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PSC 325.01: Politics of Latin America

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Politics of Latin America Autumn 2005

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber
Political Science Department, course #325
Meets: Wednesdays 4:10-6:30

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Office hours in LA 355: TR 12:30 - 2:00 (and by appointment)

Books available for purchase in UC Bookstore:

Peter H. Smith. *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

William I. Robinson. *Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change, and Globalization*.
New York: Verso Press, 2003.

Alvaro Vargas Llosa. *Liberty for Latin America. How to Undo Five Hundred Years of State Repression*.
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

This course is designed to introduce students to the complexity of contemporary Latin American politics. In keeping with much of Latin American studies, we will approach our subject from an interdisciplinary perspective. Smith, the author of the first book we will read, is a political scientist. Robinson, our second author, has a disciplinary background in sociology. Vargas Llosa is a well known public intellectual and journalist from Peru. However, even more important, is that both these authors employ combinations of history, economics, sociology, and cultural studies into their analyses. Furthermore, again in keeping with much of Latin American studies, both our readings and class room discussions will employ – and interrogate - various theoretical frameworks for understanding empirical data. No assumptions are made regarding students' familiarity with Latin America. I do, however, assume a willingness on the part of students to work hard in the effort to engage the intricacies and nuances of the region and the literature we will together utilize as tools in this effort. The reading is quite extensive (averaging about 100 pages a week) and intensive (some of it is quite sophisticated and theoretical) in this class.

Grading: Exam 1 (in-class short essay, 40% of grade), Exam 2 (take-home long essay 40%), attendance, assignments, and participation (20%)

All students are required to read all assigned readings on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. All assigned readings must be read carefully and analytically ***before*** we discuss them in class. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. Students may miss one class without explanation. After that, you must send me an email explaining the absence (***a phone call, written note or verbal communication is both unnecessary and insufficient***). Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you come late, let me know why, and above all, make sure I put you down as not being absent. I regularly communicate with students by email. Those who do not check their email may well miss important information.

August 31	Introduction to the class. No reading.
September 7	Smith, Introduction and Part I
September 14	Smith, Part II
September 21	Smith, Part III
September 28	Smith, Part IV and Epilogue (we will also allow time for exam review)
October 5	Exam 1
October 12	Robinson, Introduction and chapter 1
October 19	Vargas Llosa, Introduction and Part I
October 26	Robinson, chapter 2
November 2	Vargas Llosa, Part II and Robinson, chapter 3
November 9	Robinson, chapter 4
November 16	Vargas Llosa, Part III
November 23	Holiday
November 30	Robinson, chapter 5 and Vargas Llosa, Part IV
December 7	Exam workshop
December 14	Exam 2 (1:10-3:10)