

# **Introduction to Latin American Politics**

## **POLS 2570**

Spring 2021  
Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45  
Morrissey #0400

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Zoom link for online class: <https://slu.zoom.us/j/96138418222>

\*Security code: 716001

Office hours- Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00am-12:00pm via Zoom.

\*I am available by appointment at other times. The easiest way to make an appointment is via email.

Zoom link for office hours: <https://slu.zoom.us/j/99167471505>

\*Security code: 902369

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

Welcome! This course is designed to introduce students the political systems of Latin America. We will focus both on theoretical explanations for general political and economic phenomenon such as economic growth, democratization (and the breakdown of democracy), social movements and revolutions, and US involvement in Latin America as well as on specific case studies that highlight the diverse experiences of different Latin American countries.

My goals for the course are the following:

- 1) Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of the historical roots of contemporary Latin American politics.
- 2) Students will master the major theoretical perspectives used to explain political and economic outcomes in Latin America.
- 3) Students will acquire specific knowledge about different countries and political systems.
- 4) Students will hone their critical reasoning skills through careful reading and discussion of competing arguments.
- 5) Students will develop their abilities to write short, focused essays.
- 6) Students will leave the course with the ability to make informed and reasoned judgements about a wide variety of issues facing contemporary Latin America.

Welcome!

**Required texts:**

All required texts are available for purchase at the Saint Louis University Bookstore in the Busch Student Center. Readings that are NOT in the required books will be posted to Blackboard. The required textbook for the course is:

Harry Vanden and Gary Prevost. 2020. *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Course requirements and grading:**

*Mid-term exam: 25 points*

This exam will be given during regular class time on March 18<sup>th</sup> and will consist of essay questions.

*Final exam or research project: 25 points*

This exam will be given on May 13<sup>th</sup> at 8am and will consist of essay questions.

*Two papers: 20 points each (40 points total)*

Each student will submit two short papers over the course of the semester. Each paper should be 3 to 4 pages in length. These papers give you the opportunity to explore in greater depth a particular theme that we discuss in class. Papers should involve additional research (at least 2 *non-internet* sources in addition to any readings from class). The first essay will be due on or before March 16<sup>nd</sup> and the second will be due on or before May 6<sup>th</sup>. Students have 5 options to choose from in deciding what type of paper they will write, and students may *not* write more than one paper from the same category:

1. Policy paper- Identify a specific problem in a country of interest and identify realistic solutions (or partial solutions) to the problem, taking into account the relevant political and economic constraints the country faces.
2. Historical analysis- Identify an important event or historical process in Latin



**Academic Integrity :**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.*

The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [anna.kratky@slu.edu](mailto:anna.kratky@slu.edu); 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or -877-525-5669 or

online at [https://www.lighthouse-services.com/\\_StandardCustomURL/LHILandingPage.asp](https://www.lighthouse-services.com/_StandardCustomURL/LHILandingPage.asp).

for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020. Please take a moment to review the new policy and information on the following web address: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you>. Please contact Anna Kratky, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

### **Mandatory Statement on Face Masks (Spring 2021):**

*Interim Policy on Face Masks* governs all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors in all University-owned, leased, or operated facilities. All persons physically present in any such University facility associated with this course shall comply fully with this policy at all times. Masks must be worn before entry to all such University facilities (as well as outdoors on all University property when six feet of distance is unpredictable or cannot be maintained).

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services or Human Resources to initiate the [ADA Policy](#). Inquires or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

ADA regulations.

Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to wear masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks at any time during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.

*Note: Accordingly, no consumption of any food will be allowed in class.*

Students who do not comply with a request by a SLU instructor to wear a mask in *Interim Policy on Face Masks* may be subject to



4. Students are responsible for notifying each instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; whe

**Course schedule:**

Jan. 28- Introduction and syllabus

Feb. 2- (Part 1)



18- Midterm exam

23- Political institutions: Democracy and/or authoritarianism

\*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 9

25- Civil society- How citizens influence politics

\*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 10

30- Cuba: 60 years of revolution

\*Vanden and Prevost, Ch. 19

May 4- Mexico and the struggle for meaningful independence

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*Revista de Ciencia Política*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp.

401-430.

6- Review for final exam

\*Second paper due

**FINAL EXAM: May 13<sup>th</sup> at 8am - 9:50am**