



**Political Science 473-L01
States and Regimes in Latin America**

Winter 2023
Tue – Thu 9:30-10:45am
MS 211

Dr. Pablo Policzer

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Office hours Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm

Description and objectives

This course draws on two fundamental concepts in political science—states and regimes—to make sense of some significant problems in Latin American politics.

These include, among others, the struggle to build democratic societies, and to overcome the legacies of colonialism, exclusion, exploitation, and authoritarianism. Democracy has historically had a precarious hold in the region, yet in recent decades the bulk of the continent has become at least formally democratic. How strongly rooted is democracy in Latin America? Is there a single model of democracy or is democracy different from country to country? To what extent have democratic regimes overcome legacies of authoritarianism and exclusion? Is democracy backsliding in the region, after decades of democratic advances?

A related problem is insecurity, in the form of political and criminal violence, repression and human rights abuses. Although inter-state wars have been rare in Latin America, intra-state violence has been all-too common. What are the historical roots and contemporary dimensions of insecurity? Why has it been so pervasive, and can it be overcome?

We will address these questions from a comparative perspective by exploring different sets of literatures, through the textbook and other readings, including on the development of the state and different types of regimes in Latin America, on authoritarian military rule and democracy, on civil war and the problems of criminal violence throughout the continent, and on the struggle to create more inclusive democracies.

In engaging this literature and these problems, we will also engage in a collective and collaborative learning process. Each student will write a 2,500-3,000 word research paper, in stages, and through peer review. This will involve writing a brief

proposal prior to the paper, providing and receiving constructive feedback on the proposals using a guided rubric, assessing others' feedback, and writing the paper itself.

By the end of this course, you certainly won't know everything there is to know about Latin American politics. (No one does.) Instead, if you do your part through careful reading, discussion, writing, reviewing and thinking, you will emerge with something simpler but also more powerful: a) a better understanding of some of the region's fundamental political challenges, along with a comparative framework for making sense of them; and b) begin to develop the fundamental skills of giving and receiving constructive feedback and critique.

Readings

You are required to purchase the following textbook, available at the Bookstore:

- Gerardo Munck and Juan Pablo Luna, *Latin American Politics and Society: A Comparative and Historical Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

A list of specific readings from the textbook and other sources will be provided prior to the start of term. This will include required and optional suggested readings for different topics.

The course presumes some background in political science, and some familiarity with Latin America. Although not required, you would also be well advised to keep track of current events in Latin America through the national and international press, such as the [BBC](#), [Deutsche Welle](#) or [El País](#). Excellent more specialized sources in English also include [Americas Quarterly](#), [NACLA](#), [OpenDemocracy](#), and the [Inter-American Dialogue](#). Reading knowledge of Spanish (or Portuguese) is an asset, though also not required. [El País](#), [Deutsche Welle](#) and [BBC](#) have Spanish-language versions. [Nueva Sociedad](#) and [Revista Anfibia](#) are excellent more specialized sources.

Course requirements and procedures

We will use D2L, where I will post lecture slides at the end of each unit, along with messages and grades, and other relevant course materials (such as readings and quizzes). We will also use Top Hat for in-class discussion and brief quizzes, as well as Kritik, to manage peer review on the research proposals and papers.

You will be required to complete:

Four online quizzes on the course material, a research proposal, a research paper, peer reviews on four other research proposals and papers, and participate in class discussion (through Top Hat and Kritik). The quizzes will contain brief identification and multiple-choice questions and will be posted online via D2L. You will have a maximum of 60 minutes to complete the quiz, at a period of your choosing for 48 hours once they're available. Once you start the quiz, you must complete it within the 60-minute period. There is no final exam for the course.

For the **research paper**, you may work on a topic of your own choosing, but which meets the following conditions:

- It must be clearly connected to the themes of the course. This is *not* your chance to write on a topic you've always wanted to write about, but which has no connection to the course. It *is* your chance to explore the themes of the course in greater depth. The text and suggested readings are good places to start.
- Because this is a course in comparative politics, the project must also be comparative in some way: by focusing on more than one case. I will explain this in greater detail in class.
- It must be clearly analytical—in the sense of explaining or making better sense of a problem—rather than descriptive or based simply on opinion. Again, I will explain this in class.

The research paper should be between 2,500-3,000 words in length, submitted as a Word file or PDF, through D2L. You are required to submit a **proposal** of the research project (between 500-700 words) by February 14th. The proposal should clearly state the main *question* you will focus on, the *argument* you will formulate, and how you plan to do what you propose. I will post further details online. **Each proposal will be evaluated through the peer review platform Kritik.** This means that in addition to writing your own proposal, you will be responsible for **evaluating four (4) other proposals** from your fellow students. These reviews will be due two weeks after the proposals, i.e., February 28th. I assign the final grades on the proposals, the papers, and the quality of the reviews.

Finally, **participation** will be assessed through Top Hat (10%) and Kritik (10%). Top Hat participation will include responses to in-class questions. Kritik participation will be assessed based on the quality of your assessments of your fellow students' proposals and papers.

