

Latin American Politics, Pol S 343

Syllabus: Spring 2016

Room: Ross Hall 125, Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:40 AM
Course website on Blackboard Learn: <http://bb.its.iastate.edu/>

Professor: Amy Erica Smith (aesmith2@iastate.edu)
Office: 553 Ross Hall
Office Hours Tuesday/Thursday 2:15-4:45 PM

QUESTIONS?

A syllabus is like a contract between you and me. It outlines all of the things I expect from you over the course of the semester, and what you can expect from me in return, such as grades and lectures. I am allowed to modify it as things come up over the semester, but only if I notify you. I expect that you will read the entire document, and that you will refer back to it throughout the semester any time you have questions—for instance, about when an assignment is due, or how long your essay needs to be.

If you ever have a question about anything in this course, look here first! Peruse the entire document from front to back to make sure you haven't missed a detail. Next, check the "Documents" section under Blackboard to see if there's another document that answers your question. If you peruse the syllabus and Blackboard and can't find the answers to your question, your next step should be to ask two classmates, if at all possible. Try to get to know a few people in this class, and jot down their names and phone numbers so that you can ask a question if needed.

If you can't find it in the syllabus and Blackboard and your classmates also don't know the answer to your question, please email me! When you email, make sure you tell us that you couldn't find the answer anywhere else. (For more on emailing a professor, see [here](#).)

Description

¡Bienvenidos! Bem-vindos! Welcome to the study of Latin American politics. Who and what is happening south of the US-Mexico border? In this course, we will come to understand the political, economic, and social history of the region and the current political issues facing it today. Throughout, we will use magazine and newspaper articles, novels, and videos to grasp the great diversity of political and social perspectives of the region's residents.

The course has four sections. The first will provide you with general knowledge of Latin America's geography and demographics. This portion of the course will ensure that everyone in the class shares a basic understanding of the region. The second reviews the region's history, from pre-Hispanic indigenous civilizations, through colonization by Europeans, through independence and then movements towards (and sometimes away from) democracy over the 20th and 21st centuries. Over the past two decades, all Latin American countries, with the exception of Cuba, entered a period of electoral democracy that is largely unprecedented in the region. However some countries have experienced recent setbacks. In this section, we will also explore the major political groups and institutions that have affected these historical developments.

Following the midterm, in the third section of the course we will focus on a series of political challenges facing Latin American citizens and political leaders historically and today, including economic growth,

inequality, the environment, crime, and inclusion of disadvantaged citizens. In the fourth section of the course, we will examine in somewhat greater depth seven case studies: Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. Each of you will work with a group to develop a project related to major political challenges in one of these countries.

Objectives

We have four academic objectives in this class:

1. Understand and discuss the major historical processes and events across the region of Latin America, and in seven case study countries.
2. Discuss how Latin American people, groups, and political institutions have interacted to produce these major historical processes and events.
3. Appreciate and analyze the complex policy challenges facing countries across Latin America in the twenty-first century.
4. Demonstrate awareness of the diversity of people, places, and issues within the region.

In addition, this class, like many other classes at ISU, will provide you an opportunity to hone other life skills:

1. **“Soft” Skills:** These are the social skills and personal habits you will need to succeed both in the college classroom and any professional workplace after you graduate.
 - Follow directions and plan ahead (step #1: read the syllabus!). When you need help, seek it as soon as possible!
 - Communicate with the professor (i.e., your “boss”) and your fellow classmates (i.e., your “coworkers”) respectfully—be informative, clear, courteous, and direct.
 - Plan and execute group work effectively.
2. Transferable academic skills:
 - Know how to select and evaluate information sources.
 - Clearly and effectively communicate information and ideas verbally and in writing.
 - Read critically, identify unanswered questions, and develop hypotheses that could answer those questions.

Course Materials

We have one required book:

- Vanden, Harry E., and Gary Prevost. 2014. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*. 5th edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

In addition, you will choose one of the following books to read. We will sign up for books on the first day of class; if you miss the first day of class, you will need to check in with me.

