

**Latin American Politics**  
**PS 3375 Fall 2022**  
**Dr. Gregory W. Saxton**

**Course Information:**

Course Number: PS 3375—001  
Location: 233 Holden Hall  
Lecture: MWF 9:00–9:50AM

**Instructor Information:**

Instructor: Gregory W. Saxton, PhD  
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Office: 23 Holden Hall  
Office Hours: MW 11:00AM – 12:30PM

**Course Overview:**

Over the last four decades, Latin America has experienced great political transformations. By the mid-1970s, there were only three democracies in the region: Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. Meanwhile, other countries cycled through periods of democracy and authoritarian rule. By 2000, the overwhelming majority of Latin Americans were living under electoral democracies, although old and new problems continue to challenge democratic consolidation in the region. In this course, we will take an in-depth examination of some of the most pressing issues facing Latin America today, including: contentious politics, quality of democracy, and the representation of historically marginalized groups. Moreover, we will learn how weak political institutions, crime, violence, and corruption challenge states' ability to address these issues. In investigating these issues and challenges, we will answer three questions:

- 1) In democracies with weak political institutions, how do citizens get representation?
- 2) Poor people often have less access to political resources that allow them to hold elected officials accountable. How do the poor engage in politics?
- 3) In democracies where not all groups have equitable access to power, how do representatives from historically marginalized groups work within institutions to accomplish their goals?

To answer these questions, we will use a variety of data sources to understand the generalizability of the problems facing Latin America and the solutions to these problems. We will supplement our core class texts with recent political science research on Latin America, as well as current events readings. Articles from the *Economist* and other reputable news sources will help students gain a broader understanding of modern-day Latin America and challenge students to consider the generalizability of class content.

**Learning Objectives and Outcomes:**

This course is an introduction to contemporary *political science* research on Latin America. It is designed to expose you to many of the central questions in the current study of Latin American politics and the key theories that scholars have developed to answer these questions. More specifically, the class will address questions related to democracy and representation, political institutions, political engagement and participation, and poverty and inequality. Moreover, this class is designed to make you a more informed citizen of the world. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts and methods of political science in the Latin American context.
2. Identify the main political challenges facing democracy in Latin American countries.

3. Describe the causes and consequences of Latin America's "Left Turn."
4. Analyze current events in Latin America through the lens of Comparative Politics theories and empirical research.
5. Critically assess the main challenges and opportunities for the continuity of democracy in various Latin American countries.
6. Evaluate the barriers that historically marginalized groups in Latin America face in accessing democratic representation and accountability.
7. Use quantitative data to assess the generalizability of core case studies to the rest of Latin America and communicate data trends to a general audience.

### **Course Materials**

You do not need to purchase any materials for this course. We will be reading two academic monographs this semester. Both texts are available (free of charge) as eBooks through the Texas Tech library. As such, I have not listed them as "required" at the university bookstore. If you would prefer your own physical copy of either book, both are available through online retailers.

- 1) *Voice and Inequality: Poverty and Political Participation in Latin American Democracies* by Carew Boulding and Claudio Holzner (hardback ISBN 9780197542149)
- 2) *Gendering Legislative Behavior: Institutional Constraints and Collaboration* by Tiffany D. Barnes (paperback ISBN 9781316507650)

In addition to the required text, you will be responsible for a variety of additional readings. Most of these readings are peer-reviewed articles published in political science journals (and some short current events readings). All additional required readings are listed in the course schedule and will be made available on Blackboard.

This is an upper-level political science course and thus will be reading-intensive. **It is your responsibility to do all of the readings associated with each day in the course schedule before coming to class.** Rather than using a traditional lecture-based format, this class will revolve heavily around critical discussions of the readings. If I get the sense that students are not completing the readings, I reserve the right to base the day's participation grade on a pop reading quiz.

If you have any sort of problem accessing any of the required readings, please come see me as soon as possible. **It is my goal for everyone to succeed in this class**, and I do not want issues accessing the books to hinder anyone's progress or success!

### **Electronic Resources**

Blackboard will be used to post course announcements, course materials, assignments, and grades. Students should access this course on Blackboard as soon as possible, so that problems do not compromise course performance. Students should also make sure they have a current TTU email address on file so that they will receive any emails sent through Blackboard. Students who have problems accessing Blackboard are encouraged to consult: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/lms/>  
*Students are also reminded that all email communication with the instructor must come from a TTU email address.*

**We will be using Microsoft Excel for several "lab" activities and data assignments throughout the semester.** Microsoft Office products are available to all TTU students at no cost. If you haven't

already, you should follow the instructions posted on Blackboard to download/install Excel as soon as possible.

