SPRING 2012
Class meeting times: MWF 10:00 - 10:50 at G-316
Office Hours are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m. or by appointment at the trailer of the Sociology and Anthropology Departments. Look for Betances’ Office, #7. These appointments can be arranged by phone 6299 or email: ebetance@gettysburg.edu

RE-INVENTING LATIN AMERICAN SOCIETIES (SOC/LAS 331)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a comparative study of Latin American democracies. The course explores the different approaches to the study of democratic theory and then moves on to look at the Latin American experience. The core of the course will focus on two fundamental factors: 1) The development of the political regime and 2) the popular challenge to the implementation of neoliberal economic policies in the latter third of the 20th century. What caused democratic regimes to emerge and survive? What are their main achievements and shortcomings? What were the implications of Neoliberal economic reforms for the development of democracy?
GOALS FOR THE COURSE: OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The course provides a comparative and historical overview of the development of democracy in Latin America. It begins with the premise that since 1978 Latin America has seen an unparalleled process of democratization, which has created opportunities and threats to the status quo. This process occurred in the context of widespread socio-economic polarization promoted by a wholesale application of Neoliberal economic policies that have threatened the stability of democratic regimes. Approaches used to frame lectures and discussions will include comparative historical, sociological, structural, and institutional analysis. The instructor will use these theoretical constructs to explain the following questions: What explains the dramatic and historically unprecedented burst of democratization between 1978 and 1992, and what explains the difficulties of achieving further advances in democratization since 1992?

LEARNING GOALS FOR THE STUDENTS

Students will be expected to understand that Latin American nation states and societies have undergone drastic social, economic, and political change due to great external pressures (international politics, lending agencies, global market forces, etc.) and internal pressures (military regimes, revolutions, old and new social movements, new economic groups, war on drugs, etc.). Similarly, they will learn to the democratic process in the context shifting priorities both at the national and international level. In particular, they should comprehend that U.S. interests in the region have a strong influence in the success or failure of democracy. In addition, they should understand the following concepts: democracy, governance, democratic elections, political parties, “pacted” democracy, populism, ideology, revolution, political culture, institutional analysis, social capital, structural analysis,
civil society, civil military relations, political power, citizenship, clientelism, social movement, Neoliberalism, and non-governmental organizations.

REQUIREMENTS:

This course is taught in a seminar format. This means that students must come prepared to every class. Class participation is an integral part of the course and crucial for its successful completion. Thus, attendance is mandatory. Students will be allowed one excused absence. Additional absences will have a negative impact on the final grade. Students must keep in mind that class participation must be meaningful, which requires careful readings of materials assigned. Volunteering to make a presentation may help, but it is not sufficient to receive a good grade. Students who receive an A must always be prepared to significantly participate in class discussions. Sports events will not qualify for excused absences. Students must buy a memory stick to save their work. Excuses that a computer malfunction the night before a paper is due will not be accepted. Students must also attend two lectures sponsored by the Latin American Studies Program. All assignments must be submitted in a timely fashion. Finally, all cell phone must be turned off during class time. Students caught texting will be excused the first time. Subsequently, for each time a student is caught texting he/she will lose half a letter grade.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKE-HOME EXAMS.

All examinations must be taken as scheduled and assignments must be delivered on specified dates. The mid-term and final examination will consist of take-home exams. The instructor will provide make-up examinations for students with an official excuse. Should a student know that she/he will be absent on the day of an examination, she/he must discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible. In case of unforeseen absences (illness or other emergencies), students must notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before or on the day of the examination.

SUBMITTING EXAMS LATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE. EXAMS MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN AND DOUBLE SPACED. HANDWRITTEN EXAMS WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR SUBMISSION.

THE RESEARCH PAPER

The research proposal is the first step in preparing an excellent paper. Students must explain why they have chosen a given topic, give a brief description of the project, and provide at least two important research questions about their subject of study. The proposal must also include a discussion of the theoretical framework appropriate for the examination of the issue under consideration. Students’ paper must focus on some aspects of democracy in anyone of the following countries: Venezuela, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina. If a student wants to study a different case study, she/he must have permission from the instructor. Research paper proposals with instructor’s comments must be attached to the final paper. This means that students cannot change their research topic without prior consultation with the instructor.

Consultations with the instructor will be useful to choose and define topics, discuss the appropriate theoretical framework for the research questions and select
bibliographical references. Once the instructor has graded the proposals, student must make an appointment to see Amy Ward at the College library. They will also receive a list of academic journals and websites focusing on Latin American affairs.

It is expected that students will read three research articles or portions of a book or two prior to writing their proposals. The research paper proposal must also contain a preliminary bibliography. Students must attach their graded proposal to the final version of their papers.

The paper must include a bibliography and proper references. Papers must have minimum of 20 pages, title, introduction, body, and conclusion. Students must number all the pages and sign the honor code at the end of the paper. They might want to consult with the Writing Center at the CUB (extension 7574) to ensure the use of proper grammar and excellent organizational mechanics. In the final version of their research papers, students must demonstrate they have actually read six journal articles and sections from not less than 7 books. Finally, students must use American Sociological Association Style Guide to provide appropriate citations and bibliography.

IMPORTANT DATES:
Paper proposal is due – 2/17
Students must arrange meetings with Amy Ward after proposals are graded and returned to them.
Latin American lectures: 2/21; 2/27, and 3/26. Students must attend two of these lectures.
Take home mid-term examination – Receive exam on 2/29 (Wednesday) during class time and return it to my office on 3/1 (Thursday) at 11 a.m.
Research paper is due – 4/30
Take-home final exam –: Students will receive a take-home exam on May 11 at 1:30 p. m. and will return it to my office on May 12 at 4:30 p.m.
GRADING POLICY
Take home 1: 20%
Take home 2: 25%
Paper proposal: 10%
Research paper: 30%
Class participation 15%

REQUIRED TEXTS


SECTION I: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY


SECTION II: REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY


Mid-term exam: Take home: Students will receive the exam in class on 2/29 (Wednesday) and will return it to my office by 11 a.m. on 3/1 (Thursday).


Spring break begins March 9 (Friday) at 5 p.m. and ends March 19 (Monday) at 8 a.m.


SECTION IV: CHALLENGING THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF DEMOCRATIC REGIMES


Week 11: (4/9 - 4/13): Large-Scale Mobilizations as Citizens Responses to the Crisis. Epstein and Pion-Berlin, chapters 5 and 6
SECTION V: CASE STUDIES