Your final grade will be distributed as follows:

Four quizzes (@10% each)	40%
Research proposal (due Feb. 14)	5%
Research paper (due April 11)	35%
Participation (TopHat and Kritik)	20%

The lectures, discussions, and readings are connected but distinct streams. The lectures comment on the readings but will not necessarily follow them precisely: listening to the lectures is *not* a substitute for doing the readings. All course material—including lectures and readings—are fair game for the quizzes. If you listen to the lectures, do the assigned readings carefully, understand the main ideas, and can comment on them critically in the research paper, in the quizzes, and in discussion, you will be well on your way to success in the course.

I will be available for consultation by email, during office hours (Wednesdays between 1:00-2:00pm), or by appointment.

Grading criteria

A- (80-84%) → A (85-89%) → A+ (90% +)

Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base. Work at this level is clearly written, with no spelling or grammar faults.

B- (70-73%) → B (74-76%) → B+ (77-79%)

Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature. Work at this level is generally clearly written, containing at most a few, if any, spelling or grammar faults.

D (50-54%) → D+ (55-59%) → C- (60-62%) → C (63-66%) → C+ (67-69%)

Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour. Work at this level is sometimes or often unclear and contains from some to many spelling and/or grammar problems.

F (0-49%)

Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature. Work at this level is usually poorly written, with numerous spelling and grammar problems.

Required technology

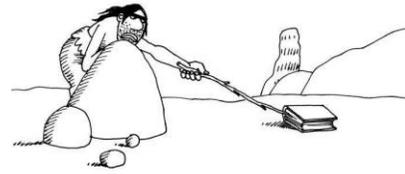
Because we will use Top Hat in class, laptops and cellphones are permitted, strictly for this purpose, and for taking notes. But you should keep in mind that a growing body of evidence suggests that it's far more effective to take notes by hand: that "even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing".¹ Even more seriously, evidence also suggests that laptops in class have an effect similar to second-hand smoke: they not only hurt you, the user, but also those around you, even if they're not using one.² If you choose to use a laptop beyond Top Hat, you must do so with courtesy to others and consideration for the aims of the course. That means using the laptop strictly for the purpose of taking notes or consulting course-related material, and not for checking email or social media, surfing the web, or any other purpose that distracts from the class. It's not a small class, but we will notice—and get annoyed by—any distractions. Similarly, cellphones should be put away after using them for Top Hat.

¹ <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159>

² <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254?np=y>

Reading and writing skills³

An academic discipline such as political science requires immersing yourself in and critically engaging a substantial body of work. That means quite a bit of reading and writing.



As you manage the reading for this course, you are likely to find that there is little correlation between effort and outcome. It's possible to spend hours reading something without "getting it," and equally possible to spend very little time reading something else and getting quickly to the heart of it. Reading is not an ability that either comes naturally or does not—it's a skill that must be learned. *Figure out the heart of the argument before you read deeply.* When you know the article's centre of gravity, you read more efficiently. *Read actively.* Be skeptical, approach the text with questions, and try to answer these for yourself as you make your way through it. The more actively you read, the more you will retain, and the easier it will be to write about it.

You should also keep in mind that it's not only *what* you write that matters in how you will be evaluated, but also *how* you write it. Crisp, clear, effective writing counts. That includes such things as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization. As George Orwell noted, "the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts."⁴ The advice in these articles should help you avoid slovenly writing, at least:

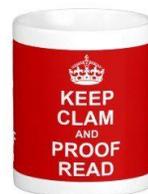
- William Zinsser, "Writing English as a Second Language": <https://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/>
- Steven Pinker, "Why Academics Stink at Writing": <http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Academics-Writing-Stinks/148989/>
- And beyond Pinker's article, I would very strongly recommend his book *The Sense of Style*: <http://stevenpinker.com/publications/sense-style-thinking-persons-guide-writing-21st-century>

Further help with writing is available through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.



<http://www.cartoonstock.com/>

CartoonStock.com



(Image Copyright Unknown)

³ Adapted from K. Chandra and D. Woodruff, MIT.

⁴ George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (1946): http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit/

Course schedule (subject to modification)

Jan. 10	Introduction and overview
Jan. 12	The comparative method
Jan. 17-19	States: Strong vs. Weak
Jan. 24-26	Regimes: Authoritarianism and Democracy First quiz: January 26
Jan. 31-Feb. 2	Political and Economic Development
Feb. 7-9	The Quality of Democracy
Feb. 14-16	The Politics of Inclusion Proposals due (Feb. 14) Second quiz (Feb. 16)
Feb. 21-23	Reading break – no classes
Feb. 28-Mar. 2	Political parties and representation Proposal reviews due (Feb. 28)
Mar. 7-9	Transitional Justice
Mar. 14-16	Violence and Insecurity Third quiz (Mar. 16)
Mar. 21-23	Social Rights
Mar. 28-30	Sustainable Development and Neoextractivism
Apr. 4-6	The political economy of inequality Fourth quiz (Apr. 6)
Apr. 11	Final class, review Term papers due

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at: https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/P22_deferral-of-term-work_lapseGrade.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Reappraisal of Grades:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Plagiarism And Other Forms of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Academic Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points> and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives

Phone: 403-220-6551

Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association

Phone: 403-220-5997

Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca

URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman

Phone: 403-220-6420

Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.