 1
https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/unfulfilled-promises-latin-america-today/
**Week 3:** Days 3 and 4 of Neo-Modernization Approach  
**September 10** Latin American Development Through a Neo-Modernization Theory Lens Day 2  

**September 12** Latin American Development Through a Neo-Modernization Theory Lens Day 3  
Required Reading: Michael Shifter and Bruno Binetti, eds. *Unfulfilled Promises: Latin America Today*. Washington D.C.: Inter-American Dialogue, 2019, chapters 6-8. Note: Recently, I have learned of an opportunity to have a guest speaker for today. Ana Luisa Moran Ahern is the Executive Director of Ecoviva, which is an NGO working on sustainable development issues in El Salvador. [https://ecoviva.org/](https://ecoviva.org/) So, assuming Ana Luisa’s trip works out and she is able to be with us this day, we will cancel the readings previously assigned for today except for the short chapter 8 conclusion to the book, which we will discuss on September 17. Stay tuned.

**Week 4:** Days 1 and 2 of Pink Tide and U Turn  
**September 17** Pink Tide and U Turn. Day 1.  

**September 19** Pink Tide and U Turn. Day 2.  
"Pink-Tide Governments: Pragmatic and Populist Responses to Challenges from the Right". Latin American Perspectives, Volume 46 Issue 1, January 2019. [https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/lap/46/1?etoc=]  
Note: if you are accessing through a university computer, this url should work. If not, you can access this online through Mansfield Library. Read the introduction by Steve Ellner and the article by Megan Pickup, pp. 4-45.  
Highly recommended (but not required): take a listen to this half hour interview: [http://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/a/d/b/adb7c9d6114ec3cf/January_2019_Podcast.mp3.mp3?c_id=30149240&cs_id=30149240&expiration=1556982204&hwt=e529dcd30021d600077b34ce12d1f9](http://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/a/d/b/adb7c9d6114ec3cf/January_2019_Podcast.mp3.mp3?c_id=30149240&cs_id=30149240&expiration=1556982204&hwt=e529dcd30021d600077b34ce12d1f9) Podcast interview with Steve Ellner, a radical scholar, who specializes in Venezuela, where he taught for many years and about which he has written much. In it, he introduces and discusses the January 2019 edition of Latin American Perspectives, that deals with various aspects of the Pink Tide phenomenon.

**Week 5:** Days 3 and 4 of Pink Tide and U Turn  

**September 26** Pink Tide and U Turn. Day 4. Continue Reading in the Latin American Perspectives volume. Read the articles on Brazil, pp. 66-104.

**Week 6:** Days 5 and 6 of Pink Tide and U Turn  
**October 1** Current Events in Brazil. Students are required to locate at least one article on current events in Brazil, write a summary of it, and come to class prepared to present it in summary fashion and make a comment or pose a question concerning the article, in 2-3 minutes. This must be typed up and will be turned in at the end of class.

**October 3** Continue Reading in the Latin American Perspectives volume. Read articles on Uruguay, pp. 122-166.

**Week 7:** Days 7 and 8 of Pink Tide and U Turn  
**October 8** Read article on Venezuela by Ellner, pp. 167 – 189 and [https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=12862](https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=12862) This link takes you first to a short article by Alvaro Vargas Llosa, a well-known literary figure who is also has become prominent within the Latin American Right. At the bottom of it, you are linked to a summary of the report from the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights on the situation in Venezuela.
Rights, which then links you to the 16-page report itself. Read all of this. Come to class prepared to compare and contrast the contrasting perspectives, especially that of Ellner and the 16-page report.

**October 10** Current Events in Venezuela. Students are required to locate at least one article on current events in Venezuela, write a summary of it, and come to class prepared to present it in summary fashion and make a comment or pose a question concerning the article, in 2-3 minutes. This must be typed up and will be turned in at the end of class.

**Week 8:** Day 9 Pink Tide and U Turn and Exam 1 workshop

**October 15** Read the article on Ecuador by Clark and García and the article on local government in Lima by Dosh and Smith Coyoli, pp. 230-246, and 263-281.

