

**Department of Political Science | University of Wisconsin Oshkosh**  
**PS 379 – Latin American Politics (online) 3 cr.**  
**Spring Semester 2023**

**Professor Druscilla Scribner** (Ph.D., University of California San Diego)

**Office Location:** Virtual

**Office Hours:** Tu/Th, 11:30-1:00 pm and by appointment via MS Teams

**Email:** [scribned@uwosh.edu](mailto:scribned@uwosh.edu)

**Class Time:** Asynchronous (with due dates)

**Class Location:** Online

**Political Science Department Office:** Sage 4631, (920) 424-3456

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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**Political Science 379 Latin American Politics (NW) (SS) (GS)** This course is an analysis of the governmental institutions, political processes, and political cultures of Latin America and explores issues of democracy and development in Latin America. We focus on the nature and limitations of democracy in the region, as well as long-standing regional and global issues that affect democratic political development: market-oriented economic reforms, social inequality, climate change, political violence, corruption, and drug trafficking. Political Science 101 is recommended. **3 credits**

This course builds on concepts covered in Political Science 101 – Introduction to Comparative Politics. The textbook was chosen to introduce and reinforce central political science concepts in comparative politics. **This course has no prerequisites;** it is open to all students regardless of major or disciplinary focus.

This course is **designated a “Global Scholar” course** and may count toward achieving a Global Scholar Designation on your transcript. Global Scholar courses build on the knowledge, skills, and perspectives you gained in your USP Global Citizenship courses. *Global Citizenship and Global Scholar courses are designed to provide students with the knowledge of nations, cultures, or societies beyond the U.S.; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence, and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical and contemporary global challenges and opportunities; and the skills needed to engage with the responsibilities of informed citizenship in a complex, interdependent, and changing world.*

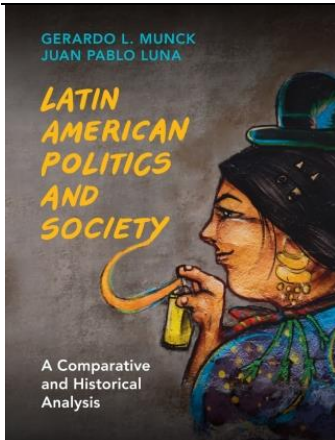
**Student Learning Outcomes:** After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize the impact of colonial history and its continuities in the current Latin American society and politics
- Identify inequities inherent in social and political power structures in the Latin American context
- Distinguish the interconnected nature of Latin America's wide-ranging political and economic challenges and successes.
- Compare and contrast state responses to challenges of and for democracy
- Craft theoretically and empirically informed arguments regarding political and economic development in Latin America
- Construct a research question on a regional country as a case study

*Assessing student learning:* This course uses a variety of methods, both formative and summative, to assess student learning. Assessment activities include quizzes, discussion assignments, writing assignments, and reflection. There is a final research paper.

## COURSE MATERIALS

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The **required textbook** for this course is *Latin American Politics and Society* by Gerardo L. Munck and Juan Pablo Luna. The text is available at the bookstore. It is also available as an eBook on VitalSource.com. eBooks are offered at different price points for six-month, twelve-month, or lifetime access periods to accommodate students' varying preferences and needs. You may also find a rental option. *As long as you have access to your reading, you can choose the format for your text.*

On Canvas I have included **recommended reading** from a secondary textbook titled *Understanding Latin American Politics* (2018) by Gregory Weeks. This is an open-source text, and the chapters are provided to you directly in Canvas. This reading is optional, but you may find it helpful as a starting place to explore concepts and countries for your research project.

## ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

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This is an asynchronous online course - we do not have any zoom meeting times. **But we do have a weekly schedule of assignments. You need to complete one week before moving to the next.** Each new week is available starting the previous Wednesday at 11:59 pm.

There are a variety of activities to complete to reach our learning objectives each week. These activities include reading, online discussions, videos, mini-explanatory lectures, written assignments, quizzes, etc. These assignments have due dates.

## PARTICIPATION

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A three-credit course's standard number of expected work hours is 9 hours per week. This is a Political Science course. The style of the readings and assignments reflect this academic discipline, and the learning activities foster instructor-student and student-student interaction.

In online courses, your regular participation involves logging in to our course, navigating through the content pages in a module, completing the readings and videos, participating in discussions and other activities, and submitting assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Your participation is an integral part of your learning, but it also contributes to the learning of your peers. As members of our learning community, we are each responsible for creating an environment where we can all learn from each other.

