

# Sul Ross State University

PS 4311: Latin American Politics  
MWF-11:00-11:50  
Lawrence Hall 201  
Sul Ross State University  
Fall 2015

## Contact Information

David Watson

Office: Lawrence Building room 203.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-4:00pm, and by appointment.

Office Phone: 837-8742

Email: [dwatson@sulross.edu](mailto:dwatson@sulross.edu)

## Course Description

PS 4311 is an upper-division course on Latin American Politics. The class will begin by learning the geography and history of Latin America as a region. The second section of the class will focus on country-specific institutional, economic, and demographic factors, disaggregating the information of the first section. The third section of the course will focus on Latin America in an international context and will incorporate numerous empirical studies. Upon completion, the successful student should have a more thorough understanding of Latin America as a whole, a working knowledge of country-specific factors that have created divergence within the region, and knowledge of international factors that constrain and shape the behavior of the Latin American states. The focus of the latter half of the class will be on empirical studies (ie papers testing and confirming a set of research hypotheses) rather than case studies, allowing students to get a taste of quantitative research and its application in regional comparative studies.

## Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science)

The graduating student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of significant theoretical approaches of political science through written work and oral communication.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze domestic and international political processes in written work.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop arguments about global equity and equality issues in politics through written work and oral communication.

**TEXAS Domain III Competency 19:** The teacher understands and applies social science knowledge and skills to plan, organize, and implement instruction and assess learning.

**TEXAS Domain III Competency 23:** The teacher understands and applies knowledge of concepts of government, democracy, and citizenship, including ways that individuals and groups achieve their goals through political systems.

## Course Goals

1. To assess and critique theories of economic development in Latin America (To be

evaluated on the Map Exam, the Midterm, and the Final Exam).

2. To assess and critique theories of economic policy choice under military and democratic rule (To be evaluated on the Midterm and Final Exam).

3. To assess and critique theories about the breakdown of democratic rule (To be evaluated the Final Exam).

4. To assess and critique theories of revolution in Latin America (To be evaluated on the Final Exam).

5. To assess the history of US relations with our southern neighbors and their possible impact on current and future events (To be evaluated on the Midterm exam).

6. To assess and critique theories to explain important issues that affects Latin America and the US (to be evaluated on both the Midterm and Final Exams).

### **Expectations**

The duty of the instructor for this course is to be prepared and on time for the lectures. In turn, the students' duty is to be on time and prepared for the lectures as well.

"Prepared" means having completed the assigned reading prior to the lecture. This course will rely heavily on discussion between instructor and students; so advanced reading by the students will facilitate an active classroom environment. Keeping up with the readings is essential in order to actively participate in class and to help the instructor monitor the students' understanding of the material before the exams, rather than on exam days. Please turn off cell phones during class. Seriously.

\*\*Although attendance is not mandatory, you will have a difficult time passing this course if you do not attend it. Occasionally, I will take attendance and use this to determine 10% of the course grade. Further, it behooves you to come to class because a good deal of knowledge needed to pass the tests will be derived from the lectures.

If you happen to miss class it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student in class or come by my office hours. It is not my responsibility to provide notes for students that miss.

I expect you to act as responsible adults in your conduct in the classroom. If you infringe on my ability to conduct class, I will ask you to leave.

Common courtesy expected in class:

- Coming to class on time
- Disabling the ringer on cell phones
- Refraining from talking, sleeping, and reading outside material during class
- \*\*Respect/toleration for fellow students regarding their political views

I am here to help you with the course material. Please feel free to come by my office hours or make an appointment with any questions you have. If you find that you are having difficulty with the material please come and see me as soon as possible particularly if you do not do well on the first exam and I can suggest study techniques that may help you do better on subsequent exams.

## Books

Boyle, TC. The Tortilla Curtain. Penguin Books. 1995.

Chasteen, John Charles. Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America. W.W. Norton & Company. 2006.

**\*\*Besides this, there are no other required textbooks for this class. However, articles will be placed under the "content" section of Blackboard prior to be assigned as reading. Please download and print these for class or at least bring them on your laptop. A lack of articles will indicate to me a lack of reading and participation for that session and will have a negative influence on your grade.**

## Course Requirements

Semester grades will be determined by each student's performance on three exams and attendance/participation. The final exam will be cumulative; however emphasis will be placed on the material covered following the second exam. There will be no extra credit offered in this course, save for the occasional attendance "perk".

