Human, Social, and Political Sciences Tripos
2023-24

POL20: Latin American Politics

COORDINATOR
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LECTURERS
Graham Denyer Willis
Pedro Mendes Loureiro
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DESCRIPTION
This paper introduces students to the politics of Latin America, past and present. How do historical legacies influence democracy today? What explains the persistence of political violence in the region? Why has corruption been so difficult to overcome and what does it have to do with organised crime? How have Latin Americans used international norms and institutions to advance their rights and hold the powerful to account? How are social movements reshaping the political landscape? How has the region conceptualised and implemented development projects, and with what results? What do its economies and political regimes reveal about the enduring forces of colonialism, racialisation, and capitalism? These are some of the questions that the paper aims to explore, drawing on a wide range of scholarship and approaches from across the human, social, and political sciences.

OUTLINE
The paper is organised in five thematic sections dealing with (I) state-society relations, (II) political institutions, (III) international relations, (IV) political economy, and (V) society, governance, and democracy.

SUPERVISIONS
Supervisions are centrally organised and are scheduled for the Michaelmas and Lent terms. Students are expected to write six essays for this paper, each not exceeding 2,500 words. All essays should be word-processed, paginated, and include a bibliography citing all sources referenced at the end of the essay. While there is no mandated citation style, it is essential to maintain uniformity within each essay, using only one style, whether it be footnotes or in-text citations. See the Cambridge Libraries’ subject guide for further information on referencing and citation style: https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/POLIS/referencing

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism involves the unacknowledged use of others’ ideas and information, including verbatim and paraphrased material and content generated using artificial intelligence. Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and will not be tolerated. For further resources and information on how to avoid plagiarism, see https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/.

ASSESSMENT
There will be a one three-hour written examination in Eastern term. Students will be required to answer three questions. Sample questions will be provided later in the academic year.
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<tr>
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<td>SG2</td>
<td>The Problem of Persistence</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>Revision (Easter Term)</td>
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* CAS = Carsten-Andreas Schulz; GDW = Graham Denyer Willis; PML = Pedro Pedro Mendes Loureiro
LECTURE AND READING GUIDE

Section I

1. The Problem of Persistence (Schulz)
Lecture: Thursday, 5 October
Essay question: How do colonial legacies continue to shape the political landscape in Latin America?

Required reading

Further reading

2. State formation (Schulz)
Lecture: Monday, 9 October
Essay question: Without the state, there would be no nations in Latin America. Discuss this statement.

Required reading
Further reading

3. Patterns of Power I: capitalism, authority, and colonialisation (Denyer Willis)
Lecture: Monday, 9 October
Essay question: What factors shaped political and/or racial order in amidst slavery?

Required reading

Further reading


**Key Resource**

Slave Voyages Database. [https://www.slavevoyages.org](https://www.slavevoyages.org).

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4. Patterns of power II: Industrialisation, urban politics, and space (Denyer Willis)

Lecture: Thursday, 19 October

Essay question: How is inequality present in processes of urbanisation and industrialisation?

**Required reading**


**Further reading**


**Key resource**


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**Section II**
5. Political Regimes (Schulz)
Lecture: Monday, 23 October
Essay question: What explains the fragility of democracy in Latin America?

Required reading

Further reading
Key resource
Guzman, Patricio, dir. The Battle of Chile. Part I: The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie. Miramax, 1975

6. Democracy and its Discontents (Schulz)
Lecture: Thursday, 26 October
Essay question: To what extent does populism undermine democracy?

Required reading


Further reading


### 7. Gender, Race, and Representation (Schulz)

Lecture: Monday, 30 October
Essay question: Why has Latin America taken the lead in the expansion of gender-based rights?

**Required reading**


**Further reading**


Franceschet, Susan, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. “Gender Quotas and Women’s Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina.” *Politics & Gender* 4, no. 3 (2008): 393-425.


8. The politics of justice and human rights (Schulz)

Lecture: Thursday, 2 November

Essay question: Why do Latin American countries not uniformly address past human rights violations?

Required reading


Further reading


Key resource

Section III

9. Foreign policy making (Schulz)
Lecture: Thursday, 16 November
Essay question: What role does the bureaucracy play in foreign policy making?

Required reading

Further reading
Cooperation? Has this commitment waned?


10. Multilateral cooperation: the politics of international norms and institutions (Schulz)

Lecture: Thursday 23 November

Essay question: What explains Latin American states’ longstanding commitment to regional cooperation? Has this commitment waned?
Required reading

Further reading
History of the World” and 8 “The Latin American Contribution to the Constitution of the World.”


11. US-Latin American relations (Schulz)

Lecture: Thursday, 18 January

Essay question: Under what conditions have Latin Americans succeeded in shaping US policy towards the region?

Required reading


Further reading


12. Latin America in a Changing International Order (Schulz)
Lecture: Monday, 22 January
Essay question: Does China’s growing presence in Latin America undermine democracy?

Required


Further reading


Further reading

Section IV

13. Dependency and (under)development (Mendes Loureiro)
Lecture: Monday, 29 January
Essay question: Is dependency theory still a powerful approach to Latin America’s political economy – if it ever was – and why?

Required reading

Further reading


### 14. Neoliberalism (Mendes Loureiro)

**Lecture:** Thursday, 1 February

**Essay question:** To what extent do domestic versus international factors explain the neoliberalisation processes in Latin America?

*Required reading*


*Further reading*


15. Varieties of capitalism and welfare regimes (Mendes Loureiro)

Lecture: Monday, 5 February

Essay question: In what ways do welfare regimes and varieties of capitalism accentuate and attenuate inequalities in Latin America?

Required reading


Further reading


16. Social movements, NGOs, and distributive politics (Mendes Loureiro)

Lecture: Monday, 12 February

Essay question: To what extent are social movements capable of counterbalancing a deficit of representation in Latin American politics?

Required reading


Further reading


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**Section V**

**17. Politics beyond the pale (Mendes Loureiro)**

Lecture: Thursday, 15 February

Essay question: What does the enduring presence of radical or extreme politics reveal about Latin America’s political economy?

**Required reading**


**Further reading**


18. Informality and bureaucracy (Denyer Willis)
Lecture: Monday, 19 February
Essay question: How do scholars describe the relationship between informality and political order?

Required reading

Further reading
Fischer, B. “Historicising Informal Governance in 20th Century Brazil.” Contemporary Social Science 17, no. 3 (2022): 205-221.

19. Policing inequality and the rise of criminal governance (Denyer Willis)
Lecture: Thursday, 29 February
Essay question: ‘Criminal governance is a problem of criminal actors’. Assess this assertion.

Required reading


**Further Reading**


**20. Conceptual challenges: envisioning democracy and development from Latin America (Mendes Loureiro)**

Lecture: Monday, 4 March

Essay question: Why is it so difficult in practice to challenge prevailing models of development and democracy in Latin America?

**Required reading**


**Further reading**