To ensure each member of our course feels included and welcomed, we will treat each other with dignity and respect while acknowledging that each of us is unique and has different views and opinions about topics. Some of the topics we cover may elicit strong reactions. Please keep in mind that written communications can be easily misinterpreted. Each time you make a post or reply to a discussion, read it twice before you submit it to ensure the words you have chosen are considerate but also convey your message. If you feel a

peer has violated these expectations, please get in touch with me directly; I will tend to your concern in a confidential matter.

*Technology Requirements:* We will use Canvas for class. Set up your Canvas notifications so you do not miss anything! Keep in mind that Canvas does not play that well with Apple. So be sure you are accessing Canvas through Chrome (not Firefox, and not Safari). Canvas only supports some file types (again, not Apple) - MS Word and PDF are good choices. Most assignments are simply submitted through the Canvas text box, so you just copy and paste your submissions into the text box.

Depending on how you decided to purchase your text(s) for this class (e.g., rental, paper copy, or electronic book), you may have other technical requirements related to your textbook. You have purchase options so that you can do you!

Web-based applications you will use in this course are all provided by UWO. They include Canvas and Microsoft Teams. For any technical problems, make sure you contact the UWO help desk right away! That's their job... so don't wait! These are not things I can help you with. See also:

- [Canvas Help](#) and [Canvas Student Guides \(very comprehensive\)](#)
- [UWO Knowledge Base \(Tech Support\)](#)

## COURSE POLICIES

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*Course Schedule:* We have a course schedule that we follow over the semester. You can find this schedule in our START HERE module. It is hyperlinked to our modules in Canvas. A non-linked version is at the end of this syllabus for your reference.

The course is organized in weekly modules. Each includes an overview highlighting what you need to accomplish during the week. The week's overview page lists the activities and associated assignments for that week; these must be completed to unlock and move to the next module.

*Assignments and Grading:* Your final grade in this course will be based on the following weighted assignment groups, using the UWO 93/87/80 grading scale.

- Reading and Chapter quizzes: 20%
- Post and Reply Discussions: 25%
- Current Event Blog Posts: 15%
- Weekly Learning Reflections: 10%
- Research Preparation and Skills: 10%
- Research Paper 20%

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	
A	100%	to 93%
A-	< 93%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 87%
B	< 87%	to 83%
B-	< 83%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 77%
C	< 77%	to 73%
C-	< 73%	to 70%
D+	< 70%	to 67%
D	< 67%	to 63%
D-	< 63%	to 60%
F	< 60%	to 0%

I know it can be frustrating to wait a long time to receive feedback or to know your grade. I will grade your work on Canvas as soon as possible (in conjunction with my other classes), ideally within 2-4 days from the due date. For papers with individualized comments, it may take more than a week. [You can see comments on Canvas.](#)

### *Absences, late work, and accommodations*

All assignments are due by midnight (11:59 pm) on the scheduled dates. Because this is an asynchronous course, you have some flexibility with your time and should be able to adjust to minor personal and family emergencies; however, if you have a significant illness or issue that *impacts your ability to complete assignments on time or complete the course, you need to communicate with me right away.*

Missing work automatically receives a zero on Canvas when the due date/time passes. Late submissions are automatically subject to a 7% per day late penalty. A late penalty can be removed for extenuating circumstances and excused absences. *If you think you have extenuating circumstances, contact me.*

- *Excused absences and late work:* According to University policy, excused absences require documented evidence of medical necessity or an approved college-sanctioned event. We will work out a schedule for you to complete your work before or after your absence. Zeros and late penalties will be removed as work is turned in.  
*Unexcused absences and late work:* The late penalty is 7% per day – it is automatic and will diminish your potential grade to a floor of 65%. This means you can turn in late work and at least get a D. You are always better off submitting something rather than nothing! However, this grace period runs until the end of Spring break for assignments due in the first half of the semester and until the last day of class for assignments due in the second half of the semester.

### *Citations and Writing Expectations*

The Political Science Department has [writing resources](#) for you, including the APSA style guide. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the APSA citation style and using it properly – if you have questions, ask.

### *Plagiarism and Academic Honesty*

Plagiarism is using someone else's UNIQUE ideas, words, theories, evidence, findings, argument, etc., and passing them off as your own by not properly attributing or acknowledging the original source of those ideas. Plagiarism could result in failing the assignment or course. If you are unsure whether what you have written constitutes plagiarism, ask before you turn it in. If there is an issue, we will talk.

