GOVT 4000: Dictators and Democrats in Modern Latin America

Fall 2010

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Office Hours: By appointment
Class Location:  Uris Hall 494
Class Time:  Thursdays, 12:20pm-2:15pm

GOALS OF THE COURSE

This course has two principal goals. The first and foremost goal of the course is to introduce you to the study in political science of dictatorships and democracies. While some of the readings will draw from textbooks, many will be drawn from academic journals and books. By the end of the course, you should be able to answer the following questions in thoughtful and informed ways:

- What are the important differences between dictatorships and democracies?
- How do political scientists think of causality, and what do they mean by a “theory”?
- What causes democracies or dictatorships to come into existence?
- What effects do democracies and dictatorships cause with regard to outcomes we may care about, such as economic development, poverty, and inequality?

The second goal of the course is to introduce you to the political history of Latin America. Please note that this is not, however, a history course. Our study of the history of Latin America will be instrumental, in the sense that it will be used to analyze the theories of dictatorships and democracies we study. Despite this instrumentality, you will hopefully exit the course knowing more about Latin America and its history than you do now. In particular, you will investigate one country’s experience in the context of some of the theoretical readings of the class, examining the causes and/or effects of a political regime in that country.

PRE-REQUISITES

There are no formal pre-requisites for this course.

GRADING

Exercises related to the first goal of the course:

Class participation: 25%

- Rather than leaving this aspect of the grade relatively vague, there will be a set grading formula. Each of the 12 “substantive” classes (leaving out the introductory class and the final review) will be worth 2 percentage points. These will be divided into attendance (1) and participation (1). The final
review will be worth one point. Therefore, if you attend all the classes and get perfect scores on the case study and exams, you will still only get a B unless you participate in the class sessions.

Let me add here a note on attendance: please do not feel you need to send me excuses for missing class. With the spread of influenza and the normal complications of life, I understand that students may miss a class or two. If you miss only one or even two classes, it should not affect your final grade. Obviously, if for some reason you are going to miss more than that, do let me know.

Take-home final exam: 40%
- The format will be announced beforehand. The exam will be distributed on the last day of class and will be due at the end of the scheduled exam period for this class (to be determined).

Exercise related to the second goal of the course:

Case Study: 35%
- In the third class session, you will choose one of the case study questions on the syllabus. Your answer to this question should be about 3500 words long. It is due at midnight one week before the class session for which the case study is assigned (that is, 11:59pm on the Wednesday one week before the class for which the paper is written). Note: This is true regardless of whether or not there is a holiday during your week. Your paper will be distributed to the class and discussed on the day in question. You will be downgraded one letter grade for every day late—exceptions will only be granted under truly extreme circumstances (“I have a lot of work this week” is not an extreme circumstance).

CORNELL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Participation in this class commits students and instructors to abide by Cornell’s expectations and policies regarding equal opportunity and academic integrity. Further, it implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity. Violations of the University Code of Academic Integrity will be firmly dealt with in this class. The Code can be found on the web at:

http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html

In addition, I will observe all university policies addressing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual preference, or religious discrimination and all forms of harassment; I will conduct class in conformance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students are expected
to familiarize themselves with pertinent policies and to bring any concerns related to them to my attention.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

These books have been ordered in the bookstore, but you may find them cheaper on Amazon.com or a similar site. If you order from such a site, make sure you order the correct edition number.


**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

NOTE: Readings are to be read before the class period for which they are listed. If a reading is not on Blackboard, it is available through the Cornell Library’s e-journals. If you cannot find a reading for some reason, please contact me. As all of the readings are readily available, I will not accept “I couldn’t find the reading” as an excuse for being unprepared for class.

**Part I: Introduction**
August 26: Introduction to course
September 2: Film: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*
September 9: Democracy, dictatorship, and the region
September 16: Institutions, actors, and preferences
September 23: An introduction to theories and research design

**Part II: Causes of Political Regime Change**
September 30: The colonial legacy
October 7: Growth, culture, and social change
October 14: Modernization and the bureaucratic authoritarianism critique
October 21: Class-based arguments
October 28: Institutions

**Part III: What effects do (and can) political regimes have?**
November 4: Growth, inequality, and poverty
November 11: International influences on the effects of regimes
November 18: Domestic influences on the effects of regimes
*November 25: Thanksgiving*
December 2: Review
READINGS

In most weeks, there are three types of readings: the textbook readings, academic book chapters or articles, and readings from the Cardoso book. I have listed the readings in the general order in which I think they should be read in order to get the most out of them.

Part I: Introduction

August 26 – Introduction to course

September 2 – Film: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised


- Skidmore, Smith, & Green, Chapter 8
  o “Venezuela,” particularly 230-243

Total pages: 34

September 9 – Democracy, Dictatorship, and the Region

- Read the course syllabus and make sure you understand it

- Wiarda and Kline: Chapters 1, 8, and 9
  o “The Context of Latin American Politics”, pp. 1-10
  o “The Struggle for Democracy in Latin America”, pp. 185-228
  o “Conclusion: Democracy in Latin America”, pp. 229-244


Optional:


September 16 – Institutions, actors, and preferences

- Wiarda and Kline, Chapter 5
  - “Interest Groups”, pp. 71-118


Total pages: 153

September 23 – An Introduction to Theories and Research Design


Part II: Causes of Political Regime Change

September 30 – The Colonial Legacy

- Wiarda and Kline, Chapter 2

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: Chapter 2


  - Make sure you also read the comments of Miguel Urquiola and Daron Acemoglu included in these pages.

