International Relations of the Western Hemisphere

Introduction

Welcome to the study of Latin American politics and international relations. The region of Latin America is associated with significant economic, social, and political change. In the past decade many countries elected leftist presidents with some of these countries continuing to be governed by the Left, i.e., Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Other countries continue to be governed by the Right. Mexico saw the return to power of the PRI, a party that has previously governed for seven decades, but recently the Right lost the election to the first leftist president under a multi-party democratic rule. Extending the historical lens further backward one can observe events and trends associated with the democratic transitions of the 1980s, the neo-liberal economic reforms of the 1990s, and the rise of the Leftist populist leaders in the 2000s. Much of the sense of optimism generated with the return to democracy and the adoption of market reforms has waned and replaced with a malaise tied to the persistence of poverty, social and political violence, and economic disappointments.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to politics in Latin America and to develop a framework for understanding major economic, social, and political events. It is designed to acquaint students with some of the basic concepts and approaches adopted for a regional study of Latin America. The course will begin with a broad overview of the region and survey historical patterns and trends since the 1500s, examine the role of political actors and development of major political institutions in Latin America, and consider the immersion of Latin America into the international political system. Special themes and issues of Latin American politics will be examined such as the return to democracy, economic development, political and organized violence. After beginning with a broad overview of the region, the course will proceed to detailed studies of specific countries or sub-regions – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela, and Cuba. We will consider a brief overview of U.S.-Latin America relations. It is intended that by the end of the semester you will have acquired sufficient analytical skills and knowledge with which to analyze political, economic, and international phenomena within the context of Latin America. The final portion of the course will be devoted towards preparing for and carrying out a simulation exercise of a Latin American summit. Students will form delegations of one to two representatives, depending on the size of the country. As representatives of various countries from Latin America you will decide how to organize your delegation based on the issues most important to your country.

Course Objectives:

- Gain factual knowledge about Latin American politics.
Define some of the basic concepts specific to the region.

- Develop an analysis of historical, economic, and political development of Latin America.
- Introduce conceptual frameworks and theories for the study of the region.
- Understand key trends and policy issues in Latin American politics.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- To define concepts and analyze theories adopted for the study of Latin American politics.
- To describe factors that have shaped the development of political systems in Latin America as well as the pursuit of economic models.
- To describe and/or explain contemporary challenges of political governance facing the region.
- To use the scholarly literature to engage in learning and critical thinking.

**Method of Assessing Learning Outcomes**

- Learning outcomes will be assessed via oral presentations, written essays, examinations, and participation in simulation exercise.

**Blackboard**

The teaching of this course is integrated with the Blackboard platform. You will find pertinent information on Blackboard such as a copy of the course syllabus, information about exams, grading system, and your grades. I also will post Powerpoints presentations for the classroom lectures. It is a work-in-progress site and will be built upon as the class unfolds.

To access Blackboard you must have an ASU email account and be registered for this course. To login go to https://blackboard.angelo.edu/ and type in your ASU userid and password. Please try to access Blackboard as soon as possible to make sure that you are enrolled in the course and that you understand the various features of Blackboard.

**Communication**

Office hours are as follows:
M,T,W, R 9:00-10:00 AM; 
M-F 3:00-4:00 PM; and
By appointment also

You can reach me by e-mail, and I will contact you using the ASU email account. To protect your privacy, I do not discuss grades over e-mail. If you use a different email address, please make sure to monitor your ASU email address on a regular basis to receive all transmitted messages.

**Class Format**

To attain these objectives a series of lectures will be provided for studying the region of Latin America. Class sessions will be set aside for lecture presentations, class discussions, and student
engagement in simulation exercises. Each student is expected to attend class on a regular basis, deliver an oral presentation, prepare written assignments, engage in class discussions, take two exams, and participate in an in-class simulation Latin American summit. For the purposes of keeping up with current events for the region of Latin America, students are encouraged to follow a major newspaper, i.e., *The Christian Science Monitor* (www.csmonitor.com), *The Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com), or *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com), plus a high quality news magazine, i.e., *The Economist* (www.economist.com).

**Course Requirements and Grading**

**Attendance and Participation**

Each student is required to regularly attend class and attendance counts as part of the class participation grade. You are expected to be on time for the start of class and to participate actively in the sharing of your ideas during various classrooms discussions. Please note that class participation means more than merely attending class sessions; it also entails doing the class readings and contributing insightful comments and posing questions throughout the class sessions. Your questions, insights, and analysis of courses materials and assigned readings are strongly encouraged and valued. Attendance will be recorded daily via a sign-in sheet. If you have six (6) or more unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered accordingly – one letter grade.

