

POLS 3337: Latin American Politics (Section 18598)

Fall 2021 Online (asynchronous)

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Appointments by phone also available.

Overview of Course

The course is divided into seven units. Each of the first six units last two weeks each. Unit 7—which includes the Thanksgiving holiday—lasts three weeks. For a list of dates, please see the course schedule on Blackboard. The dates for each unit are also indicated on the respective folder in Blackboard.

The first three units introduce students to the region and its people, history, and contemporary political systems. These initial lessons are broadly comparative and draw on experiences from throughout Latin America. Each of the last four units of the class focusses on a key country in the region: Argentina, Chile, Cuba, and Venezuela.

- Unit 1: Introduction to Latin America
- Unit 2: The Emergence of Modern Latin America
- Unit 3: Democracy and Political Institutions
- Unit 4: Argentina
- Unit 5: Chile
- Unit 6: Cuba
- Unit 7: Venezuela

Each of the four countries emphasized in the course has experienced remarkable twists and turns in its political evolution, which are so typical of Latin America. Argentina is one of the wealthiest countries in the region but has a history of populism and instability. Long a model democracy in Latin America, Chile experienced almost two decades of authoritarian rule during the second half of the last century and became a showcase for free market economic policies. Paradoxically, it has been governed by left of center governments for most of the last quarter century and seems poised to adopt a progressive constitution. Cuba emerged from a long period of intense dependence on the United States to become the region's only enduring socialist state and is now redefining its relationship with the Colossus of the North as it faces monumental economic and political challenges. Venezuela was dominated by dictators during most of its history, became a model two party democracy, and then evolved into the leading alternative to liberal, representative democracy in Latin America. Its beleaguered government is now clinging to power, as the economy collapses, many Venezuelans flee their country, and opposition grows.

Course Objectives

The course is designed so that students who complete it successfully will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the geography, people, history, and political institutions of Latin America.
- Demonstrate more specific knowledge of the history, political actors, political institutions, economic policies, and human rights records of Argentina, Chile, Cuba, and Venezuela.

These learning outcomes are most closely related to the global awareness and social responsibility goals of the UTEP Edge.

Course Components

The assignments for each unit appear in its respective folder in Blackboard. Open the folder to access the material for the unit. The units are comprised of the following components:

- Power point presentations;
- Videos and accompanying questions that students should answer while they are watching the videos (except for Unit 3);
- Three quizzes, each covering specific presentations and videos (including a map quiz in Unit 1); and
- A unit test.

There is no required textbook for the course!

The various components of the course are color coded in Blackboard. Major topics appear in **orange**, videos are listed in **blue**, and quizzes and unit tests are presented in **red**. Materials related to the map quiz appear in black in Unit 1.

Although the course is designed to give students maximum flexibility, please note that **it is not possible to successfully complete all of the assignments in a unit at the last minute**. It takes time to absorb the power point presentations, watch the videos and answer the corresponding questions, and complete the quizzes and unit test. **Please also note that the deadlines listed in the schedule are not flexible**. You are responsible for problems that might arise with your computer, Internet access, and the like, and should take that into account in your planning. **No credit will be given for late work!**

Power Point Presentations. Each unit has 2-5 power point presentations. When you click on the topic, the power point slides will appear in the lower left corner of the screen. Click on the slides, and they will appear on the full screen. Then click on the slide show icon in the lower right corner of the screen. You can also advance the slides on the left side of the screen.

Videos and Video Questions. With the exception of Unit 3, each unit includes 2-5 videos and questions that students should answer while they are watching the videos. The knowledge generated by correctly answering these questions will be the basis for questions on each video that will appear on the quizzes and unit tests. The videos vary in length, but most last about an hour. Closed captions are available.

One of the videos assigned for Unit 1 (*Guns, Germs, and Steel*) is embedded into Blackboard, and the corresponding questions appear in a separate file. The other videos are accessed via links from the respective files, which also contain the questions.

Quizzes and Unit Tests. Each assessment focuses on a discrete part of the course. Each quiz covers material in the unit since the last quiz. Each unit test covers all of the material from that unit. There is no final exam.