## Grading:

**Participation:** to be assessed on the following criteria:

15% daily attendance and participation

15% Small presentation: In the latter half of the class, each student will select a topic relevant to contemporary Latin American Politics and present their topic to the class. The presentation should last about 15 minutes and should illustrate a thorough understanding of the topic.

## Exams:

10% Map Quiz (2<sup>nd</sup> week).

60% Midterm and Final Exams (30% each). An exam will be at near the midpoint and end of the semester. Expect essays questions on each exam. The midterm will cover all of the material up to the test date and the Final Exam, everything else.

**Scale:** A: 100-89 B: 88-79 C: 78-69 D: 68-59 F: 58-0

**Exams:** The grading for this course will consist of attendance and 4 examinations. The exams will cover material from the lectures and class discussion. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, and true false questions. The final exam will be cumulative, but greater weight will be placed on the material covered in the later half of the class.

**\*\*Students who come to class on exam day after the first student has completed the exam and left the classroom will not be permitted to take the exam, so it is advised that you arrive on time for all exams.**

**Makeup Exams:** I expect that students will take exams on the day that they are given. If you have to miss an exam you must contact me **in advance** and plan a day to take the makeup exam. Any absences on an exam day require written documentation (doctor's note, etc.) and I reserve the right not to permit you to take a makeup. All makeup exams consist of essay questions and no one will be allowed to take a makeup for more than one exam. No makeup exams will be given for the final.

**ADA: Disability Policy:** It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such an accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact Joyce Sesters (University Center 211), the coordinator for program accessibility 837-8178.

**Religious Holiday:** A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor prior to the absence. 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.

**Academic Honesty:** Students will be expected to adhere to the university honor code for all assignments. Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing will be punished by automatically receiving a zero on the assignment in question and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Cheating is defined in the Student Code of Conduct as:

- 1) Use of any unauthorized aid, sources, and assistance and assisting others in taking a course, quiz, test, or examination, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out assignments;
- 2) The acquisition without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University community;
- 3) Alteration of grade records;
- 4) Bribing or attempting to bribe a member of the University community or any other individual to alter a grade.

Plagiarism is defined as: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgement. Any student, who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes:

- 1) Deliberate copying or use of another's work without citing the source.
- 2) Cutting and pasting of information off of the Internet without citing the source.
- 3) The use of an exact sentence from a source (book, Internet, etc.) without quotes.

**Drop/Withdrawal Policy:** November 11th is the last day to drop a course with a "W". Once the deadline to withdrawal has passed, the student receives an 'F' for the course if he/she still chooses to withdrawal. Thus, it is imperative for students to be cognizant of these dates to avoid earning an 'F' for the course.

**Important Dates:** November 11th is also the last day to drop a course and receive a refund (Does not apply to students who drop below zero hours).

### **Schedule of Classes (\*\*Subject to Change)**

**08/24 Course introduction and overview**

**08/26 Latin American History (Chasteen Chapters 1, 2, and 3—study the map handout)**

**08/28 Latin American History II**

**09/02 \*\*Map Quiz**

09/04 Theories of Economic and Political Development in Latin America  
09/07 Modernization  
09/09 Dependency (\*\*Last day to drop a course with "W" and get refund)  
09/11 Mexican Political Institutions/US Relations  
09/14 The Tortilla Curtain Part 1  
09/16 The Tortilla Curtain Part 2  
09/18 The Tortilla Curtain Part 3  
09/21 Political Institutions I  
09/23 Political Institutions II (Chasteen Chapters 4, 5, and 6)  
09/25 Political Institutions III  
09/28 Mexico: Liberalization, Migration  
09/30 Brazil  
10/02 Argentina  
10/05 Chile  
10/07 Uruguay  
10/09 Paraguay  
10/12 Colombia and Peru  
10/14 Review  
10/16 \*\*\*Midterm Exam  
10/19 Central America  
10/21 Mexico  
10/23 Cuba  
10/26 Democratization  
10/28 Political Economy of Latin America (\*\*Last Day to Drop without Academic Record)  
10/30 Latin America and International Organizations (Chasteen Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10)  
11/02 Bureaucratic Authoritarianism  
11/04 Neoliberal Reforms  
11/06 Cultural Considerations  
11/09 Video  
11/11 Video  
11/13 Case Studies  
11/16 Student Presentations  
11/18 Student Presentations  
11/20 Public Policies in Mexico  
11/23 Intermestic issues  
11/30 Globalization  
12/02 Review of Semester

\*\*\*Final Exam\*\*\*

10:15 Wednesday, December 9th (this classroom)