UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

UVA IN VALENCIA PROGRAM

PLCP 3330A POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICA

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is threefold. First of all, to show the main key features of different political systems of Latin America. These features will include political institutions, policies and political history. Special emphasis will be placed in specific Latin-American countries such as México, Brasil, Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela.

The second aspect to consider is the way theory applies to reality. Theory will be matched with practical exercises and students are expected to play an active role in the different activities that will be proposed. They will include debates and follow-up of contemporary politics. Politics is not just something to study, but an issue to know and to exercise during your life as citizen. Thus, **your active participation is required**.

Finally, the student should get the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize and understand the Latin-American reality as well as to expose or criticize, from reason, any policy or news published on media.

OBJECTIVES:

The course is designed to a) help you to identify and compare different political traditions of Latin America an b) to enhance your awareness about the different political processes taking place nowadays in Latin America. To reach these objectives we will use different methods, such as debates based on articles, films and essays.

Other objectives are:

To become aware of the reasons why democracy is not a world-wide institution, and the fact that it has many different nuances depending of the geographic/cultural area or historic factors. Special consideration to México, Brasil, Argentina, Cuba or Venezuela.

To underline the importance of respect towards other political cultures as a first step to understand factors that might escape at first sight from a Latin American point of view.

To understand that political institutions are subject to time and, therefore, our concepts must be flexible enough to include new phenomena taking place now in Latin America and in the near future, and, at the same time, to take into account this fact when we consider past political institutions and/or systems in Latin America.

II. GRADING SCALE AND BREAKDOWN

Students will be awarded grades according to UVA grading scale:

A+ 100-99	B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67
A 98-96	B 86-84	C 76-74	D 66-64
A- 95-90	B- 83-80	C- 73-70	D- 63-60
			F 59-0

Grade Breakdown

Presentation in class of some topics	40%
2 Response papers	10%

1 Short film review/Debates	5%
Midterm exam and Final Exam (average)	25%
Daily participation in debates in class	20%

40% Presentation in class of some topic related to the course: Students are expected to prepare some of the contents of the Course (every student will prepare a Power Point presentation on the topic selected by the instructor).

10% (5% + 5%) Two Response papers: During the course you will be proposed 2 issues to write on and, in some cases, they will be discussed in class.

5%: Short film review/Debates

25% Exams: There will be 2 in-class exams/papers consisting of an essay questions about the issues explained from the book: *Comparative Politics of Latin America (2015), Daniel C. Hellinger, Routledge*, other works proposed by the Professor, and other contents proposed in class from articles or documentaries.

20% Daily participation in debates in class

This course has an important interaction approach. Therefore, you will often work in pairs or in small groups. Your participation is essential to fulfill many of the activities successfully. I will routinely ask you to discuss something with your immediate neighbours. Failing to participate in such conversations will result in a loss of extra credit points.

To facilitate concentration, careful thinking, and practice with the fine art of expressing yourself publicly, I will occasionally (randomly) call on you to comment on the topic at hand.

The following rubric is important regarding participation grades:

A - The student always prepares the class and complies with the work plan assigned daily; he/she participates voluntarily and frequently, works well as a team and contributes positively to the classroom environment.

B - The student participates voluntarily and frequently by answering questions from the teacher

C - The student participates sporadically when the teacher asks and he/she occasionally asks questions.

D - The student does not make effort to participate; minimum work is done.

F - The student is absent and shows disrespect to other peers and to the professor.

It is essential for the course to read the materials, provided by the instructor, before class.

III. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND MATERIALS

Recommended materials to complement the course:

Explanations in class are based on the book: *Comparative Politics of Latin America (2015), Daniel C. Hellinger, Routledge* (and the documentaries and videos used in class by the teacher)

That book is available in the library of UVA, Valencia.

After every chapter, the teacher could give some complementary bibliography.

IV. COURSE PLANNING AND CALENDAR

1. Democratic and Autocratic threads before Columbus and Colonial Latin America
2. Political without Economic Independence
3. Populism, Development and Democracy in the Twentieth Century
4. Development and Dependency: Theory and Practice in Latin America
5. Democratic breakdown and Military Rule
6. Transitions and “Pacted” Democracies in Brazil and the Southern Cone
7. Transitions from Party-Dominant Regimens: México and Venezuela.