**Map Quiz**

There will be a map quiz early in the semester that will test your knowledge of Latin American geography. You will receive a list of terms countries, cities, and major geographic features, and you will be expected to be able to place these geographic features accurately on a blank map of Latin America. I will provide a study guide.

**Current Events Assignment**

You are responsible for directing a discussion of a current event topic/issue pertaining to a specific country of Latin America. To begin the assignment, you will need to select an article from a newspaper or an appropriate magazine like *The Economist* dealing with a contemporary event topic/issue, for example – migration, corruption, or drug violence. You have considerable freedom to select your topic, but the topic/issue must be relevant to the contemporary political, economic, or social setting of Latin America. To initiate the discussion you will need to distribute to the class a copy of the article on the class day that precedes your presentation.

Recommendations for oral presentation:

- You need to summarize the article while pointing out some concerns or assumptions raised by the article.
- You need to provide enough historical and regional context to “frame” the issue/topic for the class.
- You need to expand on the topic materials, pointing out how the article relates to course content.
- You might expand your research and discuss a relevant journal article that ties in with your presentation.

At the end of your presentation, the class should understand the relevance of your topic/issue to the study of Latin America and hopefully stimulate and provoke the integration of different perspectives towards a broader understanding of the issue or topic. At the conclusion of your presentation, you will need to submit a 600 word document that contains an outline of your presentation or a PowerPoint presentation of at least 7 slides. The assignment of your presentation date will be set at the beginning of the semester. Once the date is set you will not be able to change it. Please note it is important that you distribute a copy of the article ahead of your presentation date.

**Summit Simulation Exercise**

The end of the semester will be devoted to small in-class-conference-simulations based on delegations of country presentations designed around regional topics of Latin America, such as democracy, economic development/growth, security, political instability/violence, and human rights. The class will be asked to prepare and carryout a Latin American summit, where contemporary issues and challenges facing the region of Latin America will be considered from the perspective of a single country. Your role in the simulation is to act as a delegate or representative of a country and to research a contemporary challenge or issue facing your selected country. The goal of the simulation exercise is to build upon the short case study analysis and to extent the study of Latin America to include a more extensive treatment of contemporary challenges facing the region. Once you select a country, you will become part of that country’s delegation, which is participating in the Latin American summit. You have considerable freedom to select your topic, but the topic/issue must be relevant to the contemporary political, economic, or social setting of Latin America. You will be required to submit an issue profile summary, research paper on the analysis of your topic, and a reflection/response paper. Please note that this simulation exercise is a work-in-progress project and that some changes may still be made as the semester progresses and final plans are made for the Latin American summit simulation. Should changes be made, due notice will be provided in Blackboard announcements and class emails.

**Issue profile summary:**

In preparation for the simulation summit you will have to submit an issue profile paper on the specified due date. In one and half pages (500 words, excluding reference citations) students will (1) state the research topic, (2) provide a brief narrative of the topic/challenge, selected for your specific country and researched below, (3) identify major points that you assess are relevant to your analysis, (4) formulate some hypotheses to be explored or major arguments, (5) list two or three scholarly sources (journal articles, excluding Internet citations). The profile summary is due on the date specified in the course syllabus and should be submitted as a hard copy in class. It should cite at least 2 reference sources.
Research topic paper:

Each of you will prepare a topic research paper in which you develop an analysis of a specific issue/challenge relevant to the country that you have selected. You have considerable latitude in selecting a topic, but it must connect to the course materials. You are to consider regional challenges of political governance facing the region of Latin America and focus on one significant challenge from the perspective of your individual country. Among the relevant topics pertinent to the course are immigration, drug trafficking, violence, corruption, and environmental degradation. You will need to research this topic in order to develop an analysis that considers history, major actors, relevant institutions, content/structure of controversy, and policy options. This assignment will require some critical thinking of the respective topic to be treated. Your goal is to analyze this topic with respect to your selected country’s options for handling this challenge and to recommend some policy options for how your country will deal and/or resolve this important issue. Finally, you will need to outline some policy recommendations can be adopted by the summit delegates. Your research topic paper should comprise approximately 2,400 words (seven to eight seven pages) excluding reference page and title page. A useful starting point is the *The Economist* and executing a search for a specific country in mind or the BBC News while executing a search for individual country profile. I will provide additional guidelines as the semester progresses.