This class uses Turnitin technology to help you and me detect plagiarism issues. See the Dean of Students' [resources on plagiarism](#) for more information about how we address these issues at UWO.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

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We have a course schedule that we will follow over the course of the semester. The basic schedule is reproduced below. In Canvas, this schedule includes hyperlinks to our weekly pages with detailed plans and additional resources for each week. If anything changes in our schedule, I will inform you via announcements.

I have structured the course with lots of reminders and deadlines to keep you on pace to completion. You should sign up for Canvas notifications to ensure you do not miss class announcements and reminders. Each week has its own module in Canvas, and each module is structured the same way with consistent assignments and due dates to help you structure your time.

In each module, you will find

- *An introduction to the week with our learning objectives and plan of action*
- *Assigned reading and several related learning resources, such as mini-lectures, concept explainers, and commentary on current events or research*
- *Assignments for the week, such as discussion and response, current event responses, chapter quizzes, and reflection on your learning.*

The major assignment in this class is a *research paper* of approximately 3000 words; typed and double-spaced analyzing a topic of your choice. The goal of the individual research paper is to give you each the opportunity to conduct scholarly research on a topic of your choosing and practice your writing and research skills. Across the semester you will develop and narrow your topic, develop a thesis appropriate for a persuasive paper, synthesize the literature related to your topic, use evidence from your research, give and receive constructive feedback on writing at various stages, and revise your work. We will work with a UWO research librarian to help you accomplish these tasks *as part of our scheduled activities*.

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS**

### **Week 1: State and Nation in Historical context**

Jan 30-Feb 3 – Module available starting Jan 25.

Chapter 1 - The State and State Capacity

Chapter 2 - Nation Building, Race, and Ethnicity

\*Introduce yourself to the class

\*Reading quiz

### **Week 2: Democracy and Development in Historical Context**

Feb 6-Feb 10 – Module available starting Feb 1

Chapter 3 - Political Regimes and Democracy

Chapter 4 - Development Models and Socioeconomic Welfare

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply - Democracy and Development in Historical Context

\*Current Event Blog Post #1 illustrating the impact of history on contemporary issues

## **PART II: CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY**

### **Week 3: Democratic Deficits and the Quality of Democracy**

Feb 13-Feb 17 – Module available starting Feb 8

Chapter 5 - Democracy and the Quality of Democracy: The Never-Ending Quest

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Democratic Deficits and the Quality of Democracy

\*Research skills – Book review/database use

### **Week 4: Political Inclusion and Participation**

Feb 20-Feb 24 – Module available starting Feb 15

Chapter 6 - Political Inclusion and Institutional Innovations: Women, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendants, and Ordinary People

Country case example: Brazil

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Political Inclusion and Participation

\*Research skills – Identity a broad topic

### **Week 5: Political Parties and Representation**

Feb 27-Mar 3 – Module available starting Feb 22

Chapter 7 - Political Parties and the Citizen–Politician Link: The Persistent Crisis of Representation

Country case example: Peru

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Political Parties and Representation

\*Current Event Blog Post #2 illustrating specific “problems OF democracy”

## **PART III - CIVIL RIGHTS AS A PROBLEM FOR DEMOCRACY**

### **Week 6: Civil Rights – Promises Unmet**

Mar 6-Mar 10 – Module available starting Mar 1

Chapter 8 - The Protection of Civil Rights: A Pending Task for Democracies

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Civil Rights – Promises Unmet

\*Research skills – Meeting with the research librarian / Narrowing your research question

### **Week 7: Responding to Past Human Rights Violations**

Mar 13-Mar 17 – Module available starting Mar 8

Chapter 9 - Transitional Justice: Responses to Past Human Rights Violations

Paired case examples: Brazil and Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, Chile, and Argentina

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Responding to Past Human Rights Violations

\*Research skills – Meeting with the instructor / finalizing your research question

## **Spring Break – Mar 20- Mar 24**

### **Week 8: Corruption – Public Officials against the Public Interest**

Mar 27-Mar 31 – Module available starting Mar 22

Chapter 10 - High-Level Corruption: Public Officials against the Public Interest

Country case examples: Brazil, Mexico and Guatemala

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Corruption – Public Officials against the Public Interest

