GOVT 4000: Dictators and Democrats in Modern Latin America

Spring 2010

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        White Hall 315
Office Hours:    By appointment
Class Location:  Stimson 119
Class Time:  Wednesdays, 10:10am-12:05pm

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).* 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).

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
January 27: Introduction
February 3: Democracy, dictatorship, and the region
February 10: Rules, actors, and preferences
February 17: Film: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised
February 24: An introduction to theories and research design

Part II: Causes of Political Regime Change
March 3 – The colonial legacy
March 10 – Growth, culture, and social change
March 17 – Modernization and the bureaucratic authoritarianism critique
March 24 – Spring break
March 31: Class-based arguments
April 7 – Institutions

Part III: What effects do (and can) political regimes have?
April 14: Growth, inequality, and poverty
April 21: Domestic influences on the effects of regimes
April 28: International influences on the effects of regimes
May 5: Review

Part I: Introduction
January 27 – Introduction to course
February 3 – Democracy, Dictatorship, and the Region

- Read the course syllabus and make sure you understand it

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

- 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


  Total pages: 173

February 10 – Rules, actors, and preferences

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


  Total pages: 157

February 17 – Film: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*


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

  Total pages: 34

February 24 – An Introduction to Theories and Research Design


Total pages: 163

**Part II: Causes of Political Regime Change**

March 3 – The Colonial Legacy

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: Chapter 2

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: the “From Colony to Nationhood” sections
  - Mexico: 45-54
  - Central America: 86-91
  - Cuba: 121-124
  - The Andes: 151-153
  - Colombia: 191-194
  - Venezuela: 220-224
  - Argentina: 244-248
  - Chile: 278-280
  - Brazil: 306-315


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

Total pages: 199

March 10 – Growth, Culture, and Social Change

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: “Overview: Economic Growth and Social Change” sections
  - 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: Chapters 2 and 3
  - “The Pattern of Historical Development”, pp. 11-30
  - “Changing Political Culture”, pp. 31-50

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green, Chapter 14


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*Costa Rica: Costa Rica is often called “Latin America’s Oldest Democracy”. When did it transition to a democracy, and has its regime ever been in danger or fallen?*

March 17 – Modernization and the Bureaucratic Authoritarianism Critique


CASE STUDY – Brazil: O’Donnell classifies Brazil’s regime as “bureaucratic authoritarian”? How did this type of regime come into place in Brazil, and how did it fall?

March 24 – Spring Break

March 31: Class-based arguments

- Wiarda and Kline: Chapter 4


  Total pages: 174

Optional


CASE STUDY – Colombia: The Rueschemeyer, et al., argument focuses, among other things, on the character of the export economy. Discuss Colombia’s past and current export economy, focusing on who primarily benefits from it and its implications for the political situation there.
April 7 – Institutions

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


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Optional (this class and next)

- Skidmore, Smith, & Green: Sections on “Politics and Policy: Patterns of Change” and “The Contemporary Scene”

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

April 14: Growth, Inequality, and Poverty

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

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


  Total pages: 164

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.)
April 21: Domestic influences on the effects of regimes


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CASE STUDY – Bolivia: Discuss the domestic political context of Bolivia’s 1985 stabilization. To what extent do the effects of the stabilization (and what are those?) reflect the political realities at the time?

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?

April 28: 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](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/ChomOdon_Panama.html)


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*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 – Argentina: Discuss the role of the International Monetary Fund in Argentina since 1991. How has the political system in Argentina contributed to Argentina’s relations with the Fund?*

May 5: Review

**TAKE HOME FINAL**