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PSC 595.01: Capitalism and Democracy in the Americas

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Capitalism and Democracy in the Americas

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber 243-4862
Political Science Department, course #595
Autumn 2000

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Meets Tuesday and ~~Thursday~~ 11:40 – 2:00
Office Hours: LA 355 TR 2:00 – 3:30

Overview: This graduate seminar critically examines the politics of capitalism and democracy in Latin America from a variety of perspectives.¹ The course begins with a set of readings that explore the concept of globalization from a number of political and disciplinary perspectives. We then turn our attention to Latin America. We begin with political history of capitalism and the politics of resistance to existing capitalisms. Attention then turns to a theoretical discussion of the complex relationships between capitalism and democracy in Latin America. This is followed by a case study approach to the politics of resistance. The following week will be an exploration of more conservative approaches to the question of political and economic modernization. This is followed a continuation of our earlier discussion of capitalism and democracy in Latin America via discussion of a number of chapter length reflections from a number of perspectives. We then open it back up to a more global perspective by discussion of one man's political action plan. We will conclude the course by reading and discussing readings of the student's choice that pertain to their special conceptual and regional interests that relate to the course's broad theme of democracy and capitalism.

Course Expectations and Assignments: The success of this seminar depends on members' careful attention to the readings and active participation in weekly discussions. The format of the class discussion will vary and is amenable to changes and experimentation over the course of the semester. We will hold a preliminary discussion of format and expectations on the first day of class. All students will be required to hand in written work although the specific requirements will vary from student to student depending on individual student needs. For example, a student at work on a thesis project might want to propose the writing of a chapter. Students who are required to write a series of substantive papers as part of the requirements for graduation might want to submit such a paper. Other students might prefer to write a series of five page long critical essays on the readings.

All students will submit to me a typed proposal for writing requirements no later than the third class meeting (February 15th). Each student is also responsible for discussing the proposal with me (at the same time you bring it to my office is fine). Finally, all students will be required to select and put on reserve readings that pertain to their special interest. Students will facilitate the discussion of their readings.

¹ While the readings will focus heavily on Latin America, students are strongly encouraged to bring comparative perspectives from other regions about which they are knowledgeable to class discussions, student presentations and to written work.

Course Readings: Some of these may be put on reserve. Check with me if interested. All titles should be available at the bookstore for purchase. Please let me know if we sell out.)

Books:

Ben Agger. *Critical Social Theories: An Introduction*. Westview Press, 1998.

David Korten. *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism*. Kumarian Press, 1999.

John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*. The New Press, 1998.

Jorge Castañeda. *Utopia Unarmed*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

James Mittelman, ed. *Globalization: Critical Reflections*. Lynne Rienner, 1996.

Atilio Boron. *State, Capitalism, and Democracy in Latin America*. Lynne Rienner, 1995.

Lawrence Harrison. *The Pan-American Dream*. Westview Press, 1997.

Philip Oxhorn and Graciela Ducatenzeiler. *What Kind of Democracy? What Kind of Market? Latin America in the Age of Neoliberalism*. Penn State Press, 1998.

Neil Harvey. *The Chiapas Rebellion*. Duke University Press, 1998.

There are also three folders on reserve, entitled Neoliberalism I, II, and III that are suggested readings. Each contains a collection of readings. Please be very careful that the articles are all returned to their proper folders in good shape.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Reading Assignments: Note, reading assignments are subject to change and new items may be added as our discussions evolve over the course of the semester.

Jan 24: Introduction and Overview.

Feb 1: Setting the Theoretical Stage. Discuss Agger.

Feb 8: Introduction to Globalization from a Number of Perspectives: Discuss Mittelman.

Feb 15: Global Capitalism. Discuss Gray.

Feb 22: History of Latin American Resistance to Capitalism. Discuss first half of Castañeda.

Feb 29: History and Future Prospectus for the Latin American Left. Discuss second half of Castañeda.

March 7: Capitalism and Democracy in Latin America I. Discuss Boron.

March 14: Social Movement Resistance to Authoritarianism and Existing Capitalism. A Mexican Case Study. Discuss Harvey.

March 28: A More Conservative View. Discuss Harrison.

April 4: Capitalism and Democracy in Latin America II. Discuss Oxhorn and Ducatenzeiler.

April 11: Looking Towards the Future. A Political Action Plan. Discuss Korten.

April 18: Student facilitations. Readings to be announced.

April 25: Student facilitations. Readings to be announced.

May 2: Americas Potluck Dinner and presentation of final papers (informal presentations and discussion but firm deadline for papers)