

Department.: Political Science

Course number: POLS 238/W

Title: Democratic Culture and Citizenship in Latin America .

Credits: 3

Contact Person: Jennifer Sterling-Folker, Associate Professor

Content Area : CA2 Social Sciences

Competency Group : W only

Catalog Copy: POLS 238W. Democratic Culture and Citizenship in Latin America . Prerequisite: ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250. Either semester. Three credits. A study of the development of democratic attitudes, norms, and behavior in Latin America .

Course Information :

a. course goals and objectives : This courses introduces students to the study of democracy and democratization in Latin America . The course reviews theoretical discussions of the nature of democracy and what it means to have a democratic citizenship and democratic culture. It grounds the theoretical discussions in reviews of the emergence of democracy in Europe, the US and Latin America and by comparing Europe, the US and Latin America today.

b. course requirements: The central requirements for the course are a research paper and participation in a group oral presentation. In addition, at mid-semester, students will turn in a short paper (a preliminary version of the longer paper) and groups will be required to present for review a detailed plan for the oral presentation. Finally, students will have a final exam based on the semester work. Each week, students

will be required to read roughly one hundred pages from a variety of sources (literature, history, anthropology, and political science) discussing both theory and empirical evidence about democratic citizenship and culture. Both papers will require a revise and resubmit.

c. major themes, issues, topics, etc. to be covered : Concepts of democracy, democratic citizenship, democratic culture and the difficulty of defining them precisely, Theories of democracy and democratization, Emergence of democracy and democratic culture in Europe and US, Experience of democracy – strengths and weaknesses – in Latin America, Examination of democratic practices in US and Europe – comparison with Latin America for purpose of refining understanding of ways in which they are similar and ways in which they differ.

How Meets Goals of Gen Ed .:

The course is designed to meet these goals in general education:

1. Become articulate : The course encourages students to become articulate in two ways. First, it forces students to examine their own normative assumptions about democracy and their own beliefs about what democracy is and how it functions in both the US and abroad. Students will participate in classroom discussions designed to explore the range of views that exist in the classroom and pushing students to express their ideas orally. Further, by participating in organized group presentations, students will also develop the skills to present a prepared oral argument, supported by evidence.

2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility : This is an interdisciplinary course that will draw on history, literature, anthropology and diverse areas of political science to examine one of the central normative questions of politics. Students will learn how to draw on disparate sources of knowledge to develop their arguments.

3. Acquire critical judgment : The course encourages students to acquire critical judgment by requiring them to repeatedly consider and articulate their views (orally and in writing) write about the meaning of democracy and industrialization in the context of the developing world. Students are asked to consider how democracy functions in different societies by, for example, comparing Brazil to the US . Such a comparison forces students to consider why in what ways these nation-states are both similar and different in their institutions and cultures. Students begin to see nuances in the very concepts of democratization and democratic culture. In so doing, they begin to develop a critical analytical understanding of how these concepts can and should be applied.

4. Acquire moral sensitivity : The course seeks to develop moral sensitivity and moral awareness of their era and society by encouraging students to reflect on the ways in which democratizing societies may be much more democratic than we often assume and established democracies are often much less so. Course materials are selected to make students appreciate the care one must apply when making moral judgments and the necessity of applying uniform standards, whether they are applying it to a Latin American country or the US . By using such material, students develop an understanding of the substantial social, economic, and political injustices that exist in the world, even in established democracies.

5. Acquire awareness of their era and society : This course makes students aware of the global struggle to establish and maintain the functioning of democracy. It gives students perspective on the way that groups and individuals in developing societies struggle to deepen democratic reforms and the obstacles they face. It also focuses students' attention on the condition of democracy in their own society.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: The course begins by asking what is democracy and why it appears so hard to establish and sustain. The course uses these themes to repeatedly stress the diversity of cultures and experiences in the world. It does so by asking students to appreciate the extent to which democratic societies differ amongst themselves – both between established and new democracies and amongst established and amongst new democracies. In so doing, the course amply illustrates that there is tremendous diversity in the human cultural experience, and it underscores the variety of political, economic, and social conditions that exist in both the developed and the developing world.

CA2 Criteria :

This course enables the students to analyze and understand interactions of the numerous social factors that influence behavior at the individual, cultural, societal, national, or international level, and meets the four required criteria in this manner:

1. Introduce students to theories and concepts of social science: The course exposes students to theories of democratization, one of the central topics of study in political science. The course explores all of the concepts related to democratization, including democratic consolidation, electoral systems, and party systems, as well as harder measure aspects such as culture, norms, and attitudes. It examines these topics in a comparative context, so that the topic of democratization is defined, analytically examined, empirically examined, and ultimately problematized in both the developed world and the developing

world. In so doing, the course exposes students to the complexities and nuances of social scientific theory and practice.

2. Introduce students to methods used in the social sciences, including the ethical problems social scientists face : The course relies on a combination of historical analysis, qualitative case-study analysis, and quantitative analysis, as well as drawing on other disciplines such as history, literature and anthropology. Students will learn about the comparative method as well as issues such as cross-national analysis, the appropriate use of case studies, and historical analysis. Students will also be exposed to discussion of the way normative assumptions can color analysis and complicate the definition of concepts.