The questions on the quizzes and tests are objective: multiple choice, true/false, and (in Unit 1) identifying countries on a map. Some questions from the quizzes will typically be repeated on the respective unit tests. The questions appear one at a time. You must answer a question in order to move on to the next one. There is no backtracking. You should complete each assessment in one sitting. Do not save a quiz or test in order to resume work later because the timer keeps running, even if you are logged out. If your quiz or test is disrupted due to technical difficulties, try to log back in as soon as possible.

Each 15-minute quiz has 5 questions. A student may retake a quiz once so long as the deadline for completing the unit has not passed. Ordinarily some different questions will appear on different attempts. Your quiz grade will be the average of the attempts.

When you complete a quiz, you will be able to review the question, alternative answers, and your answer. Blackboard will tell you if you are correct, but if you miss the question, it will not identify the correct answer because the goal is for you to understand the material. In order to improve your score, you will want to review the power point presentations and videos to understand what you missed the first time around. You may want to budget additional time for multiple attempts and extra study.

The most important components in the course grade are the seven hour-long unit tests. Each unit test has 21 questions and may be taken only once. Unit tests typically have some questions that appeared on the quizzes for that unit.

Please note that five points of extra credit are built into each quiz and unit test. Each quiz has 5 questions, each worth 21 points, for a total of 105 points. Each unit test has 21 questions, each worth 5 points, for a total of 105 points.

All quizzes and unit tests are due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time. The deadlines for taking the assessments are not flexible. Students may take the quizzes in a given unit and the respective unit test only during the dates for that unit. If you begin a quiz or test before the deadline, but finish it after the deadline 10 points will be deducted from your score. You will receive a 0 for any missed assessment.

I must be notified immediately (gdschmidt@utep.edu) of any medical or personal emergency that prevents a student from taking an assessment by the deadline. Proof is required.

By accessing a quiz or test, students agree not to give or accept any help in completing the assignment. Students may use printouts of power point slides and video questions, as well as

their own notes, but they may not seek or accept help from others or use electronic devices. It is also a violation of academic integrity to disseminate questions or answers from quizzes or tests to other students or to post them online. Violators will face academic sanctions and will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law!

All suspected violations of academic integrity at UTEP must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please see the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Additional Policies and Information

Course Grade. The course grade is based on the 21 quizzes (one-third) and the 7 unit tests (two-thirds). All of these grades will be posted on Blackboard. Students will also be able to see their average grades for quizzes, and tests, as well as their overall average for the course.

Course grades will be distributed as follows:

Course Average	Final Grade
90% and above	A
At least 80% but less than 90%	B
At least 65% but less than 80%	C
At least 50% but less than 65%	D
Less than 50%	F

I cannot accept extra credit projects to compensate for poor performances on assessments because opportunities for extra credit must be available to all students on an equal basis. However, as discussed above, extra credit opportunities are built into each quiz and test.

Incompletes will not be given for reasons other than a medical or personal emergency and then only after presentation of verifiable documentation. Academic hardship does not qualify as an acceptable reason.

Technology. The content for this course is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system, so you will need to have access to a computer or laptop. Make sure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have Internet access and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. If you have technical difficulties, try updating your browser, clearing your cache, or switching to another browser.

The most common technical problem is weak Wi-Fi signals that throw students out of a quiz or test. If this happens, you should immediately log back into the assessment. If the problem persists, you should immediately contact the Helpdesk (915) 747-4357 (HELP)) and the instructor. If you are granted additional attempts due to technical difficulties (proof required), the grade will be based on all questions answered from all attempts. Additional penalties may be

imposed for repeated technical difficulties. It is your responsibility to acquire reliable Internet access.

If you encounter technical difficulties not related to a quiz or test that are beyond your troubleshooting skills, please contact the UTEP Help Desk, whose staff is trained specifically in assisting students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped to assist you!

If you do not have access to a computer, you may do course work and take assessments on the second floor of the UTEP Library. You may also be able to check out a laptop there. Please consult with the library regarding their hours and any additional requirements for access. Library hours may be limited, due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Course Communications. I will send out announcements at least once a week and usually more often. You will receive these by e-mail, and they will also be posted on Blackboard.

UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt. Indeed, I am usually pretty prompt! When e-mailing me, please be sure to use your UTEP student account and put the course number (POLS 3337) in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

You can also contact me via course mail on Blackboard, but I check this only about once a day.

Students with Disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>