- Alvarez, Julia. 2010. *In the Time of Butterflies*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.
- Azuela, Mariano. 2006. *The Underdogs*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Guevara, Ernesto Che. 2003. *The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes on a Latin American Journey*. Ocean Press.
- Obejas, Achy. 2009. *Ruins*. New York: Akashic Books.

Chapters listed in the schedule without an author are all from Vanden and Prevost (2014). Readings with asterisks (*) will be available on our BlackBoard site; others are hyperlinked.

Grading and Requirements

TOTAL POINTS: 500

1. **Exams:** The exams will be multiple choice, and will be administered by the [Online Testing Center](#) (see this link for locations, hours, and other logistics).
 - **Midterm Exam:** 100 points (50 multiple choice questions)
 - **Final Exam:** 110 points (55 multiple choice questions)
2. **Map Quiz:** 30 points
 - You will need to identify 25 countries and their capitals: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela
 - 1 point/country correctly labeled and 0.2 points/capital. I will give you a map with numbers, and an answer sheet to write the country and capital corresponding to each number.
3. **Other Unannounced Quizzes:** 30 points
 - There will be approximately 6 unannounced quizzes throughout the semester (30 quiz questions @ 1 point/question). I will tend to focus on the readings outside the textbook in my quiz questions. I may ask additional quiz questions beyond 30, and the quiz points will count as extra credit.
4. **Novel Politics Assignment:** 70 points total (Detailed instructions given out January 19.)
 - Short essay: 60 points
 - Contribution to class discussion: 10 points
5. **Policy Challenges Project:** 110 points total (Detailed instructions will be given)
 - Group country presentation: 35 points
 - You will make a 20 minute presentation on one of the seven countries we will cover in the final section of the semester. Your presentation should explain: (a) recent current events and problems in your country; and (b) how policymakers are seeking to resolve a current policy challenge.
 - Policy brief: 45 points
 - [USAID](#) has hired your group as a team of policy consultants to help develop initiatives to promote democracy and development in the country to which you were assigned. You will develop a 10-page policy brief (a) explaining a policy issue in your country; (b) outlining current attempts by policy leaders in your country or in the international community to solve the issue; and (c) making recommendations to USAID for future initiatives.
 - Self/Peer evaluation: 30 points
6. **Participation:** 50 points

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS AND EXTRA CREDIT

7. **Research Paper:** Substitutes for either exam; due online May 5 by 5 PM
 - Develop a 10-12 page research paper examining academic research on a major political problem facing Latin America. Make sure you cite at least 6 academic sources using the Chicago Manual of Style "Author-Date" citation format (see below), and that you discuss at least 4 Latin American countries. This paper should be submitted online by Thursday, May 5 at 5 PM.

8. **Extra Credit Breaking News Reports:** Up to two reports @ 5 points each.
- Potential topics: Haitian election Jan 24; Bolivian constitutional referendum Feb 21; Peruvian election April 10; other topics with approval by Prof. Smith
 - You should write a 250-300 word essay explaining (1) what happened; and (2) how it connects to themes we have discussed in this class. You must email the breaking news report to Prof. Smith **the day following the event**, and come to class prepared to discuss the event.

Your point total will be assigned a letter grade according to the following scale:

A: 465-500 **A-:** 450-464 **B+:** 435-449 **B:** 415-434 **B-:** 400-414 **C+:** 385-399
C: 365-384 **C-:** 350-364 **D+:** 335-349 **D:** 315-334 **D-:** 300-314 **F:** ≤ 299

General Policies

Computers, Digital Communication, Etc.

