RE-INVENTING LATIN AMERICAN SOCIETIES (SOC/LACLS 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: The development of the democratic states and 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?
The Gettysburg College Curriculum is organized around four major components: learning how to look at the world from multiple perspectives (multiple inquiries); learning how to combine different perspectives to form a deeper understanding of the social world (integrative thinking); learning how to share knowledge and information with others in a clear and effective manner (effective communication); and learning how to use the knowledge and information gained to make a contribution to communal life (informed citizenship). This class touches upon all of the components of the College curriculum. Thus, not only will we look at various theoretical perspectives (multiple inquiries), you will also be encouraged to combine the insights that you gain from this class with those of other classes that you are taking (integrative thinking). The reaction papers, class assignments, and exams of this class will also be opportunities to improve how you communicate.

**Learning Outcomes for 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.

**Goals for the course: Theory 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 factors can explain the difficulties of achieving further advances in democratization during the 1990s? Are the radical governments that emerged during the first decade of the 21st century the beginning of a process of radicalization of liberal democracy in the region.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Supervised students’ work

1) Paper proposal: In preparing a proposal students must develop a bibliography of 7 books and three or more research articles. They will consult with the instructor in the selection of their paper topics, discuss the research
questions, and carefully read 3 research articles and portions of at least two books before writing a 3 page proposal. The proposal must include the preliminary bibliography. See instruction for research paper below = 8 hours.

2) Attend a **library workshop** for one hour instruction given by a librarian = **1 hour.**

3) Attend two lectures or activities of the Latin American Studies Program = **3 hours.**

4) Researching and writing a 20-page research paper includes: Reading 7 books, re-reading the 5 research articles, consulting with the instructor to discuss the theoretical framing of the research questions, bibliographical issues, writing a draft of paper, taking it to the College Writing Center, and editing the final copy = **30 hours.**

5) Read a novel assigned by the instructor (see instructions on how to read a novel) = **4 hours.**

6) Writing the review of the novel includes reading three professional reviews published in journals, drafting it, having it checked at the Writing Center, and editing the final copy = **5 hours.**

**Total = 51 hours.**

**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. Students will not be allowed to use computer for note taking unless there is explicit authorization from the instructor. 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.

WRITING SUMMARY OF SELECTED CHAPTERS

This course requires that students prepare written summaries of selected chapters throughout the semester. They will receive questions before reading the assignments and must hand-in their summaries when they come to class. The preparation of these summaries will ensure that students are prepared for a class discussion. Students will not be allowed to send these summaries via email.

Book review: *Adios Muchachos. A Memoir of the Sandinista Revolution* by Sergio Ramírez

A book review is not a book report (10 full pages). A book report tells us what the book says. A reviewer seeks to put the work under discussion in the larger context of the literature and how effectively the author communicates his/her arguments to the readers. Summarizing the content of the book is important, but it should not take more than two pages. The real task of the reviewer is to think about the book, how it relates to this course, and what it means.

Two-third of the review must focus on the following areas: 1) Why did the Sandinistas leadership who lived under a strict code of conduct during the
revolutionary war changed and became corrupt? What were the political consequences of this change? 2) The Sandinistas formed a political front that included three important factions: Popular Prolonged War, the Proletariat and the Third Way. Why do you think that the Third Way was able to take the leadership of the revolutionary movement? 3) According to the Sergio Ramirez what was the greatest, unintended, legacy of the Sandinista Revolution? 4) What were the greatest blunders of the Sandinistas and why did they lead to the government defeat in the elections of 1990? 5) What is your evaluation of Sergio Ramirez memoir and why do you hold that evaluation? These five parts are not necessarily separate, but you must address them. Take time to read this memoir, think about it as you read it and try to summarize it in your own words. Avoid lengthy quotes.

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, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, and Perú. 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 3 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.*

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.

Latin American Lectures:
All the following lectures will take place at 6:30. Location: McCreary Hall Room 115, Bowen Auditorium. Students must attend two of these lectures.

