GOVERNMENT 2131

Comparative Politics of Latin America

Course Purpose: This seminar is intended for Ph.D. students. Its purpose is to discuss critically a large body of scholarly literature about Latin American politics, especially with regard to the larger South American countries. We will give no lectures.

Prerequisites: The seminar does not presume prior work on Latin American politics, but some prior undergraduate or graduate work on Latin American history, economics, politics, or society, or on some non-Latin America social science or historical topic is helpful. For those who know the least about Latin America, read the recommended text, Bethell's volumes 7 and 8 of The Cambridge History of Latin America. Although we will never discuss this text in class, everyone will benefit from reading these chapters. The History is organized mainly by countries; it supplements the syllabus, which is organized by topic.

Enrollment: All Ph.D. students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are automatically admitted to the course. Others are welcome to apply for admission to the course; we will communicate these decisions regarding course admission by email.

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of Everyone: The purpose of the course is to train Ph.D. students. The requirements are designed for that purpose. You choose your own deadlines and mix of writing projects according to Options A and B, below.

1. Reading. You should attempt to read everything. The reading averages about 350 pages per week. Readings from books are on reserve at Lamont library and on the course’s website. Articles are available electronically from the Harvard library; click on the link on the syllabus for each article. Contact one of us if you have difficulty finding a reading.

2. Oral presentation. One common professional task is to make oral presentations; everyone will make a timed 15-minute presentation. Choose any week. Prepare a 15-minute presentation to open the discussion of the week's subject. (We will keep time as if you were presenting on a professional panel.) Remember that, in 15 minutes, you may at most make one or two big points, with secondary points to develop the one or two big points. Do not attempt to comment on all of the readings, although you should do all of the readings for that week to prepare yourself. Choose a given theme from that week, and develop that theme with explicit reference to 2 or 3 of the readings. You should want to open the discussion, not to kill it. You may choose any week for your oral presentation but we will make sure that there is only one presentation per week. You must choose your week for the oral presentation by Wednesday September 13. Email your preferences to us.

3. Book review. Another common professional task is to write book reviews. Subject to your
choice between Options A and B, write one 1000-word book review. Choose any week. Pick any 7 articles. Assume that they constitute an edited book. Write a book review. Along with your review, submit the list of the articles that you included in the "book" and submit your word-count (up to 1000 words). A good book review should tell the reader what the book is about: what are its central subjects, arguments, and evidence. It should evaluate the book critically and situate it in the wider context of its pertinent scholarly literature. Submit your book review at any time during the semester but not later than Saturday December 10.

4. Rapporteur's report. A third somewhat less common but also important professional task is to report on and edit other people's work. Subject to your choice between Options A and B, write a rapporteur's report on the discussion for a given week. Choose any week. By the Monday following that discussion, submit a 7-8 page report that brings together the oral presentation (if any), the class discussion, and the readings. Do not write a blow-by-blow account of what was said. Informed by the discussion and the readings, highlight the central issues, arguments, disputes, and conclusions, if any. Indicate what areas, if any, remained obscure and in need of further discussion. Formulate your own judgments and arguments about the subject matter to build on but go beyond the discussion. You may write your report regarding any week. (There is no problem if several of you report on the same week.)

Choose between Options A and B to fulfill the remainder of the requirements. By Wednesday September 28, you must tell us which Option you will have chosen.

Option A. Write two short papers (7-8 pages each). Choose any topic; you may draw from the readings for just one week, or from more than one week. Focus on not more than 3 or 4 articles (although you should have read more widely to inform yourself) and on a specific theme. Develop an argument either about the state of the field, or about how to advance the field, or about how to design research to assess propositions in the field. Submit these papers at any time but not later than Saturday December 10. If you choose this option, you must also write the book review and the rapporteur’s report.

Option B. Research seminar paper. Write a research seminar paper not shorter than 30 pages. This is the only requirement for which reading must be done beyond the syllabus. It is due not later than Saturday December 10. If you choose this option, you are exempt from either the rapporteur's report or the book review.

Prohibition of Deadline and Subject Overlap: The course's requirements are intended to serve various interests. The deadlines are flexible to accommodate your schedules. There are two limitations on your range of choice.

1. Timing of Requirement Fulfillment. You must fulfill all, or all but one, requirements by Saturday December 10.

2. Non-overlap of Subject. You must develop the oral presentation, the book review, and the rapporteur's report for the subject matter for three different weeks. If you choose Option A and
also choose to write your paper regarding the readings for a single week, these, too, must be on weeks different from those on whose basis you have fulfilled other course requirements.

Policy on collaboration: Students are encouraged to chat with the professors and each other about their work in this course. We value the exploration of intellectual differences through respectful dialogue. However, it is also expected that all paper assignments and examination represent the student’s own work. Students should always take care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from other people or sources. **Collaboration in the completion of paper assignments is always prohibited.**

Special arrangements: A student needing special adjustments or accommodations should present a letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with one of us by Wednesday September 14. Failure to do so may result in our inability to respond in a timely manner. Discussions will be confidential, although the AEO would be consulted.

Grading: Class participation 20%. Oral presentation 10%. Book review 15%. Rapporteur's report 15%

Option A: Each of the two papers is worth 20%. Option B: The seminar paper is worth 55%.

Professors and paper readings: If you choose Option A, give one short paper to Domínguez and one to Levitsky. Also, divide the submission of the book review and the rapporteur’s report between the two instructors, one to each. If you choose Option B, give either the book review or the rapporteur’s report to one of the instructors who would be its sole reader. Give the seminar paper to either instructor; both will read and assess the seminar paper.

Page printing: Use type 12-point times-roman font and double-space.

Office hours: Domínguez, Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:15-12 PM. Levitsky, Tuesdays 2:00-4:00. Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, 1737 Cambridge St. We may be available at other times by appointment.

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The course will most likely be omitted in 2017-2018.