

Political Science 3337
Latin American Politics

Gregory D. Schmidt
For technical help, please click on
UTEP's Blackboard Help in the course
menu or go to helpdesk.utep.edu

Overview of Course

This intense seven-week course examines politics in Latin America. The first three weeks 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 weeks of the class focusses on a key country in the region: Argentina, Chile, Cuba, and 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. Its newly elected president is attempting to temper some of the populist excesses of his predecessors. Long a model democracy in Latin America, Chile experienced almost two decades of authoritarian rule during the second half of the last century, and is now a showcase for free market economic policies. Paradoxically, it has been governed by left of center governments for most of the last quarter century. 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. 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 and opposition grows.

Communication

If there is any way I can help, I am eager to do so. Please contact me by Course Mail in the panel on the left. I will make every endeavor to respond within 24-hours. Given that I teach multiple courses with many students, please use Course Mail, rather than contacting me through regular UTEP e-mail.

Course Assignments

This intensive course is completed over seven weeks, with each week devoted to a particular topic (listed below). The activities for each of these weeks include the following:

1. Several written presentations on specific topics.
2. Several videos and accompanying questions that students should answer while they are watching the videos.
3. Three mini-quizzes over the presentations and videos. (Map questions will also be included during the first week).
4. A weekly quiz.

Please note that there is no textbook for this course!

Outline of Topics

Week 1

Introduction to Latin America

Week 2

The Emergence of Modern Latin America

Week 3

Democracy and Political Institutions

Week 4

Argentina

Week 5

Chile

Week 6

Cuba

Week 7

Venezuela

Requirements and Grading

Students can demonstrate that they have learned the material by taking the mini-quizzes and especially the weekly quizzes. Each mini-quiz encompasses material covered during the week since the last mini-quiz. Each weekly quiz covers all of the material from that week. The questions on mini-quizzes and weekly quizzes are objective: multiple choice, true/false, and identifying countries on a map. Some questions from the mini-quizzes will typically be repeated on the weekly quizzes.

The deadline for completing the mini-quizzes and weekly quiz is each Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time, which is two hours behind Eastern and one hour behind Central, but one hour ahead of Pacific. This deadline is designed to give students maximum flexibility, but please note that **it is not possible to successfully complete weekly assignments at the last minute**. It takes time to absorb the presentations, watch the videos, and complete the mini-quizzes and weekly

quizzes. Most of the videos are about an hour in length, but several are longer. Please also note that the deadlines 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!**

Each 15 minute mini-quiz has 5 questions. A student may take a mini-quiz up to four times so long as the deadline for completing the week's work has not passed. Ordinarily different questions will appear on different attempts. Your quiz grade will be the average of the attempts.

When you complete a mini-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 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 weekly quizzes. Each of these covers the material from the preceding week (that is, they are not comprehensive) and will include 21 questions. Each weekly quiz may be taken only once.

By accessing a mini-quiz or weekly quiz, students agree to accept no help from others while completing it. Students may use notes and other materials of their own, but they may not seek or accept help from others. If a mini-quiz or weekly quiz is not completed by the deadline, it will be assigned a score of 0.

Please note that some extra credit opportunities are built into the course, as follows:

Each mini-quiz has 5 questions, each worth 21 points, for a total of 105 points.

Each weekly exam has 21 questions, each worth 5 points, for a total of 105 points.

A course average will be computed, using the following weights:

Mini-Quizzes	1/3
Weekly Quizzes	2/3

Course grades will be assigned, as follows:

Course Average (weighted points)	Grade
90 or more	A
80-89	B
65-79	C
50-64	D
Less than 50	F

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.

Academic Dishonesty

The following summary of the University's policy on academic dishonesty applies to this class:

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. (Regents' Rules, Ch. 6, section 3.22)

Specifically, in this course, acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, copying on mini-quizzes or weekly quizzes, using notes or materials supplied by others on mini-quizzes or weekly quizzes, seeking or receiving assistance from others on mini-quizzes or weekly quizzes, giving or attempting to give assistance to others on mini-quizzes or weekly quizzes, and accepting credit for an answer on a mini-quiz or weekly quiz entered by another.

Incidents involving academic dishonesty will be forwarded without exception to the Office of the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate action. Penalties are detailed in section 3.6, Ch. 6 of the Regents' Rules.

Technology Requirements

You will need the following software on your computers to efficiently work in this course. In some cases your computer may already have some of these programs installed.

- Adobe Acrobat Reader. You can get the program by going to <http://www.adobe.com/> and then clicking on the icon on the center of the screen which says 'Get Adobe Reader'? Follow instructions to install the reader.
- Adobe Flash Player. You can get the player by going to <http://www.adobe.com/> and then clicking on 'Get Adobe Flash Player?'. Follow instructions to install the player.

- Apple QuickTime Player. You can get this player by going to <http://www.apple.com/> . Once there, click on the 'Downloads'? tab on the top of the page and then click on QuickTime 'Download'? and follow instructions.
- Microsoft Office. I recommend buying this if you do not have any word processing software or presentation software. As students, you can generally buy this entire package for about \$25, far less than the store price of approximately \$400.

Help Desk

For technical help, please click on UTEP's Blackboard Help in the course menu or go to helpdesk.utep.edu

You may also call the UTEP HELP desk at (915) 747-5257.

The HELP desk hours are given below:

- Mon-Fri 7:00am - 8:00pm (Mountain Time)
- SAT 9:00am - 1:00pm (Mountain Time)
- SUN CLOSED

Copyright © 2017 The University of Texas at El Paso