\*Research skills – Mini annotated bibliography – peer-reviewed journal articles

### **Week 9: Violence and State Responses**

Apr 3-Apr 7 – Module available starting Mar 29

Chapter 11 - The New Violence: Homicides, Drugs, and the State

Country case examples: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Violence and State Responses

\*Current Event Blog Post #3 illustrating “civil rights as a problem FOR democracy”

## **PART IV - SOCIAL RIGHTS AS A PROBLEM FOR DEMOCRACY**

### **Week 10: Social rights, Inequity, and Democracy**

Apr 10-Apr 14 – Module available starting Apr 5

Chapter 12 - Social Rights in Law and Reality: The Dilemmas of Democracy in Unequal Societies

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Social rights, Inequity, and Democracy

**Week 11: Development, Social Inequality, and Environmental Sustainability**

Apr 17-Apr 21 – Module available starting Apr 12

Chapter 13 - Sustainable Development and Neoextractivism: Growth, the Environment, and Social Action

Country case examples: Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Development, Social Inequality, and Environmental Sustainability

\*Research skills – Paper outline and peer review

**Week 12: Social Exclusion and Poverty – Policy Responses**

Apr 24-Apr 28 – Module available starting Apr 19

Chapter 14 - Basic Social Inclusion and Social Policy: CCTs as a Poverty Reduction Policy

Country case examples: Brazil and Mexico

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – Social Exclusion and Poverty – Policy Responses

**Week 13: The Paradox of Political and Social Inequality**

May 1-May5 – Module available starting Apr 26

Chapter 15 - Unequal Democracies: The Paradox of Political Equality and Social Inequality

Country case examples: Chile and Brazil

\*Reading quiz

\*Post and Reply – The Paradox of Political and Social Inequality

\*Current Event Blog Post #4 illustrating “Social rights as a problem FOR democracy”

**Week 14: Wrapping up and Research Paper**

\*Research skills – Video presentation

\*Final research paper due

**POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

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*Office Hours:* The [Political Science Department](#) uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) for holding office hours. This system is available to all UWO students. Your Poli Sci faculty are available during their posted office hours (whether you are taking an in-person or an online class). To use MS Teams during office hours, send a chat to your instructor to let them know you want to meet - think of that as the equivalent of knocking on the door. We're here for you! Please use our office hours freely and often. Many faculty are also happy to set up meetings outside of office hours if students have conflicts with the posted times.

*Expectations for Academic Honesty:* A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person, all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with appropriately (quoted when using someone’s words and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When you are asked to work in teams, that work should be done by the group collaboratively. [More information can be found here.](#)

*Concerns or Grievances:* The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. You should contact me if you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method. That goes for your other classes, too: always talk to your professor first. But if you are not comfortable speaking to your instructor, you can always reach out to the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu). As needed, he can guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science or the Dean of Students.

*Note to Political Science Majors:* Congratulations on joining a great major - the world needs your critical thinking, creative problem-solving, knowledge of the issues, and stellar communication skills!

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. If you have questions about this requirement, your course schedule, possible internships, or career preparation, please reach out to your faculty adviser. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisers at least once per year. If you are unsure who your adviser is, you can check Titanweb or email Ms. Angelee Hammond at [hammond@uwosh.edu](mailto:hammond@uwosh.edu).

*Changes:* If substantive changes are made to this course syllabus, such as changes in schedule or assignments, notification will be provided promptly, and a revised syllabus will be made available (see our course schedule page). See the next tab for support resources

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

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I want you to be successful! There are many [student resources](#) dedicated to your academic and personal success.

UW Oshkosh strives to create inclusive learning environments. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. For more information, see the [Dean of Students](#) website and the [Accessibility Center](#).

If you have any situation/condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect your ability to perform in this class or access class assignments; please reach out to me so that we can work together on a plan for your success. Canvas is an ADA-compliant course management software suite. Both Canvas and our textbook have accessibility features that you may find helpful such as the immersive reader function.

Diversity drives innovation, creativity, and progress. At the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the culture, identities, life experiences, unique abilities, and talents of every individual contribute to the foundation of our success. Creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable environment is of paramount importance to us. This pursuit prepares all of us to be global citizens who will contribute to the betterment of the world. We are committed to a university culture that provides everyone with the opportunity to thrive.

By federal regulations set forth by [The Higher Education Act of 1965](#) (amended in 1998), [consumer information](#) is available to all students at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.



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