3. Introduce students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment : The course pays particular attention to how institutions structure incentives for individual and group behavior in the economies, societies, and political systems in Latin America. In turn, it also explores how cultures, norms, beliefs, and attitudes shape institutions. In particular, it examines the challenges of designing institutions that are consistent with cultural norms and the breakdowns that occur when that is not the case.

4. Provide students with tools to analyze social, political or economic groups and social issues at the societal, regional, national and international levels : The course provides tools for students to comparatively analyze social issues by providing basic concepts and theories that help account for poverty, inequality, corruption, the breakdown of democracy and the efforts to counteract all these problems. These are all examined from a methodology that is basic to the study of comparative politics. This comparative methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative techniques, ways to operationalize key concerns, examine data presentation in a wide array of formats, and find and assess a wide variety of types of data. The students are taught these analytical tools with the goal and expectation that they will be able to apply them in group oral presentations and their own individual research.

W Criteria: The purpose of the writing assignment is to push the student to develop an in-depth understanding of democratic practice in one area and to compare it between Latin America and the United States . The intent is to both introduce the student to the nuances and complexities of making judgments about democratic behavior as well as sharpen their analytical, conceptual, and critical skills. The purpose of the course is to show how hard it is to make simplistic judgments and to push students to reflect critically on what it really means to be democratic. Therefore, the writing assignment is integral to the course and is the primary means of getting students to reach their own conclusions. The written assignments will include a five page research design proposal which is worth 15% of their final grade. Their second paper will be a research paper of 15 or more pages in length, and they will write a first draft

which they will revise into a final draft based on comments received. This final draft will be worth 35% of their final grade. The syllabus will inform the students that they must pass the W component of the course in order to pass the course. Formal instruction in class in time set aside for discussing writing. Written comments on first drafts submitted. Individual conferences to discuss papers and comments on them. Both the research design and research papers will receive feedback and comments. Students will also receive verbal feedback during individual conferences. They will be required to incorporate feedback and suggestions on their research design paper into the first draft of their research paper. And they will be required to incorporate feedback and suggestions on the first draft of their research paper into the final draft of the research paper.

Role of Grad Students: The department has not relied on graduate students to teach W courses or sections in the past, nor does it intend to do so in the future.

Supplementary Information: syllabus

Democratic Citizenship and Culture in Latin America

Political Science 238W

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Course Objectives : This course seeks to develop students' critical thinking and moral reasoning about the emergence of democratic society. Promoting democracy and human rights has become one of the most important themes in the global community today. But, how does one go about promoting democracy? What, in fact, is a democracy? These are actually much more difficult questions than activists, policy-makers, and well-meaning citizens often realize. Too often, attention focuses on specific laws or institutions, especially elections, as the solution. But, historical experience and extensive

scholarship demonstrate that democracy is much more than a specific law or institution and that both defining and promoting democracy are exceptionally difficult tasks.

This course examines these issues by focusing on democratic citizenship and culture in Latin America . Latin America has been trying to develop and deepen democratic rule longer than any other region of the developing world. There have been some important successes: as of 2005, almost every country in Latin America is nominally democratic. For the most part, Latin American countries have developed democratic institutions and democratic laws. But very important challenges and limitations to democratic rule remain. These include widespread poverty, the world's worst inequality, corruption, impunity, and various forms of social and political violence. In short, many of the laws and institutions are democratic, but in many ways society remains undemocratic. As one Mexican scholar phrased it, “the million dollar question is why isn't democracy sinking in.”

Course Requirements : The central requirements for the course are a research paper and participation in a group oral presentation. The group project will draw on students' individual research efforts. In addition, at mid-semester, students will turn in a short paper (a research proposal for the longer paper, including a bibliography) and groups will be required to present for review a detailed plan for the oral presentation. Students will be required to submit preliminary drafts of both the 5-page and the final 15-page paper for comments. Individual conferences will be scheduled where students and the instructor can discuss written commentary from the instructor on their drafts. Students will be required to incorporate comments and criticisms and resubmit both papers. Finally, students will have a final exam based on the semester work. The breakdown of the grades is as follows:

Group Plan: 10%

Research Proposal: 15%

Research Paper: 35%

Group Presentation: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

NOTE: POLS 238W IS A W COURSE. WRITING THE TWO PAPERS, SUBMITTING THEM FOR COMMENTS, DISCUSSING THE COMMENTS IN CONFERENCE WITH THE INSTRUCTOR, AND REVISING AND RESUBMITTING THE PAPERS ARE ALL FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS OF THE W COMPONENT OF THE COURSE. YOU MUST PASS THE W PORTION OF THE COURSE TO PASS THE COURSE.

Course Plan : The course is organized into the following sections.

Part One: Defining difficult concept: democracy, citizenship, and culture

Part Two: Ways of evaluating democracy and assessing democratic culture

Part Three: A survey of the state of democracy in Latin America

Part Four: The Origins of Democracy I – the emergence of democracy in Europe

Part Five: The Origins of Democracy II – the emergence of democracy in Latin America

Part Six: Explaining the successes and limitations of democracy in Latin America

Part Seven: Comparative Perspectives – Democracy in the US versus Latin America