- Cardoso, Chapters 1 and 2
  - “The Emperor and the General,” pp. 9-30

  Total pages: 196

Optional:

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: the “From Colony to Nationhood” sections
  - Mexico: 45-54
  - Central America: 86-91
  - Cuba: 121-124
  - The Andes: 151-153
October 7 – Growth, Culture, and Social Change

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: “Overview: Economic Growth and Social Change” sections (52 pages)
  - Central America and the Caribbean: 91-97
  - Cuba: 124-128
  - The Andes: 153-163
  - Colombia: 198-203
  - Venezuela: 226-230
  - Argentina: 248-253
  - Chile: 280-284
  - Brazil: 315-321

- Wiarda and Kline: Chapter 3
  - “Changing Political Culture”, pp. 31-50


- Cardoso, Chapter 3
  - “All Bubbles Must Burst,” pp. 31-56

Total pages: 177

Costa Rica: Costa Rica is often called “Latin America’s Oldest Democracy.” To what extent can this be attributed to Costa Rica’s culture? In answering this question, make sure to explore the country’s transition to democracy and any times the democracy seemed in danger.

Optional:
- Skidmore, Smith, & Green, Chapter 14
  o “Culture and Society”, pp. 403-437.

October 14 – Modernization and the Bureaucratic Authoritarianism Critique


- Cardoso, Chapter 4
  o “A Recipe for a Coup,” pp. 57-76

Total pages: 180

October 21: Class-based arguments

- Skidmore and Smith, Chapter 13
  o “Dynamics of Political Transformation”, pp. 376-402

- Wiarda and Kline: Chapter 4


- Cardoso, Chapters 5 and 6


CASE STUDY – Colombia: The Rueschemeyer, et al., argument focuses, among other things, on the character of the export economy. To what extent, and in what way, has Colombia’s past and current export economy affected its political regimes?

October 28 – Institutions

- Wiarda and Kline: First part of Chapter 7
  - “Government Machinery, The Role of the State, and Public Policy”, pp. 145-162


- Cardoso, Chapters 7 and 8
  - “Change, Now!” pp. 125-154
  - “Kings of the Jungle,” pp. 155-178
Total pages: 192

Optional:

- Wiarda and Kline: Chapter 6 and first part of Chapter 7
  - “Political Parties”, pp. 119-144
  - “Government Machinery, the State, and Public Policy”, pp. 145-162.

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: Sections on “Politics and Policy: Patterns of Change” and “The Contemporary Scene” (Also optional for next class)

CASE STUDY – Venezuela: Venezuela’s 1958 Punto Fijo has been called the “model” of a political pact. What was the Punto Fijo, who were the main players involved, and what were its effects on Venezuela’s political system?

Part III: Effects of Political Regimes

November 4: Growth, Inequality, and Poverty

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green, Chapter 12
  - “Strategies for Economic Development”, pp. 351-375

- Wiarda and Kline: second part of Chapter 7
  - “Government Machinery, the State, and Public Policy”, pp. 162-184.


- Cardoso, Chapter 9
  - “A Real President,” pp. 179-202

Total pages: 187

Optional
CASE STUDY – Cuba: Discuss the political incentives in Cuba for providing public services. Have these changed over time? Do you think they can explain the differences in social outcomes in Cuba as opposed to other Latin American countries?

CASE STUDY – Peru: It has been said that Peru’s land reform “was motivated by a desire to quell an incipient guerrilla movement and to reduce the rural oligarchy’s political power”? Discuss the political landscape in Peru during this time, and argue whether or not you agree with this statement. (The quotation is from Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege. 1995. Latin America’s Economy: Diversity, Trends, and Conflicts. Cambridge: MIT Press.)

November 18: International influences on the effects of regimes


- Chomsky, Noam. 1993. What Uncle Sam Really Wants. Odonian Press. Read at least two of the following:
  - “The Crucifixion of El Salvador”:
  - “Teaching Nicaragua a Lesson”
  - “Making Guatemala a Killing Field”
  - “The Invasion of Panama”
    - http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/ChomOdon_Panama.html


CASE STUDY – Chile: Discuss the tools by which the U.S. involved itself in the fall of the Allende and Pinochet regimes. What were the interests the U.S. had regarding each transition?

CASE STUDY – Bolivia: In 1985, Bolivia embarked on one of the most dramatic stabilization programs witnessed in Latin America. To what extent can this program be attributed to international influences (such as international advisors or organizations), and why were these influences powerful, or not?

Optional:


November 11: Domestic influences on the effects of regimes


- Cardoso, Chapter 11

Total pages: 138

- CASE STUDY – Argentina: Argentina’s federal system presents certain challenges to the national government in terms of fiscal stability. What role have these challenges played in Argentina’s recent history of economic crises?

- CASE STUDY – Mexico: Mexico has been said to still have “authoritarian enclaves,” despite its transition to democracy. What does this mean, where are they, and why do they exist?

Optional:


November 25: Thanksgiving

December 2: Review

- Cardoso, Chapter 12
  o “The Land of the Future,” pp. 251-276

Total pages: 26

TAKE HOME FINAL