Professor Wendy Hunter  
Batts 3.138, 512-232-7247, wendyhunter@austin.utexas.edu  
Office Hours: Tues 11:15 – 12:45, Thurs 11:15 – 12:15, and by appointment

Course Description
This course is a graduate-level introduction to Latin American politics. It is designed to provide students with the theoretical and analytical tools to engage in cross-national study and research of political processes in Latin America. It explores alternative theoretical approaches as well as substantive topics of major importance studied by scholars in the field. Priority will be placed on critically examining the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to understanding political and economic change in the region. The debates and theoretical currents that we will examine have been central not only in the study of Latin American politics but also in the development of the sub-discipline of Comparative Politics over the last thirty years.

Book to Purchase


All other readings have been posted on Blackboard.
Course Requirements

1. Seminar participation: The success of the seminar will depend first and foremost upon the active engagement of students. Barring extraordinary circumstances, students should always come prepared to discuss and debate the material. You must contact me ahead of time if you plan to miss a session.

2. Two position papers. Twice during the semester students will write a very short paper (2-3 pages in length) on the readings in response to questions that will be handed out. The same students that write for the week will lead off the class discussion. Students will sign up to select these days.

3. Two short essays. Students will be required to write two short essays (6–8 pages) that critically analyze the readings around given questions. These essays must put forth and develop a thesis, not merely summarize/synthesize the readings.

4. Final essay. Students will be required to write a final integrative essay (10–12 pages) in response to given questions.

Deadlines and Grade Determination

Seminar participation: 20 percent
Position papers: 5 percent each (students will sign up for two specific dates)
Two short essays: 20 percent each, due on March 4 and April 8
Final Essay: 30 percent, due on May 10

You should e-mail the class your position papers by 8:00 am on the day you will present. Please submit the essays to my government department box by 4:00 of the day they are due. I will not accept papers via e-mail. Late papers will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: 20 January – INTRODUCTION

No reading.

Week 2: 27 January – CULTURALISM


Week 3: 3 February - THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM


Week 4: 10 February - RATIONAL CHOICE


Week 5: 17 February – INTERNATIONAL DIFFUSION OF IDEAS AND POLICIES


Week 6: 24 February – HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM


Week 7: 3 March – THE BREAKDOWN OR EROSION OF DEMOCRACY


Week 8: 10 March – DEMOCRATIZATION


Week 9: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 10: 24 March – THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE


Week 11: 31 March – MARKET REFORMS


Week 12: 7 April – SOCIAL POLICY, CHALLENGES OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY


Week 13: 14 April – POLITICAL PARTIES AND CLIENTELISM


**Week 14: 21 April – REPRESENTATION OUTSIDE OF PARTIES**


**Week 15: 28 April – RISE OF THE LEFT and its CONSEQUENCES**


**Week 16: 5 May – FINAL REFLECTIONS**

No new reading.