Oral presentation:

You will be asked to give a short (8 to 10 minute) presentation on a county and the topic of choice before the conference participants you will be asked to deliver a brief summary of your topic to the entire delegates attending the simulation conference in which you outline the most important points and/or positions. Your presentation will be delivered at the beginning of the simulation summit exercises. To help you deliver this presentation you will need to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that contains at least seven slides:

- a brief description of the topic, include relevant content information and actors
- a visual element of the topic
- a summary of points, observations and goals to be sought

Reflection/response essay:

The second paper is labeled as a post-summit essay. You are to comment with regards to issues and topics discussed at conference. How does your topic relate to other topics and issues presented by other country delegations? How did your participation in the summit conference simulation enhance your understanding of Latin American politics? In addition, you are to briefly comment on the applicability of the theoretical framework for the study of Latin America to the case study that you develop, such as were the theoretical concepts and framework applicable towards understanding the historical, political, and economic development of your selected country. Your response paper should comprise 2,100 words (six to seven pages).

All written assignments must be submitted in hard copy. Your papers must be typed, paginated, and double-spaced with one-inch margins (unjustified) and Times New Roman font with a 12 pt.
size. Please be advised that papers may not be submitted electronically unless you have made advanced arrangements. Be careful to avoid the offence of plagiarism which is the intellectual appropriation of someone else’s ideas or writings.

It is suggested that you consult appropriate scholarly journals. Among the appropriate journals, but not limited to, are: *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (now titled Latin American Politics and Society); *Journal of Latin American Studies; Latin American Research Review; Journal of Inter-American Economic Affairs; Latin American Perspectives; Third World Quarterly; Comparative Politics; Comparative Political Studies; Foreign Affairs; Journal of Democracy; and World Politics.

The due dates for the written assignments of the simulation Latin American summit are specified in the syllabus. Late papers will be penalized by reduction of ½ grade taken off for every day late.

**Current Event News Sources**
[Note: Some may require a subscription for access]

- Wall Street Journal (Newspaper:  http://online.wsj.com/)
- Washington Post (Newspaper: http://www.washingtonpost.com/)
- L.A. Times (UK, Newspaper: http://www.latimes.com/)
- Financial Times (UK, Newspaper: http://www.ft.com/home/uk)
- The Independent (UK, Newspaper:  www.independent.co.uk/)
- The Guardian (UK, Newspaper:  www.guardian.co.uk/)
- The Economist (UK, Magazine: http://www.economist.com/)
- BBC News World (UK, News Channel:  http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/)
- National Public Radio (Radio:  www.npr.org/)

**Examinations**

Your grade will also be determined by two exams (each counting 25%). All exams will be closed book and a combination of multiple-choice, identification, and short essay. They will cover the assigned readings and class discussions. If you miss an exam when scheduled, you are strongly encouraged to notify me within 24 hours so that alternative plans can be arranged. Make-up exams will be granted only in cases of verified absences for health or personal emergency. Make-up exams will be scheduled during the last week of the semester; they will be comprehensive and entirely essay. You will be allowed to take only one make-up exam for the semester.

According to the University Calendar, the last day for a partial or total withdrawal from the University is **Tuesday, November 10, 2020**. Withdrawal grades will be indicated by the letter W.

**Grading System**

Your semester grade will be based on the total number of grade points accumulated for each
course requirement, graded on a 100 point scale. Each course-required item is weighted according to the specified percentage (listed below) and will contribute to your sum total of
semester grade points. The total number of earned semester points equals 100 semester points. Your total semester points will be used to determine your letter grade. The grading scale adopted for determining the letter grade is listed below. In order to be fair to all students it should be considered fairly rigid.

Course Requirements & Component Weighting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American Summit Simulation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Profile Summary</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Topic Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summit Performance</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Exams (25% each)</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quiz (Extra Credit)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading Scale

A=90-100  B=80-89  C=70-79  D=60-69  F=59 and below

[Numeric numbers refer to total semester points]

Required Text:


Additional Class Readings (Short articles and other pertinent materials as made available throughout the semester)

Course Schedule:

[The schedule is a tentative and may vary depending upon class progress. At the instructor’s discretion, there may be some changes to the reading assignments listed below]

August 18: Introduction

What are the rules of the game for this course? What will be the basis for evaluating student performance? Questions pertaining to course requirements and management of the course will be answered.
August 20 – September 8: Conceptual Framework for the study of Latin America

How does one pursue the study of the Southern Hemisphere? Is there a conceptual framework suitable for the study of modern Latin America? Latin American is a region with a rich and diverse history of major political and economic change.