**October 17** Exam 1 Workshop

**Supplemental Readings** on Pink Tide and U Turn (not required: listed here for those with time and inclination)

Jorge Castañeda, “Latin America’s Left Turn” in Foreign Affairs 85(3):28-43. Haber note: Castañeda’s widely read and much publicized article delineates talks two lefts, a good one (social democratic) and a bad one (authoritarian leanings, populist). This article unleashed a long-standing debate and continues to be referenced to today. In 2008, Castañeda teamed up with Marco Morales to edit *Leftovers: Tales of the Latin American Left*, which expanded on his thesis.


[https://theintercept.com/2018/11/11/nicaragua-protests-terrorism-daniel-ortega/?utm_source=The+Intercept+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d0defc8a0d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_11_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e00a5122d3-d0defc8a0d-131635733](https://theintercept.com/2018/11/11/nicaragua-protests-terrorism-daniel-ortega/?utm_source=The+Intercept+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d0defc8a0d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_11_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e00a5122d3-d0defc8a0d-131635733)

About Nicaragua and other countries passing counter-terrorism laws that are used to prosecute and persecute political dissenters.


Omar G. Encarnación, “The Rise and Fall of the Latin American Left: Conservatives now control Latin America’s leading economies, but the region’s leftists can still look to Uruguay for direction.” The Nation May 9, 2018. Note: I have word document copy in folder and happy to send to anyone who wants it.


Note on Biglaiser and McGauvran article: this is a sophisticated article about an important issue for us in this class: how right governments actually govern - the policies they pursue when in power in Latin America and why, including the observation that they do not go as far to the right as might be expected, even when they have substantial mandates from voters and unified government.

**Week 9** Exam 1 and Day 1 Introduction to Bolivia
**October 22** Exam 1

**October 24** Introduction to Bolivia. Day 1.
**Required Reading:**
Our reading for this section is a book by the well-known political anthropologist and Bolivianist, Nancy Postero. The book is open access and available at the link below. You can also purchase a hard copy if you prefer:


**Week 10** Days 2 and 3 on Bolivia.
**October 29** Introduction to Bolivia. Day 2 Postero, pp. 41-88
**October 31** Introduction to Bolivia. Day 3 Postero, pp. 91-136

**Week 11** Days 4 and 5 on Bolivia
**November 5** Introduction to Bolivia. Day 4. Postero, pp. 137-177

**Week 12** Day 6 on Bolivia and Exam 2
**November 12** As we did for Brazil and Venezuela, everyone is responsible to bring in an article on recent events in Bolivia and to turn in a written statement.

**November 14** Exam 2.

**Note to students regarding Weeks 13 – 15.**
As has become my custom, I intentionally leave the final weeks of the semester open so that we might decide together as group how to work together for the rest of the class. There are many options, including individual or group research presentations or keeping the structure essentially the same only deciding together which topics to cover (see list below for a list of candidates). Left to my own devices, I would probably suggest doing something on Mexico, something on Central American migration to the US, given my expertise on Mexico and the timeliness and importance of Central American migration in humanitarian terms and US electoral politics. I might also suggest considering Latin America and China relations. But, this is truly a time for you to weigh in if you wish.

November 19
November 21
November 26
November 28 Thanksgiving
December 3
December 5

**Candidates for Remainder of the class (to be collectively decided upon)**

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**Future of Latin America and China**
NAFTA and the Future of Trade Deals from a Progressive-Left Position

https://fpif.org/what-kind-of-trade-policy-should-progressives-support/

This link goes to a summary of the report. In the summary is the link to the 81-page report.

NAFTA 2.0 has been negotiated but has yet to be ratified. This report is highly critical of this particular trade agreement and other trade agreements that are characterized as neoliberal. The report includes a long discussion of what good trade agreements should look like going forward.

--Latin American Emigration to the United States: Implications for (historical overview and/or contemporary situation). Here are some reading candidates:


Selections from Judith Adler Hellman, The World of Mexican Migrants: The Rock and the Hard Place. The New Press, 2008. Prologue (pp. xiii – xxiv), Introduction (pp. 1-14), Beto (pp. 17-22, from the section entitled “The Rock”), Tomás (pp. 65-75, from the section entitled “The Journey”), Sara (pp. 137-144, from the section entitled “The Hard Place”), and Patricia (pp. 191-209, from the section entitled “To Stay or Return Home”.


