

Department of Political Science | University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
PS 379 – Latin American Politics (online) 3 cr.
Spring Semester 2024

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

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11 to 1 pm AND Wednesdays from 6-7 pm on MS Teams (or by appointment)

Email: scribnerd@uwosh.edu

Class Time: Asynchronous

Class Location: Online

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 has no prerequisites; it is open to all students regardless of major or disciplinary focus. The course builds on concepts covered in Political Science 101 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (which is recommended but not required). The textbook introduces and reinforces central political science concepts in comparative politics.

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.*

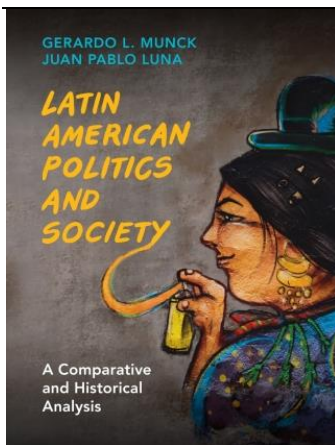
Student Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, you should be able to:

- 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
- Conduct independent research on a theme or issue in Latin American Politics

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 project.

COURSE MATERIALS



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

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: 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 and quizzes.

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 responsible for creating an environment where we can all learn from each other. Depending on the size of our class, you may be placed in a discussion group of about 10 students (give or take) to make our discussions more intimate and manageable. Discussions are automatically tied to your group.

To ensure each member of our course feels included and welcomed, we will abide by a few key rules of etiquette. We will treat each other with dignity and respect while acknowledging that we are unique and have different views and opinions about topics. Some of the topics we cover may elicit strong reactions. To ensure everyone feels comfortable engaging in our discussions, please remember 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, don't hesitate to contact me directly; I will tend to your concern in a confidential matter.

Workload: For a three-credit course, the standard number of expected work hours is 9 hours per week. As a rule of thumb, that is 3 hours of lecture (in class with your professor/lecture) and 6 hours of time spent on coursework such as reading, note-taking, and assignments. You have a lot of flexibility with your time during the week. Each week is a module in Canvas that includes an overview highlighting what you need to accomplish in the module. *Make yourself a schedule for this course and stay organized and self-motivated to ensure you do not fall behind!* I will provide you with reminders and deadlines to keep you on pace to completion.

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 submitted through the Canvas 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!

The 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

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 into 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.

There are weekly assignments associated with reading, including reading quizzes and discussion assignments. Each week you will reflect on your learning. As we switch to major sections of the course we will consider connections to current events in the region in a shared "current event blog." The major assignment in this class is a *research project* of approximately 7 to 10 pages, typed and double-spaced, analyzing a topic of your choice. The goal of the individual research project is to give you each the opportunity to conduct scholarly research on a topic of your choosing and practice your writing and research skills. Details about all assignments are on Canvas.

- Reading and Chapter quizzes: 15%
- Post and Reply Discussions: 35%
- Current Event Blog Posts: 15%
- Weekly Learning Reflections: 15%
- Research Project: 20%

I know it can be frustrating to wait a long time to receive feedback or to know your grade. For some items, like quizzes, you have instant feedback. Discussions and reflections take some time to get through. 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. You will see rubric comments and often additional comments in your grade book on your written assignments. [You can see comments on Canvas.](#)

Early Alert: A few weeks into the semester, your instructors will send you an **early alert message if they think that you are struggling with class**. This message will let you know whether your instructors have noticed any academic problems, attendance problems, or both. When you get such a message, it is a chance to address a problem and improve on your work. I suggest meeting with me in office hours (or by appointment) so we can work out a plan for your success in this class.

Absences, late work, and accommodations: Plan on submitting work on time. All assignments are due by midnight (11:59 pm) on the scheduled dates. Because this is

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%

an asynchronous course, you already have flexibility with your time and should be able to adjust to minor personal and family emergencies; however, if you have a significant illness or another issue that impacts your ability to participate in the course, communicate with me immediately.

Note that assignment deadlines are not flexible. *Discussion assignments every week have a key goal of students learning with and from each other.* Late assignments compromise this learning goal and affect both your learning and that of your classmates. Student contributions impact the learning process for other students – **student-to-student interaction is a requirement of online courses.**

You will be submitting all your work on Canvas. Canvas automatically assigns a zero on Canvas when the due date/time passes. **Late submissions are automatically subject to a 7% per day late penalty**, and the grade overrides the zero once the assignment is graded.

A late penalty can be removed for university-excused absences and for extenuating circumstances that temporarily impact your ability to participate in the course. *If you are experiencing extenuating circumstances, you need to communicate with 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 once the 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 60%. This means you can turn in late work and at least get a D- and therefore, you are always better off submitting something rather than nothing! All assignments must be submitted before the end of week 14 to get a D- rather than a zero.
- **Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities** that may affect their ability to participate in some *limited course activities* or meet some *minor course requirements*. Documentation must be on file in the University's "accommodate" system. Both the eBook version of the textbook and Canvas have accessibility features that you may find useful, such as the immersive reader function. For more information on accommodations at UWO, see the Dean of Students website and the Accessibility Center.

