Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-1:50
Place: Annenberg Hall, G15

Professor: Edward Gibson
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-5
Office: 236 Scott Hall
Tel.: 491-2629
E-mail: egibson@northwestern.edu

Teaching Assistants: Jennifer Cyr (j-cyr@northwestern.edu)
Sylvia Otero (Silvia_otero85@yahoo.com)
Brian Dempsey (briantdempsey@gmail.com)

“Latin America is ungovernable.” Simon Bolivar, on his deathbed in 1830.

This is a course about the dynamics of political governance in Latin America. The objective is to help students develop an understanding of contemporary Latin American politics—some of its more important patterns over time, and how different countries are responding to challenges of development, political stability, and democratization.

No prior coursework on the region is assumed or required.

Course Requirements:

Formal course requirements include timely reading of assignments and regular attendance at lectures and discussion sections. They will also include a mid-term examination and a final take-home essay consisting of two 5-6 page responses to assigned questions.

The reading load will average 100-120 pages per week.

All students are expected to attend class regularly, and to come to class having done the readings. Attending class is important, because lectures will generally not review reading assignments, but will provide additional material and theoretical perspectives that will be important for your exam responses. Timely reading of the assignments is also important for understanding the lectures. I will assume you have done the readings, and will not re-state the background and basic information in them.
Attendance and participation in discussion sections is not only mandatory, it will also be vital to your good performance in this course. If you expect to miss a discussion section you are advised to notify your Teaching Assistant prior to the scheduled meeting time.

The approximate grade distributions for the course will be: mid-term, 35%, final exam, 45%, participation in discussion section, 20%.

The mid-term will be held during the class period of April 25.

The final essay exam will be due on Monday, June 5, at 4 pm. Details on the posting and submission of the exam will be provided during the quarter.

Exceptions will be made for these exam dates and deadlines only for documented cases of illness or family crisis. Students seeking an exception must request it from the instructor prior to the exam or paper deadline.

Course books and readings:

The following books are available for purchase from Norris Bookstore:


All assigned readings other than the Skidmore and Smith will be posted on a “Blackboard CourseInfo” website set up specifically for this class.

Schedule of Classes and Readings:

Introduction: Historical Patterns and Contemporary Trends in Latin American Politics (March 26 and 28) *No sections this week*

Required readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, Modern Latin America: Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2.

The Rise and Legacies of Populism in Latin America: Lessons from Argentina and Mexico (April 2, 4, and 9).

a) Peronism in Argentina
b) The Mexican Revolution
Required readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*: Ch. 3 on Argentina, pp. 69-91; Ch. 8 on Mexico, pp. 254-287.

Chile—A Nation of “Models”: Parliamentary Democracy and Authoritarianism; Socialism and Free Markets (April 1 and 16).

a) Chilean democratic politics until the overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973  
b) Transition to Democracy and the Post (?) Pinochet Era

Required readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*: Chapter 4 on Chile.  
- Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*. Intro, pp. 3-49; 77-80 (read entire selection on the website if you are interested—it’s interesting stuff).  
- Timothy J. Scully, “Chile: The Political Underpinnings of Economic Liberalization,” in Domínguez and Lowenthal, eds., *Constructing Democratic Governance: South America in the 1990s*.  
- Patricio Navia, “Chile’s Middle Class Flexes its Muscles,” *Current History*, February 2012.

Argentina: The Political Economy of (Un)Governability (April 18 and 23)

Required Readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*: Ch. 3 on Argentina, pp. 91-108.  
- Peter Kingstone, Introduction to Chapter 6, pp. 210-213.  

3

Mid-Term Exam, April 25

Mexico: Democracy has Arrived. Now What? (April 30 and May 2).

Required Readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*: Ch. 8 on Mexico, pp. 287-295
- Peter Kingstone, Introduction to Chapter 11, pp. 490-494.
- Pamela Starr, “Mexico’s Big, Inherited Challenges,” *Current History*, February 2012.

Brazil: Leaving the Past Behind? (May 7, 9, and 14)

Required Readings:
- Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 5 on Brazil, esp. pp. 157-180.
Venezuela: What’s Revolutionary about Chavez’s Bolivarian Revolution? (May 16, 21, and 23--documentary film on Chavez on May 21)

Required Readings

-Skidmore, Smith, and Green, Chapter 8.