

Syllabus GVPT 482H Government and Politics of Latin America  
Fall Semester 2022  
Classroom TYD 1102  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm - 3:15pm

Instructor: Isabella Alcañiz - Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center (LACS)  
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Virtual Office Hours: Please email to schedule\*

This course examines key political and economic policies in Latin America over the past four decades. The seminar will be of interests to students who wish to deepen their knowledge of major events and trends in the region, such as the democratic transitions of the 1980s, the market reforms of the 1990s, and the rise of a Leftist leadership in the 2000s. Students will survey the main debates of contemporary political economy in the region. Drawing from studies in the field of Comparative Politics and Latin American Studies, this course explores the interactions of political and economic actors under specific international conditions, with a particular emphasis on how the state structures, channels and negotiates the economy. Please note that the course does not have a textbook. Rather, similar to graduate seminars, students must read before class a number of research articles, policy reports, and book chapters assigned to each week. The course is organized in three sections: readings on the STATE, on the ECONOMY, and on SOCIETY. This organization is mainly analytical, as most readings touch on two or all three of these areas. But authors prioritize their focus. An important exercise of this class will be to determine how do different authors direct the arrows of causal explanation: do economic factors shape political outcomes? Do state institutions determine political participation?

For up-to-date information on any COVID-related policies, please check [here](#). I ask that you stay connected and as informed as possible. **Make sure you check your email periodically in order to receive any and all UMD and course announcements.** Per University regulation, it is recommended but not required that masks be worn inside for added protection. For all UMD course-related policies, please check [here](#).

This is a **global classroom**. We will host international guests, faculty, and students.

Course Readings:

All class readings are available to you on Elms in the weekly module (or folder) when they are due. In addition, I might post short readings, such as newspaper articles or any other class handout, so please make sure you check regularly the weekly modules for them.

Course Evaluation is based on the following:

Participation (5% of final grade)

To do well in participation come to class well prepared and ready to comment on the readings: pose questions, share your own take of the readings, help further and deepen discussion with your classmates. Part of this grade will be determined by participating in in-class team exercises. If for any reason participating in class gives you concern, please talk to me and I will gladly help you with this.

Research Design on the State (10% of final grade)

In this assignment, students are asked to formulate a viable and relevant research question for comparative Latin American politics, drawing from the research discussed in the first section on the state. In just one page, students will (1) state their research question, which must address an actual empirical puzzle of the region or country in the region; (2) formulate one hypothesis to be tested; (3) make explicit whether the DV and main IVs are political, economic, or societal variables (one must be state or regime-related); and (4) identify two sources of data (with full reference and corresponding online link). This exercise will test the causal thinking of students, their skills in designing a research project, and their understanding of the salience and relevance of contemporary Latin American and Caribbean problems. It is due on Tuesday September 27 on Elms.

Two In-Class Exam (25% and 30% each)

There will be two exams (one midway through the semester, the other at the end) where students will be tested on their knowledge of key concepts, theories, and facts. Exam dates are Thursday, October 14 and December TBA (the University official final examination schedule becomes available mid-semester on Testudo). We will have a review session on Tuesday, October 12 for the first one. To make good use of the review session, make sure you bring questions to class.

One final team project (30% of final grade: 20% final product, 10% final presentation)

This final assignment gives students the opportunity to carry out in-depth research of two of the themes of the class in any area or country of Latin America and the Caribbean. Students will produce a final product that examines the intersection of two class themes (e.g., race and environment; gender and inequality; democracy and subnational politics) and that meets professional standards. Research teams of 2 students will decide on what kind of project the team wants to create and will present the results of their research in creative ways the last two weeks of class (presentation dates and order to be assigned randomly to each team in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the semester). The project format choices are:

Write a 750-word opinion article to submit for publication to a blog, newspaper, or news website. Your article must address an urgent issue of the region. In addition to making a point, your article must cite relevant data, research, and evidence to back up your position. You must submit the article to a newspaper or news website for their consideration by the deadline. Grade is contingent on submission not publication. For polished and professional blog pieces in political science, see [here](#).