A. Colonial Foundations
B. Strategies for Economic Development
   1. Export-Import Growth
   2. Import-Substitution Model
   3. Socialism
   4. Neoliberalism
C. Political Transformation in the Region
   1. Various types of democratic regimes – oligarchy versus populism
   2. Bureaucratic authoritarian regimes
   3. Return to Democracy
   4. Turn to Left - socialism
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapters 1, 2, 12 and 13.
E. Map Quiz – August 27
F. Student Oral Presentation – September 3

September 10 – September 15: Argentina

How does one develop the case study of Argentina? What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? Periods of colonialism, democracy, authoritarianism, neoliberalism dot the landscape of this country. Major political and economic problems persist. Is there a conceptual framework applicable for this case study?

A. Historical Development
B. Economic Development
C. Political Transformation
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 9.
E. Student Oral Presentation – September 10

September 17 – September 22: Chile

How does one develop the case study of Chile? What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? A country associated with populism, socialism, authoritarianism, neoliberalism and democracy. In what manner is the conceptual framework applicable to this case study?

A. Historical Development
B. Economic Development
C. Political System
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 10.
E. Student Oral Presentation – September 17
September 24: First Exam

September 29 – October 1: Brazil

How does one develop the case study of Brazil? What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? A country associated with democracy and its breakdown, bureaucratic – authoritarianism, and return to democracy with a Leftist twist. Is there a conceptual framework applicable for this case study?

A. Historical Development  
B. Economic Development  
C. Political System  
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 11.  
E. Student Oral Presentation – October 1

October 6 – October 8: Mexico

How does one develop the case study of Mexico? What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? A country associated with a rich colonial history and revolution, seven decades of one party rule, and contemporary violence and political decay. In what manner is the conceptual framework applicable to this case study?

A. Historical Development  
B. Economic Development  
C. Political System  
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 3.  
E. Student Oral Presentation – October 8

October 13 – October 15: Venezuela

How does one develop the case study of Venezuela? A country with a half-century of two-party rule and the transition to a political strongman system. Today a country described as an economic and political basket case despite its vast petroleum reserves. What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? Is there a conceptual framework applicable for this case study?

A. Historical Development  
B. Economic Development  
C. Political System  
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 8.  
E. Student Oral Presentation – October 15
October 20 – October 22:  *Cuba*

How does one develop the case study of Cuba? What are the important events and major themes associated with this case study? A country associated with dictatorship, revolution, and socialism plus authoritarianism. Is there a conceptual framework applicable for this case study?

A. Historical Development  
B. Economic Development  
C. Political System  
D. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 5.  
E. Student Oral Presentation – October 22

**October 27 – Issue Profile Summary Due**

October 27 – November 3:  *U.S.-Latin America Relations*

What basic patterns shape U.S.-Latin America relations? What are the historical dynamics and the major contemporary issues associated with the Inter-American international system?

A. U.S. policy towards Latin America in the 19th and 20th centuries  
B. Challenges of the Inter-American system  
C. Readings: Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 15-16.  
D. Student Oral Presentations – October 29

**November 5: Second Exam**

November 10: Student Oral Presentations

November 12:  *Summit Conference Preparation*

**November 12 – Research Topic Paper due**

November 17 – November 19:  *Summit Conference Presentations*

**November 24: Reflection Essay Due**

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**General Policies related to this course:**

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

Angelo State University Student Handbook  
Angelo State University Catalog
Unprofessional Behavior

A certain classroom decorum based upon mutual respect toward others contributes towards a productive environment. Please note that arriving late without a good reason or making distracting noise in the classroom, i.e., whispering or eating, is unprofessional and a sign of disrespect. Please be sure to turn off cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices with audible signals, and also refrain from bringing food and beverages.

Academic Honesty

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address: http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/) and click on Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU’s Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

Accommodations for Disability

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.
Title IX at Angelo State University

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sex discrimination, sexual misconduct, public indecency, interpersonal violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking are not tolerated at ASU. University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including the above, to the University’s Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. You are encouraged to report any incidents to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator in the Mayer Administration Building, Room 210 at 325-942-2022. For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Religious Holidays:

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day for more information.

COVID-19 Statement

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

Incomplete Grades

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

Copyright Policy

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of
course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.