2018 report on the 85 billion dollars of remittances from Latin Americans working abroad and sending money home to their families. Most of this is from the United States to Latin America but there exist also South-South transfers. This report can be quickly consulted for quick statistical introduction.


About the Central American caravan. (I have been working on this topic a lot recently and have a lot of articles. We could easily put together a broad selection if there is interest.)


Note: An intense volume written by a young writer born in South Africa, raised in Mexico, and now living and working out of New York City. This book is based on her work with children from Central America seeking asylum in the US. Here is a book review: https://www.npr.org/2017/04/06/521791352/tell-me-how-it-ends-offers-a-moving-humane-portrait-of-child-migrants


Note: as is true of all Duke titles, first chapter available open access at the press’s webpage.

https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2019/05/23/trump-different-emergency/

Critical assessment of Trump’s Wall.

--U.S. – Latin American Relations. Reading candidates include:

Brian Loveman, *No Higher Law: American Foreign Policy and the Western Hemisphere Since 1776*. University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Haber note: This is an excellent history book. We could potentially do selections but this might be more difficult than doing so from the Gilbert Joseph volume.


Mark Eric Williams, *Understanding U.S.-Latin American Relations: Theory and History*. Routledge, 2012. The primary advantage I see of selections from this volume is that those interested in international relations theory could look at the relationship through prominent IR theory lens such as realism and liberalism.


---Mexico. In addition to this being an important country in Latin America, with particular relevance to the United States, it is the country I know best in the region, having begun to conduct research there in 1979 and having lived in different parts of Mexico numerous times for between seven weeks and a year at a time. Here is one mix of readings for Mexico:


Neil Harvey, “Practicing autonomy: Zapatismo and decolonial liberation” in *Latin American & Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 2016. Note: This article could also be integrated into a social movement theme.


---Susana Draper, 1968 Mexico: Constellations of Freedom and Democracy. Duke, August 2018. Could just do the free first chapter, which is long and interesting (and open access): [https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0143-0_601.pdf](https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0143-0_601.pdf)

---More on Bolivia.


Note: a major drawback with this book is the price. It is not available in paperback and the kindle price and hard cover price is over 70 dollars.


Note: this is a sophisticated article about an important Latin American social movement, thus its value is both in its conceptual and methodological approach to movements as well as educating about a particular movement history. It might well mix nicely with the article by Neil Harvey on autonomy and the Zapatistas, also put forward as a required reading candidate on this syllabus which also has these values.


Could be combined with article by Quick and Spartz listed elsewhere in the syllabus.

--Focus on one or more nations other than Mexico or Bolivia. We could do one or more countries together or we could do individual or group projects. Let's discuss in class.

One candidate of course is Venezuela, which is much in the news these days. Here is a brief 10 page report that outlines possible scenarios, written from a perspective quite critical of the existing government: [https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/transition-interrupted/](https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/transition-interrupted/) but also warning about extreme actions by the US government, including military intervention. We could combine this "moderate view" with a reading or readings that are more supportive of the existing regime and much more critical of the opposition and US foreign policy towards Venezuela. Here is but one brief example of those alleging media right leaning distortion of current events in Venezuela: Michael Fox, "Once Again, Mainstream Media Get It Wrong on Venezuela: Foreign outlets, dutifully supporting Trump administration calls for regime change, reported that a widespread uprising was
underway, even though Juan Guaidó’s coup attempt had little support” in The Nation, May 2, 2019. I have copy in folder.

--The “New Extractivism”. https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/lap/46/2?etoc= 
Open Veins Revisited: The New Extractivism in Latin America Part 2  
Latin American Perspectives, Volume 46 Issue 2, March 2019. Open access.

--Radical alternatives to neomodernization thinking in Latin America:
Haber note on Escobar reading: A deep and theoretically rich look at radical alternatives.


This reading could also fit within a Bolivia country theme.