February 16th
István Urcuyo, Associate Professor of Biology
Gettysburg College
“Environmental Threats of Nicaragua’s New Interoceanic Canal”

March 16th
Silvia Tandeciarz, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literature
College of William and Mary
“Framing Absence: The Visual Turn in Post-Dictatorship Argentina’s Labor of Memory”

April 6th
Rita Urquijo-Ruiz, Associate Professor of Spanish and Modern Languages and Literature
Trinity University
“Pachucas & aCholas in the Philharmonic: María Elena Gaitáns’ Performance Art”

IMPORTANT DATES:

Library Workshop schedule on 1/30
Paper proposal is due – 2/23
Students must arrange meetings with Mallory Jallas throughout the semester to prepare proposal and conduct their research.
Take home mid-term examination – Receive exam on 2/25 (Wednesday) during class time and return it to my office on 2/26 (Thursday) by 4 p.m.
Discussion of Adios Muchachos on 3/20
Review of Adios Muchachos due on 3/30
Research paper is due – 4/27
Take-home final exam –: Students will receive a take-home exam on May 5 at 1:30 p.m. and will return it to my office on May 6 at 4:30 p.m.

GRADING POLICY
Take home 1: 20%
Take home 2: 25%
Paper proposal: 5%
Research paper: 30%
Review: 10%
Class participation 10%

REQUIRED TEXTS


SECTION I: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

Week 1: (1/19- 1/23): Comparative Political Theory and Latin American Area Studies, Hellinger, Introduction and Part 1, chapter 1. **Write a summary of chapter 1 by responding to questions posed at the beginning of the chapter.**

Week 2: (1/26 – 1/30): History: Colonial Legacies, Mass Politics, and Democracy. Hellinger, chapters 2 and 3. **Write a summary of chapter 3 following the questions at the beginning of the chapter.**

Library workshop scheduled on 1/30.

Week 3: (2/2 – 2/6): Democratic, Autocratic, and Populist threads
Hellinger, read chapter 4 and Journal article: “Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy” by Margaret Canovan (Politics Studies (1999), XLVII,
Instructor will provide the questions to help you summarize the article. In addition, read case studies in Chapter 5, pp 132-153.

Week 4: (2/9 -2/13): Development, Dependency, and Democratic Breakdown. Hellinger, chapters 6 and 7. Write a summary of chapter 7 following the questions provided at the beginning of the chapter.

Week 5: (2/16 – 2/20): Pacted Democracies and Transitions. Hellinger, chapters 8 and 9. Write a summary of chapter 9 following the questions at the beginning of the chapter.


Research paper proposal due on 2/23

Mid-term exam: Take home: Students will receive the exam in class on 2/25 (Wednesday) and will return it to my office on 2/26 at 4 p.m. (Thursday).

SECTION II: DEMOCRACY, NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Week 7: (3/2 – 3/6): Political Parties, State Institutions, and Human Rights Chapters 12 and 13. Write a summary of chapter 12 following questions at the beginning of the chapter.

Spring break begins March 6 (Friday) at 5 p.m. and ends March 16 (Monday) at 8 a.m.

Week 8: (3/16 – 3/20): Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Trade Hellinger, chapters 14 and 15. Write a summary of the chapter 14 following questions at the beginning of the chapter.

Discussion of Adios Muchachos on 3/20
Week 9: (3/23– 3/27): The United States and Latin American Democracies. Chapter 16 and afterword. Write a summary of chapter 16 following the questions at the beginning of the chapter.

Review of Adios Muchachos due on 3/30

SECTION IV: Challenges and Complexities of the Latin American Democratization Process

Week 10: (3/30 – 4/3): Theoretical, Historical, and International Background. Ellner, see Introduction, chapters 1, 2 and 3. Write a summary of chapter 1, 2, and 3 (instructor will provide questions for all the chapters on the Ellner’s book)


Week 12: 4/13 – 4/17: Influences of the Twentieth-First Century Radical Left in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cuba. Chapters 6, 8 and 9. Write a summary of chapters 6, 7 and 8

Chapter 9 and 10. Write a summary of chapter 9 and 10.

Research paper is due 4/27


Take home final examination: Pick up the exam on Tuesday, May 5, 1:30 P.M. and return it to me on Wednesday, May 6 at 4:30 p.m.