### **Earning Your Grade**

The grading and assignments for this course have been designed to offer you **a variety of ways to succeed**. Below is a breakdown of how your grade for this course will be assessed.

**Preparation and Participation** (20%): In lieu of an official grade for attendance, we will have a variety of preparatory and in-class activities/discussions throughout the course of the semester. **This means that you will not earn credit for simply attending class – rather, you must actively participate in the course.** *Sometimes in-class activities will be announced in advance, and at other times they will not.* Examples of preparation/participation assignments include, but are not limited to: pop reading quizzes, short reading/writing assignments, discussion activities, etc. There is no official attendance policy for this class, but students are strongly encouraged to attend lecture. *If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues.*

**Country Profile** (30%): Each student will have the opportunity to investigate the issues discussed in the course overview through an in-depth country analysis. To do this, we will take a data-driven approach. Students will analyze data from a number of different sources to develop a fuller understanding of democracy, politics, and representation in their country. There will be 5 short assignments due over the course of the semester. Each assignment is worth 6% of your grade. In total, this assignment is worth 30% of your grade. Due dates are outlined in the course schedule.

**Exams** (50%): Students will take two exams designed to assess their mastery of course materials and the learning outcomes listed in this syllabus. The first exam is a midterm assessment (15%) that will be completed **in class on Wednesday October 19** (20% of your final grade). The second exam will be a comprehensive *take-home* essay (30% of your final grade) that you will complete during the finals period and upload to Blackboard no later than December 10.

### **Calculating Your Grade**

Each assignment will receive a percentage grade and both midterm and final grade formulas will result in a percentage, which will translate into a letter grade using the following scale:

<b>Points</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or below	F

**Please do not contact me requesting an arbitrary grade increase (this includes requests for “rounding” at the end of the semester or for extra credit opportunities that were not offered to the entire class).** If you have an appeal about an assignment grade besides a simple clerical error, you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should clearly explain why you believe that your original work correctly answered the question and make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original work to your appeal.

## **Attendance Policy**

There is no official attendance policy for this class, although you cannot earn your participation grade without attending and participating in class. I do not record regular attendance.

## **Additional TTU Rules**

- In case of an illness that will require an absence from class for more than one week, the student should notify her/his academic dean. The dean's office will inform the student's instructors through the departmental office. In case of class absences because of a brief illness, the student should inform the instructor directly. OP 34.04
- The Texas state legislature has passed rules governing absences for **religious observances and holy days**. TTU OP 34.19 stipulates the following:
  1. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20.
  2. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.
  3. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

## **Academic Accommodations**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note, instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information you may contact the [Student Disability Services](#) office in 130 Weeks Hall or 806-742-2405.

## **LGBTQIA Support**

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, [www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu](http://www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu), 806.742.5433.

## **Academic Integrity, Cheating, and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and

staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. OP 34.12

Cheating and plagiarism are serious crimes and will be handled in accordance with Texas Tech University policy. **I have no tolerance for this type of behavior.** Students caught cheating may receive a failing grade for the course, not simply for the assignment, and the incident may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. **Remember that copying from internet sources, closely paraphrasing sources, and quoting without citing sources are all forms of plagiarism. Self-plagiarism involves submitting work you completed for another class without the instructor's prior permission and is not permitted.** Copying/reproducing test and quiz questions or collaborating with other students on assignments are likewise considered academic misconduct. For more information on the definitions of and penalties for cheating and plagiarism, please consult the following website: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/>

### **Classroom Behavior and Civility**

Please be respectful to others in this class and engage in civil discourse when we discuss topics with a diversity of perspectives. This includes being respectful in online or in-person discussions and in your engagement with course materials. It is one thing to disagree with the normative basis of a question or argument, but in disagreeing, it is everyone's responsibility to do so in a respectful manner. Critiques of readings should be based in scientific reason and not in the character of the author. Any personal or discriminatory remarks based on race, sex, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation made by students will likewise not be tolerated and may result in a "zero" grade for participation or assignments/exams.

### **TTU COVID-19 Statement**

The University will continue to monitor CDC, State, and TTU System guidelines concerning COVID-19. Any changes affecting class policies or temporary changes to delivery modality will be in accordance with those guidelines and announced as soon as possible. Students will not be required to purchase specialized technology to support a temporary modality change, though students are expected to have access to a computer to access course content and course-specific messaging. This is where students can find information about COVID testing, vaccinations, isolation, and quarantine. <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/emergency/coronavirus/>. If you test positive for COVID-19, report your positive test through TTU's reporting system: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/emergency/coronavirus/>. Once you report a positive test, the portal will automatically generate a letter that you can distribute to your professors and instructors.