- I am asking you **not to use laptops or cell phones in class**. (If I see you using your cell phone, I reserve the right to ask you to bring it up to the front of the class and lay it on the table.) I will use my laptop to make PowerPoint presentations and show videos, and I will post these materials on Blackboard after class. Lots of research shows that using a laptop in class distracts not only you, but also your classmates surrounding you. Curious? Read [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#). Let's try to respect each other by giving each other our full attention three hours a week!
- I will post PowerPoint lecture notes for the week by 5 PM each Monday. These lecture notes will not contain all questions for class discussion questions, but they will contain a guide to the content I expect you to master. Please feel free to download and print the PowerPoints and bring them to class.
- Please allow 24 hours for me to respond to emails. When you email me, please include a descriptive subject line and make sure you remind me what class you are in. For very helpful pointers on emailing a professor, see [this](#).

Attendance Policy

- Many aspects of class depend on your being with us in class! I will pass around an attendance sheet each day. I expect you to let me know if you're going to be absent—there is no maximum allowed number of absences, but this is a courtesy. When in doubt about a student's level of participation, I will take attendance into consideration in assessing class participation.
- According to ISU policy, "excusable absences" include:
 - Those in which you officially represent the university (for instance, conferences and workshops; intercollegiate competitions; or artistic performances for external audiences)
 - Required military and National Guard duty
 - Officially mandated court appearances including jury duty.
- If you're sick—especially if you're having flu-like symptoms—please don't come to class! Email me before class time if possible.
- If a member of your immediate family dies, you may be excused if you provide documentation of the event – a dated funeral program or obituary, a note from a religious leader on official letterhead, etc.
- If you anticipate problems, please talk with me about them ahead of time; I am happy to make reasonable accommodations.

Late/Missing Assignments

- Any student with an approved excuse for missing the exams may retake them at a date and time we will arrange. **If you miss the exam, it is your responsibility to contact me.**

- I will take a letter grade off your written assignments for each day they are late. I will not accept late optional papers.

Citations

- Political science research is most commonly published using [Chicago Manual of Style](#). This is what we will be using in this class. Please use in-text, parenthetical citations—on the Chicago Manual of Style webpage, make sure you click on the tab for “Author-Date” format in the middle of the page.
- Note that if you are citing an article from an academic journal, there is no need to list the web address or the date accessed. Follow the guides on the webpage linked above.
- You may use a different citation format if you check with me in advance, and if you include a note at the bottom of your bibliography to remind me.

Academic Integrity

- The most frequent problem of academic integrity I encounter involves plagiarism. Iowa State has an excellent resource on understanding and avoiding plagiarism [here](#). **If you use more than three words, or even just one key word, from another author without using quotation marks and citing your source, you are committing plagiarism.** If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ASK.
- Anyone thought to have violated Iowa State’s [standards of academic integrity](#) may fail the course, and may be referred to the Dean of Students to face university-sanctioned penalties.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and need accommodations for this course, please contact me early in the term so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Student Disability Resources (SDR), located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-7220. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. All conversations between you and me will remain confidential. Retroactive requests for accommodations will not be honored.

Dead Week

This class follows the Iowa State University Dead Week policy as noted in section 10.6.4 of the Faculty Handbook: <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/resources/faculty-handbook>

Harassment and Discrimination

Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact me, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or email dso-sas@iastate.edu, or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at 515-294-7612.

Religious Accommodation

If a course requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations in writing, and I will review the request. You may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

If you experience a problem with any of the above, please email academicissues@iastate.edu.