Tips for managing online learning and participation: Online learning is different and can be challenging! What's out of sight can often be out of mind. Although you aren't coming to a physical classroom, ensure you stay engaged and on top of your work.

- **Create a schedule that works for you.** Plan your week and schedule consistent blocks of time to work on this class. Just like if you had an in-person class. Early each week, review the week's overview page and your "To do list" for each week on that overview page.

- **Budget time for working online.** You already know it will take you longer to respond to an online discussion than to raise your hand and comment in class - so give yourself time!
- **Use Canvas features, like the calendar.** Review your Canvas Calendar for assignment due dates. I will post materials on Canvas, primarily using the announcement tool to post reminders twice a week and stay in touch with the class.
- **Find a place to focus - avoid shared spaces;** let others know when you're working so they leave you alone (or remind you to stay on task!)
- **Don't procrastinate!** It can be effortless to delay work when you're not physically attending class. Keep up with what's posted in Canvas daily - set up a schedule for yourself so you don't fall behind.
- **Ask questions.** If you don't understand something, don't sit in silence. Message me! And/or see me virtually in office hours.

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.

Students may inadvertently plagiarize when they fail to provide page numbers for quotations in a paper or when they paraphrase or summarize the work of others without acknowledging the source in the text of their paper. Even "accidental" or "sloppy" plagiarism is widely considered wrong, unethical, and dishonest. If you are unsure whether or not what you have written constitutes plagiarism, ask before you turn it in. If there is an issue, we'll talk.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be complicated regarding plagiarism and academic honesty. AI text generators can be useful tools, but they are often prone to factual errors, incorrect or fabricated citations, and misinterpretations of abstract concepts. I have found that Chat GPT (and other AI tools) are *not reliable - they often make things up*, from academic citations and historical names. **Do not rely on AI to be correct!** AI is permitted in this course under certain circumstances as a tool but should be used cautiously. Moreover, AI programs are not a replacement for human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. These are skills that you must develop over time.

- The use of AI tools is permitted in this course to:
 - Check grammar and style.
- The use of AI tools is NOT permitted in this course to:
 - Impersonate you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion posts or replies.
 - Write entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

Remember that you are responsible for the content of any work submitted for this course under your name. This includes the information you submit based on an AI query such that it does not violate intellectual property laws, contain misinformation, or unethical content. Your use of AI must be properly documented

and cited to stay within university policies on academic integrity. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways runs afoul of the academic integrity expectations.

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

Citations: Your written work, such as discussion posts, should consistently demonstrate that you have read the material, that you understand it, and that you can apply concepts and support your reasoning. **Use your textbook and course materials for support.**

If you are a political science major, the Political Science Department has [writing resources](#), including a citation style guide. **For this class, you will primarily cite the text (Munck & Luna 2022: page number).** [UWO Libraries also has citation help](#). This doesn't have to be perfect... but you do need to cite!

COURSE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES

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. These include:

- *Learning objectives for the week*
- *Assigned reading in our textbook*
- *Related learning resources*
- *Discussion(s) assignments*
- *Chapter Quiz (due Friday)*
- *Learning Reflection (due Sunday night)*

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS

Week 1: State and Nation in Historical Context

Feb 5-Feb 9 – Module available starting Jan 31.

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 12-Feb 16 – Module available starting Feb 7

Chapter 3 - Political Regimes and Democracy

Chapter 4 - Development Models and Socioeconomic Welfare

*Reading quiz

*Post and Reply - Democracy and Development in Historical Context

PART II: CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY

Week 3: Democratic Deficits and the Quality of Democracy

Feb 19-Feb 23 – Module available starting Feb 14

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

*Reading quiz

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

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

Week 4: Political Inclusion and Participation

Feb 26-Mar 1 – Module available starting Feb 21

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 Project Interest Statement

Week 5: Political Parties and Representation

Mar 4-Mar 8 – Module available starting Feb 28

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 11-Mar 15 – Module available starting Mar 6

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

*Reading quiz

*Post and Reply – Civil Rights – Promises Unmet

*Research Project – Getting Started with a Book Review

Week 7: Responding to Past Human Rights Violations

Mar 18-Mar 22 – Module available starting Mar 13

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 Project – Meet with me (before Spring Break)

Spring Break – Mar 25 - Mar 31

Week 8: Corruption – Public Officials against the Public Interest

Apr 1-Apr 5 – Module available starting Mar 20

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 Project – Meet with our UWO research librarian

Week 9: Violence and State Responses

Apr 8-Apr 12 – Module available starting Apr 3

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 15-Apr 19 – Module available starting Apr 10

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 22-Apr 26– Module available starting Apr 17

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 Project – Meet with me (again – status update)

Week 12: Social Exclusion and Poverty – Policy Responses

Apr 29-May 3 – Module available starting Apr 24

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 6-May 10 – Module available starting May 1

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 Project Submission

May 13-May 17 – Module available starting May 1

*Research skills – Video presentation

*Final research paper due

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT POLICIES

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 or online experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. Tracy Slagter. She can be reached at slagtert@uwosh.edu. Should she be unable to resolve your concerns, she will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

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.

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 on Canvas).

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

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.

STUDENT RIGHT TO KNOW ACT (1990) Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Student Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>