--More neomodernization thinking

--Inequality. Special Issue: Enduring and/or New Forms of Inequality in a Globalizing World - Volume 52 - Issue 2 - 2017 of LARR. https://larrlasa.org/2/volume/52/issue/2/ 

Note: The issue of inequality is big in Latin America. We could pick and choose from this special issue or we could divide it up amongst ourselves and come prepared to share collectively. There are a range of perspectives here, from Marxist (Webber) to much more moderate and established (Lustig). Just reading those two approaches would make for an interesting discussion.

--Corruption

Note: Corruption is a real problem in polities. There are different forms of corruption and we should perhaps take time to think about the concept in class before assuming any one of the competing definitions. One of the common pitfalls, in my view, when viewed at from the vantage point of the United States, is to assume, absent critical analysis, that Latin Americans or at least their governments are corrupt while the United States - inhabitants and/or government - are not or are less so. At the very least, this assumption should be interrogated. I could provide context regarding competing explanations of Latin American corruption and how the “undue/anti-democratic use of money in politics” in Latin America compares and contrasts with the US.

This article could also be integrated into a Bolivia country theme.
--Review Essays.


Note: The value in reading this short article is that it would introduce or perhaps further the knowledge of “the art of the review essay” as well as to seed a conversation regarding participatory democracy in general and in Latin America in particular, perhaps suggesting to the class that we might want to delve further into the topic with more readings and/or other materials.


Note: The value of this essay would be to introduce students to introduce students to the art of the "review essay” and also review some excellent Mexican historiography, as well as help set up Clary to speak to 1968.

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**Film**

We could watch some films. Here are some that I am pretty sure we could gain access to and watch in class:

-- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WOYeGpGSqs

Hour long doc on the gangs of Central America. Looks really good but I have not watched it yet.

Los olvidados
Orfeu negro
Memorias del subdesarrollo
La batalla de Chile
La última cena
Pixote: a lei do mais fraco
El Norte
Camila
La historia oficial
Yo, la peor de todas
La frontera
Fresa y chocolate
Como agua para chocolate
Central do Brasil
Amores perros
Y tu mamá también
Cidade de Deus
When Worlds Collide. PBS Special (assigned above)
Which Way Home
“Eyes Wide Open” narrated by Eduardo Galeano;
“South of the Border” by Oliver Stone;
“Megalopolis” about the women workers in Maquilas,
“Narcocultura” about the narcocorridos in northern Mexico;
“Crude” about the work of Chevron in Ecuador;
“The take” by Naomi Klein and her husband (don’t remember his name) about “fabricas recuperadas” in Argentina;
“Memoria del saqueo” by Pino Solanas about the 2001 economic crisis in Argentina. There is a newer one by Pino Solanas about mega-mining (la megamineria) in Argentina, I can't recall the name but it is on You Tube.

“Black in Latin America” by Henry Louis Gates of 4 videos on the Afro-American presence in Latin America: Cuba/Dominican Republic and Haiti/Brazil/Peru and Mexico.
Vice.com has good videos but one has to get to the site and look for complete documentaries. One can search for Latin America, and for example, find https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/punta-de-rieles-most-humane-prison-south-america/5bfd9159be4077378919e734 which is about a prison in Uruguay. My view is that one of the hallmarks of a social democracy is a criminal justice system that focuses on rehabilitation as opposed to punishment and warehousing. This film suggests that Uruguay is at least partially on this path.

https://roarmag.org/films/
This is a cool site, if you are interested in short left progressive documentary films and essays. You can go in, search for Latin America, and locate a number of good docs, many of them short. For example, if you are interested in the cultural survival approach (which is the left embracing a set of conservative preservationist values, check out:
https://roarmag.org/films/all-of-this-we-have-to-defend/

And/or check out these April 2019 essays on Venezuela from a number of left leaning scholars: https://roarmag.org/essays/bolivarian-revolution-venezuela-crisis/ or this sympathetic take on the Zapatistas: https://roarmag.org/essays/a-community-in-arms-the-indigenous-roots-of-the-ezln/ or this essay about self-defense community efforts by the well-known Uruguayan activist scholar, Raúl Zibechi: https://roarmag.org/essays/raul-zibechi-counterpower-self-defense/

And/or this film on an indigenous congress held in Chiapas: https://roarmag.org/films/think-heart-mexicos-indigenous-congress/?play=true