Latin America at the Start of the XXI Century: 
Coming of Age or Continuing Chaos?

Fall 2019

I. Course description

This seminar focuses on several aspects of Latin America’s problems in the past and their possible solutions today. It takes up such topics as the absence of orderly, peaceful, and steady democratic rule during the first 160 or 170 years of independence from colonial rule and the consolidation of representative democracy today; the absence of economic growth during the last 30 years and the possibility of a new economic takeoff today; the widespread persistence of violence in Latin America and the growing respect for human rights today; and the weakness of civil society in Latin America in the past and the growing strength and vigor of social movements in the region today. For each topic, there are readings dealing with its political, economic, and cultural dimensions in both past and present.

II. Course requirements

Midterm Examination: 30%
The midterm exam will cover the topics discussed in class between Weeks 1-6. It will be held on October 21, 2019 (to be confirmed).

Final Examination: 25%
The final exam will cover all topics discussed during the course, but relying more heavily on Weeks 7-13.

One-pager reading responses: 10%
Students will deliver a one-page reading response six times during semester (Weeks 2-4-6-8-10-12). Responses will address prompts assigned by the graduate assistant. Responses should not summarize the class readings, but rather show the student’s capacity to analyze the topics at hand and to relate it to contemporary events in Latin America.

Class participation: 5%
Students are encouraged to participate throughout the lecture. Students are only allowed to be absent from class twice throughout the semester. After the third unexcused absence, students will be deducted a full letter from their final grade.

Final Paper: 30%
In consultation with the graduate assistant, students are expected to write a 10-15 page paper. While not intended to produce original research, it should address a topic of interest to the student that is linked to the general topic of the course. Final paper topics should be defined by Week 5 at the latest. The paper will be due on December 14th.
III. Meeting Information

Professor
Jorge G. Castañeda
Jorge.castañeda@nyu.edu

Graduate Assistant
Vaclav Masek
vaclav.masek@nyu.edu
(send email to set up office hours)

Class Meetings
Mondays 9:30-12:00
King Juan Carlos II Center, Room 404W
53 Washington Square South

IV. Required Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the University bookstore:


Additional articles on current events and other required reading materials will be made available on NYU Classes as the semester progresses.

V. Required Films

An attachment uploaded to NYU Classes contains the list of films that will be viewed throughout the semester. All of them can be accessed through various streaming platforms (Netflix, Amazon, YouTube). Students can use the films as part of their weekly written responses, but should not rely entirely on them in their writing.

It is expected that students watch all of the films listed, as questions regarding their themes may appear on the midterm and final. Prof. Castañeda may also suggest additional films depending on how class discussion.

VI. Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
VII. Weekly Schedule

A. INDEPENDENT LIFE & THE CONSOLIDATION OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY.

Week 1: September 9th - Total Reading: 102 pages

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2012. Why Nations Fail. Ch. 3 (pp. 70-95), Ch. 4. Random House: NY.


Complementary Readings


NOTE: STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE READ EVERYTHING PRIOR TO WEEK 1

Week 2: September 16th - Total Reading: 116 pages

Reid, Michael. 2017. Forgotten Continent. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (Ch. 5 pp 113-133, Ch. 11: 301-328).


Complementary Readings


**B. THE PERSISTENCE OF VIOLENCE, THE GROWING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY.**

**Week 3: September 23th - Total Reading: 387 pages**


**Film:** No. 2012. Dir. Pablo Larrain. (Related to Ch. 6 in Rosenberg's *Children of Cain*).

**Complementary Readings**


**Week 4: September 30th - Total Reading: 93 pages**


Borzutzky S. (2017) Conclusions. In: Human Rights Policies in Chile. (Ch. 8, pp. 219- 224)

**Film:** *Cidade de Deus*. 2002. Dir. Fernando Meirelles.

**Complementary Readings**


**Week 5: October 7th**

**NO CLASSES SCHEDULED**

**NOTE:** FINAL PAPER TOPIC SHOULD BE DEFINED BY THIS DATE.
C. THE ABSENCE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS,THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW ECONOMIC TAKE-OFF.

Week 6: October 14th - Total Reading: 124 pages


Sebastian Edwards. 2010. Left Behind: Latin America and the false promise of populism, University of Chicago Press. (Ch. 1 and 2, pp 1-46).


Complementary Readings


Week 7: October 21st

MID-TERM EXAM

Week 8: October 28th - Total Reading: 88 pages

Sebastian Edwards. 2010. Left Behind: Latin America and the false promise of populism, University of Chicago Press. (Ch. 2-4, pp.21-100).

Film: La dictadura perfecta. 2014. Dir. Luis Estrada.

Complementary Readings


D. THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA:
FROM CONFLICT AND MISTRUST TO COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION.

Week 9: November 4th - Total Reading: 81 pages


Long, Tom. 2015. Latin America Confronts the United States Asymmetry and Influence, Cambridge University Press. (Ch. 1 pp. 1 – 24)


Week 10: November 11th - Total Reading: 51 pages


Complementary Readings


E. OTHER ISSUES: IMMIGRATION POLICY AND DRUG TRAFFICKING.

**Week 11: November 18th - Total Reading: 222 pages**


*Complementary Readings*

González Viaña, Eduardo. 2007. "Dante's Ballad" (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press).


**Week 12: November 25th - Total Reading: 75 pages**

“Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy, Drugs & Democracy: Toward a Paradigm Shift.” *Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy* (pp. 7-41).


*Complementary Readings*


F. LATIN AMERICA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY.

Week 13: December 2\textsuperscript{nd} - Total Reading: 85 pages


Week 14: December 9\textsuperscript{th}

No readings assigned

NOTE: FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 14\textsuperscript{TH} 5:00PM

FINAL EXAMINATION: DECEMBER 16\textsuperscript{TH} (9:30am-11:30am, ROOM 404W KJC II)