Create a 7-minute podcast about an urgent issue of the region. In addition to making a point, the podcast must cite relevant data, research, and evidence to back up your position. You have creative control over the podcast. It can be an interview, a conversation between different people about the topic, a single narrator. It can include music or clips from speeches. For a great primer, see [here](#).

Students are strongly encouraged to share their final product on social media.

Final research teams and deliverables must be decided by Thursday October 6. Your team's completed project will be due Monday December 12 at noon. You will upload the pdf or media file to Elms, and also turn in a bibliography which should be formatted in APA style.

Your team will also do a 15-minute oral presentation as a “progress report” on your project, and answer questions. If your project is a podcast and it is ready before the end of the semester, you will share that with the class in lieu of an oral presentation, and will answer questions. Presentations will be held during the last 2 weeks of class. I will provide further guidelines for this assignment during the semester, including the order of presentations.

Please note: For all written assignments you will need to make sure you quote and cite properly all your sources and list the complete bibliography in a separate page. The paper must follow proper citation rules. Please use the guidelines of the American Political Science Association when citing your bibliography. You can find them at: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html> You are expected to do some outside research (beyond the assigned readings of the course). Please only use reputable sources such as Latin American and Caribbean politics journals (e.g., Latin American Research Review) or news sources like the NYT or the BBC- unfortunately, no Wikipedia allowed.

**For Blog Writers (but applies to all projects):** A good description of an engaging blog post by the LSE Undergraduate Political Review: “The blog is a dynamic, accessible outlet for students to treat specific political topics in a succinct and lucid way through the presentation of well-researched arguments. The LSE UPR invites the application to politics of a range of disciplinary perspectives, both within and without the social sciences, both empirical and theoretical.”

In short, the bar for a PS blog piece is much higher than a policy memo assignment. It has to be well-written and polished. The subject matter needs to be current, relevant, interesting. References to empirical findings and new and existing literature are critical.

The upside to the extra work is that a published blog post is a great line on your CV. And of course, you get bragging rights. Check out my website for past blog posts by former students, scroll under MEDIA: <http://gvptsites.umd.edu/alcaniz/>

#### **Possible blogs to submit:**

This one is the LSE Undergraduate Political Review: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseupr/files/2015/10/LSEUPR-BLOG-SUBMISSIONS-PDF.pdf>

This one “America Latina Hoy” is in Spanish: <https://latinamericahoy.es/contacto/>. If you have the language skills or can secure translation of your piece into Spanish, it might be interesting. I won’t translate your blog piece, but I promise to look it over carefully not just for substance and style, but also language.

#### Accessibility & Disability Service:

Please let the instructor know of any accessibility or special accommodation needed within the first 2 weeks of class. From the [Accessibility & Disability Service](#) website: “The Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to ensure equal access to services, programs and activities sponsored by the University of Maryland. Through the variety of services offered, we work to ensure that your accommodation, and accessibility needs are met.” Email: [adsfrontdesk@umd.edu](mailto:adsfrontdesk@umd.edu).

#### Academic Honesty:

Please read carefully the following statements from the UMD Teaching Policies and Guidelines: “The student-administered University Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge, “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination or assignment.” Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a community of trust on the

College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty should be reported directly to the Honor Council (4-8450) by any member of the campus community. For additional information, consult the Office of Student Conduct ([studentconduct.umd.edu](http://studentconduct.umd.edu)).”

**This course has a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. All potential violations will be forwarded to the UMD Student Honor Council.**

## THE STATE

**Week 1** August 30 and September 1

*We will go over syllabus and class expectations on Tuesday*

### **The Democratic State**

Mainwaring, S. and Pérez-Liñán, A. (2013). “Democratic Breakdown and Survival” *Journal of Democracy* 24 (2): 123-137.

**Week 2** September 6 and 8

### **The Subnational State**

Alcañiz, Isabella, and Ricardo Gutierrez. 2020. Between the Global Commodity Boom and Subnational State Capacities: Payment for Environmental Services to Fight Deforestation in Argentina. *Global Environmental Politics* 20 (1): 1-22.

Gibson, E. L. 2013. *Boundary control: Subnational authoritarianism in federal democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 2 and 4.