## Course Schedule

I reserve the right to alter the course schedule. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class or via email, as well as posted on Blackboard.

\*A Current version of the course schedule will always be available on Blackboard.

*\*We will be discussing the readings listed for each day in class. I expect that everyone will have completed the readings prior to class. I also recommend that you bring a copy of the assigned readings to class so that you can easily reference them during lectures and discussions.*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Reading/Plan</b>	<b>Assignment(s) Due</b>
<b>Introductions:</b> 8/26	Friday: No reading assignment. Introduction to the course	
<b>Unit 1: Poverty, Democracy, &amp; Political Participation</b>		
<b>Week 1:</b> 8/29 – 9/2  Contemporary Challenges Facing Latin America	Monday: Read “Many Shades of Pink”  Wednesday: <a href="#">Read Pulse of Democracy 2021</a>  Friday: Read Cohen, Smith, Moseley, & Layton (2022)	
<b>Week 2:</b> 9/5 – 9/9  Democracy in Latin America	Monday: No Class (Labor Day)  Wednesday: Read B&H Chapter 1  Friday: Read B&H Chapter 2, Lab day (bring computers)	
<b>Week 3:</b> 9/12 – 9/16  Political Participation in Latin America	Monday: Read B&H Chapter 3  Wednesday: Read Cohen (2018)  Friday: No meeting (APSA)	Friday 9/16: Assignment 1 (Democracy) due by 5PM
<b>Week 4:</b> 9/19 – 9/23  Civil Society in Latin America	Monday: Read Boulding (2010)  Wednesday: Read B&H Chapter 4  Friday: Lab Day (bring computers)	
<b>Week 5:</b> 9/26 – 9/30  Representative Linkages & Latin America’s Left	Monday: Read B&H Chapter 5  Wednesday: Read Levitsky & Roberts (2011)  Friday: Read B&H Chapter 6	Friday 9/30: Assignment 2 (Protest) due on Bb by 5PM
<b>Week 6:</b> 10/3 – 10/7	Monday: Read Córdova (2019)	

Barriers to Political Participation	Wednesday: Read Brooks (2014) Friday: Read B&H Chapter 7, Lab Day (bring computers)	
<b>Week 7:</b> 10/10 – 10/14 Poverty & Inequality in Latin America	Monday: Read B&H Chapter 8 Wednesday: Read Córdova & Layton (2016) Friday: Read Tepperman (2016)	Friday 10/14: Assignment 3 (Economic Development) due by 5PM
<b>Week 8:</b> 10/17 – 10/21 Catch-up & Midterm Exam	Monday: Exam Review Wednesday: Midterm Exam Friday: No class (mental health day)	Wednesday 10/19: In-class midterm exam
<b>Unit 2: Representation of Historically Marginalized Groups in Latin America</b>		
<b>Week 9:</b> 10/24 – 10/28 A Crisis of Democratic Representation?	Monday: Read Mainwaring (2006) Wednesday: Read selected articles about Chile's constitutional convention (Bb) Friday: Read Reyes-Housholder (2019)	
<b>Week 10:</b> 10/31 – 11/4 Gender Quotas & Women's Access to Office	Monday: Read Arana Arraya & Guerrero Valencia (2022) Wednesday: Barnes Chapter 1 Friday: Barnes Chapter 2, Lab Day	
<b>Week 11:</b> 11/7 – 11/11 How Are Groups Marginalized Within Institutions?	Monday: Read Heath et al. (2005) Wednesday: Read Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson (2009) Friday: Read Barnes Chapter 3	Tuesday is Election Day – Remember to Vote!  Friday 11/11: Assignment 4 (Quotas) Due by 5PM
<b>Week 12:</b> 11/14 – 11/18 How Do Institutions Constrain Legislative Representation?	Monday: Read Barnes Chapter 4 Wednesday: Read Barnes Chapter 5 Friday: Read Barnes Chapter 6	
<b>Week 13:</b> 11/21 – 11/25 Catch up & Thanksgiving	Monday: Read Barnes Chapter 7 Wednesday – Friday: No classes	

<p><b>Week 14:</b> 11/28 – 12/2</p> <p>Evaluations of Democratic Institutions</p>	<p>Monday: Read Barnes Chapter 8</p> <p>Wednesday: Read Morgan and Buice (2013)</p> <p>Friday: Read Barnes and Saxton (2019)</p>	<p>Friday 12/2: Assignment 5 (Current Events) due by 5PM</p>
<p><b>Week 15:</b> 12/5 – 12/7</p> <p>Final Thoughts</p>	<p>Monday: No reading</p> <p>Wednesday: No classes – Individual Study Day</p>	
<p align="center"><b>Take home final exam – due by 5PM on Saturday December 10</b></p>		