8. Democracy in times of Revolution
9. Parties, Media and the Left-Right Dimension in Latin America
10. Human Rights, Corruption and the Rule of Law

CALENDAR

September 7th - October 21st: 5 lessons

1. Democratic and Autocratic threads before Columbus and Colonial Latin America
2. Political without Economic Independence
3. Populism, Development and Democracy in the Twentieth Century
4. Development and Dependency: Theory and Practice in Latin America
5. Democratic breakdown and Military Rule

During these weeks we will work with audiovisual resources to know deeper the main characters of the history of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina and the main political threats nowadays in these countries.

Midterm Exam: October 26th / 28th (Official schedule)

November 2nd - December 9th: 5 lessons

1. Transitions and "Pacted" Democracies in Brazil and the Southern Cone
2. Transitions from Party-Dominant Regimens: México and Venezuela
3. Democracy in times of Revolution
4. Parties, Media and the Left-Right Dimension in Latin America
5. Human Rights, Corruption and the Rule of Law

During these weeks we will work with audiovisual resources to know deeper the main characters of the history of Cuba and Venezuela, and the main political threats nowadays in these countries.

Final Exam: December 14th - 16th (Official schedule)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1) Use of Spanish at the Center

The use of Spanish at the Center is strongly encouraged. Remember that you have come to Spain to learn Spanish and immerse yourself in its culture, and there is no better way to do so than by using Spanish on as many occasions as possible.

2) Class Attendance and Tardiness

2.1) Attendance and punctuality are essential for the successful completion of the course. Consequently, unexcused absences and lateness will negatively affect the final grade.

2.2) Only one unexcused absence is permitted. Please bear this in mind when planning trips or outings.

2.3) Arriving more than 5 minutes late to class will count as half an absence (1/2). It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of an absence before the class begins.

2.4) Arriving more than 30 minutes late to class will be considered an absence.

2.5) Four (4) unexcused absences will result in the student not receiving credit for the course.

2.6) Only documented absences will be considered excused: a religious holiday, a family emergency, or a medical appointment. Medical absences must be supported by a doctor's note and submitted at reception on the day the student returns to class after the incident has ended.

3) Academic Integrity

3.1) The exchange of information is not only permitted but is also a way of enriching the knowledge acquired during the course. However, all work submitted for each course must be individual and original in every respect. Any sources and direct quotations used must be properly cited.

3.2) Remember that the use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments or examinations is strictly prohibited unless an instructor expressly states otherwise. Such use constitutes a lack of authenticity, and may amount to direct plagiarism, in addition to undermining the development of critical thinking and writing skills, which are among the primary goals of this program. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

3.3) Any work that has received credit for one course will NOT be accepted for credit in another course. There will be NO exceptions to this rule. Reusing such work will result in immediate failure of the second course. If assignments for two different courses are related in any way and the student has questions about whether the second project is permissible, the matter must be discussed with all instructors involved. This will prevent any possible unintentional violation of this rule.

3.4) As with punctuality, assignments must be submitted on time. Any late submission will result in a reduction of the grade for that assignment.

3.5) Failure to comply with the provisions set out above will result in the loss of the corresponding course credits for the course in which these rules have been violated.

3.6) If you have a documented special need that requires academic accommodations (SDAC), it must be certified by your home institution. Please contact the Head of Studies in Valencia, María Andrés (maria.andres@uvavalencia.org).

4) Activities, Workshops, and Lectures

Throughout the course, various activities, workshops, and lectures are organized. Participation may be voluntary or mandatory if the instructor considers the activity relevant to the course.

5) Classroom Conduct

5.1) It is very important that all students arrive to class on time, prepared, and with the materials needed for the day. During class, students must treat one another and the instructor with respect, demonstrate a positive attitude, and help create a participatory and collaborative environment that supports effective learning. Any violation of these expectations will have direct consequences.

5.2) Electronic devices (laptop, mobile phone, smartwatch) may be used in class only for course-related purposes. If a student uses such technology for personal reasons during class, the student may be penalized with an unexcused absence.

5.3) The use of computer or electronic technology during examinations is prohibited unless the instructor determines otherwise in accordance with the examination format.

6) Course Content

On occasion, and always within the context of the course, certain "sensitive" topics may be addressed both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, if a student feels offended by such content in a particular class, the student may leave the class, and doing so will not have any negative effect whatsoever on the final grade. Faculty members will always be open to communication and dialogue in order to promote better intercultural understanding.

7) Final Clarification

The instructor may modify or add activities and/or change the dates indicated according to the learning needs of the group. Effective learning requires not only careful planning, but also a certain degree of flexibility.