**Week 3** September 13 and 15

### **The Single-Party State & Political Violence in the State**

Martinez-Gallardo, C. (2012). “Mexico” in Case Studies in Comparative Politics, Ed. Samuels, D.J. Pearson Higher Ed, pp. 236-276.

Magaloni, B. (2005). “The Demise of Mexico's One-Party Dominant Regime: Elite Choices and the Masses in the Establishment of Democracy” in *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, Eds. Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring, Cambridge University Press, pp. 121-146.

How Mexico's drug cartels fragmented and the Northern Triangle

**Week 4** September 20 and 22

### **The Reformed State**

Kauffman, C.M. and Martin, P.L. (2016). Can Rights of Nature Make Development More Sustainable? Why Some Ecuadorian Lawsuits Succeed and Others Fail. *World Development* 92: 130–142.

Krook, M. L. (2010). *Quotas for women in politics: Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide*. Oxford University Press, pp. 3-17 and 161-182.

**Week 5** September 27 and 29 **Research Design on the State assignment due Tuesday 27**

### **The Gendered State**

The Politics of Interruptions: Gendered Disruptions of Legislative Speeches. 2022. Vallejo Vera, S. and Gómez Vidal, A. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(3).

Dr. Analia Gómez Vidal will be a guest lecture on Tuesday 27 to present her paper.

## THE ECONOMY

**Week 6** October 4 and 6

## **Inequality & Financial Assistance**

Tepperman, J. (2016). "Brazil's Antipoverty Breakthrough: The Surprising Success of Bolsa Familia." *Foreign Affairs*, 95: (34-44).

Michaelowa, K., & Humphrey, C. S. (2010). "The Business of Development: Trends in Lending by Multilateral Development Banks to Latin America, 1980-2009" Working Paper #65 of the *Center for Comparative and International Studies* (CIS), University of Zurich.

China as a major investor in Latin America

## **Teams and type of project decision this week on Thursday October 6**

**Week 7** October 11 and 13

Review session on Tuesday 11

**In-Class Exam** on Thursday 13

**Week 8** October 18 and 20

## **The Distributive Politics of Climate Disasters**

Alcañiz, I., Alejandra Marchevsky, Ashley D. Ross, and Stella M. Rouse. 2022. American or not American? The Role of Race, Immigration and Partisanship in Shaping Attitudes about Disaster Assistance in the United States, Manuscript.

**Week 9** October 25 and 27

## **Climate Inequality**

Documentary Waste Land (Brazil) 2010

**Week 10** November 1 and 3

## **The Socio-Economic Costs of Inequality**

Johnson, Marcus (2017). From Racial Democracy to Racial-ized Democracy in Latin America. *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter*, 27(2), 37-43.

The World Bank. (2015). *Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

## SOCIETY

**Week 11** November 8 and 10

## **Indigenous Politics**

**Documentary: Cocalero (Bolivia) 2007**

**Week 12** November 15 and 17

## **Environmental Politics**

Hochstetler, K., & Keck, M. E. (2007). *Greening Brazil: environmental activism in state and society*. Duke University Press, pp. 1-22 and 97-139.

Veronica Herrera. 2021. *Slow Harms and Citizen Action: Environmental Degradation and Policy Change in Latin American Cities*, Manuscript

**Week 13** November 22 and 24 (Thanksgiving no class on 24)

## **Race and Ethnic Politics**

Yashar, D. J. (2015). Does Race Matter in Latin America: How Racial and Ethnic Identities Shape the Region's Politics. *Foreign Affairs* 94: 33-40.

Paredes, M. V. (2019). Indigenous Activism and Human Rights NGOs in Peru: The Unexpected Consequences of Armed Conflict. In *Politics after Violence Legacies of the Shining Path Conflict in Peru*. (pp.

176 - 201). Austin: Texas University Press.

**Week 14** November 29 and December 1

**Team Presentations**

**Week 15** December 6 and 8

**Team Presentations and Final Exam Review**

**Final Exam (in our classroom date and time TBD)**

**Final Project Due in Elms at the time of final exam**