Class Schedule

Topic and Date	<i>Readings (in italics)</i> and Assignments (in bold) (to be read/completed by date listed)
Part I: Introductions: to Each Other, to the Region, to the People	
Tuesday, January 12	Sign up for Novel Politics group today
Thursday, January 14	<i>Naím 2015</i> <i>Moseley and Layton 2013</i> <i>Duddy 2015</i>
Tuesday, January 19	<i>Ch. 1</i> <i>*Picture A Favela (excerpt)</i>
Thursday, January 21	Map Quiz <i>Dominus 2015</i>
Part II: Historical Overview of the Region: Political Actors and Institutions	
<u>Historical Overview</u>	
Tuesday, January 26	<i>Ch. 3</i>
Thursday, January 28	Recommended: <i>Ch. 2</i>
Tuesday, February 2	Essay due for Novel Politics; discuss in class. By 5 PM Monday, email 3 discussion questions to Prof. Smith
Thursday, February 4	<i>Ch. 10</i>
<u>The Impact of People, Groups, and Institutions</u>	
Tuesday, February 9	<i>Ch. 8</i>
Thursday, February 11	<i>Ch. 9</i>
Tuesday, February 16	<i>*Auyero 2000</i>
Thursday, February 18	<i>Ch. 6</i>
Tuesday, February 23: Wrap-Up/Review	
Midterm Exam: Thursday, February 25	

Topic and Date	<i>Readings (in italics)</i> and Assignments (in bold) (to be read/completed by date listed)
Part III: Political Challenges in Latin America	
<u>Economic Development</u> : Tuesday, March 1	<i>Ch. 7</i> <i>Cave 2012</i> Discuss and sign up for Policy Challenges Project
<u>Poverty and Inequality</u> : Thursday, March 3	<i>Layton and Smith 2011</i> <i>Americas Quarterly Social Inclusion Index</i>
<u>Environment</u> : Tuesday, March 8	<i>Finegan 2002</i> <i>Dosh and Kligerman 2009</i> <i>Watts 2014</i> Time to Meet with Groups
<u>Foreign Policy and US-Latin America Relations</u> : Thursday, March 10	<i>Ch. 11</i> <i>Baker and Cupery 2013</i> <i>The Economist 2012</i>
SPRING BREAK March 15-17	
<u>Race and Ethnicity</u> : Tuesday, March 22	<i>Ch. 4</i> <i>Smith 2010</i>

Topic and Date	Readings (in italics) and Assignments (in bold) (to be read/completed by date listed)
<u>Gender and Gay Rights</u> : Thursday, March 24	<i>Moloney 2014</i> <i>Associated Press 2013</i> <i>Corrales and Pecheney 2010</i> Recommended: <i>Ch. 5</i> Time to Meet with Groups
<u>Crime, Violence, and the Military</u> : Tuesday, March 29	<i>Perez 2015</i> <i>Phillips 2015</i> <i>García-Ponce and Lajous 2014</i> <i>*Gootenberg 2012</i> Recommended: <i>*Mani 2011</i>
Part IV: Latin American Politics: Seven Cases	
<u>Mexico</u> : Thursday, March 31	<i>Ch. 12</i> Recommended: <i>*Roush 2014</i>
<u>Cuba</u> : Tuesday, April 5	<i>Ch. 19</i> Recommended: <i>*Leogrande 2015</i>
<u>Venezuela I</u> : Thursday, April 7	Watch “The Hugo Chávez Show” in class
<u>Venezuela II</u> : Tuesday, April 12	<i>Ch. 17</i> Recommended: <i>Corrales 2015; Carey 2015</i>
<u>Guatemala</u> : Thursday, April 14	<i>Ch. 20</i> Recommended: <i>*I, Rigoberta Menchú</i> (excerpt); <i>What Happened at Dos Erres</i> (podcast); <i>Partlow 2015; Pahlberg 2015</i>
<u>Brazil</u> : Tuesday, April 19	<i>Ch. 14</i> Recommended: <i>Romero 2015; Wampler and Touchton 2014</i>
<u>Chile</u> : Thursday, April 21	<i>Ch. 18</i> Recommended: <i>*Jara 2014; Siavelis and Sehnbruch 2013</i>
<u>Argentina</u> : Tuesday, April 26	<i>Ch. 13</i> Recommended: <i>*Petras 2003; Lupu 2015; Nelson and Steinberg 2016</i>
Thursday, April 28: Wrap-Up/Review	Policy Briefs Due Self/Peer Evaluations Due
Final Exam: Tuesday, May 3 9:45 AM	
Thursday, May 5 PM	Optional Paper due