Students graduating from Texas A&M – Corpus Christi should be able to demonstrate awareness and knowledge of distinct cultures or subcultures, including but not limited to ethnicity, gender, class, political systems, religions, languages, or human geography. Different types of political rule have marked the Latin American landscape in the twentieth century. This course attempts to understand these differences. The course begins by examining the democracies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay from the end of World War II to the onset of authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 1970s. It next compares explanations for the emergence of authoritarian rule and for the return of democratization in these countries. The effects of economic policy choice under military rule are highlighted here. The course then examines countries that remained democratic over the past forty years, including Colombia and Venezuela. From this, relations between the United States and Central America and Mexico are discussed, with issues of revolution in Cuba coming to the forefront. The course concludes by examining the government and politics in Latin America in the 1990s and beyond.

Grades will be based on an two essays (30%), and a research paper (40%). Class participation is strongly encouraged and is worth 30% of your final grade.

**Grade Scale**
A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69; F=less than 60%

**Course Grades**
Course grades are based on the following:

40% Research Paper
30% Essays
30% Class Participation

**Required Texts**

Assigned readings mentioned as “available on blackboard” are available on Blackboard. Amazing!

**Class Participation and Attendance (30%)**

This course is a seminar, not a lecture series. It is your responsibility, as well as mine, to come to class prepared to discuss the information and claims found in the readings and explore related research possibilities. If any of us shirk, we all lose. I expect no absences in the course, and I encourage you to discuss any circumstances with me that will preclude you from attending class. I also expect you to arrive on time. If you do need to miss class, please contact me ahead of time to let me know that you will not be able to attend and to make arrangements to complete an alternate assignment. A large portion of my overall evaluation of your performance in the course will depend on the quality of your seminar participation.

Grades for participation (including discussion questions and attendance) will be assigned at the end of the semester, but you may ask for feedback on your performance at any time. If you have concerns about the quality and quantity of your participation in the course, I hope you will speak to me. Remember, this is a seminar, so just showing up to class is not enough. You must come to class prepared to participate in an informed discussion of the issues raised by the week’s readings. If you just show up to every class, but never say a word, you can expect to receive a D or lower for class participation (30% of your grade).

The following general grading scale will be used for participation and preparation:

- **A:** The student made a very strong contribution to the course. Class discussion, comments, and presentations reflected understanding and analysis of the material, and were constructive. Constructive means that a student does not simply identify a weakness or problem. Rather, constructive comments identify a problem and offer suggestions for how to address the weakness or problem.

- **B:** The student contributed meaningfully to the course. Class participation and/or presentations went beyond repeating the assigned material, perhaps identifying weaknesses in the current literature, but did not make many constructive suggestions about how weaknesses might be overcome or how the literature might be usefully extended in the future.

- **C:** The student did not contribute meaningfully to the seminar. Class participation and/or presentations were limited to repeating the assigned material rather than making connections or extensions.

- **D or lower:** The student attended class, but did not participate in discussions or present meaningful questions for academic debate.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the seminar is to engage in informed group discussion: we are not interested in uninformed opinion. This means that students should closely and critically read each book or article on the reading list, and spend time thinking about what each contributes to the topic that week and to conflict studies in general. Class discussion will focus on such issues as the theoretical arguments being made (both explicitly and implicitly), the empirical evidence that is marshaled to test these arguments, weaknesses of the work, and potential directions for future study.

Finally, because we will engage in vigorous academic debate during class, classroom etiquette is vital. Please work to ensure that you make comments in ways that invite discussion. Our
classroom contains members with various life experiences, divergent perspectives, varying levels of experience with political science research, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking, and speak to me if you are offended by something that is said in class. If you do not follow these guidelines, your participation grade will be adversely affected.

**Essays (30%)**

There will be two 3-4 page essays assigned this semester. The first essay, covering the film “The Motorcycle Diaries” will be due on October 27th and further instructions on the essay’s content will be provided later. The second essay, covering the book The Tortilla Curtain, will be due Dec 6th and further instructions on the essay’s content will be provided later.

**Research Paper (40%)**

Another requirement is an original research paper. This paper will be devoted to a case study of the government of an individual country in Latin America and its levels of democracy and development. How have these factors impacted human rights, stability of governance, military strength, international relationships?

The following should be addressed:
- Is the country currently a democracy? If so, how strong of a democracy?
- How did their current system of government come into being?
- The history of the country’s relationship with the U.S.
- The country’s level of democracy and type of government have impacted human rights
- The impact of the international community on the country’s development and government

Quantitative methods can be employed if desired, and depending on the student’s methodological training, but the general structure of the paper is still case study. In any case, it must be analytical and theoretical in nature rather than strictly descriptive. The final paper must be 10-20 pages in length, and should be comparable to an academic journal article in style. Please note that this must be an original paper for this course, and cannot overlap in any substantial way with a paper written for another course; if there is any question please talk to me about it and bring me a copy of the other paper. There will be two components of this part of the course:

1. A one page proposal that is due by the beginning of class on September 22nd (worth 10% of the course grade).
2. A final version of the research paper to be handed in (not emailed in) at 10:30 am on December 13th (worth 30% of the course grade).

The paper will be graded on the clarity and contribution of the theory as an addition to the literature on Latin America. These papers will be expected to conform to the submission standards of the American Journal of Political Science. The final paper must be printed and turned in—emailed attachments will not be accepted.
Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:

1. Obtain a basic understanding of the politics and economics of the Latin American region.
2. Identify the democratic transitions and on-going democratic deepening in the region.
3. Define key political institutions and players in Latin American governments.
4. Understand important current events in the Latin American region.
5. Apply this knowledge to current events, books, and movies focused on Latin America.
6. Develop your writing skills through applied writing exercises.

Outcome Assessments
Examinations and a term paper will be used to assess the learning outcomes. The first five learning outcome will be assessed through essay and identification terms on midterm and final examinations. The sixth and seventh outcomes will be assessed based on a term paper and oral debates and class participation.

Course Policies:
You are expected to come prepared for class and to make thoughtful contribution in class. If you do not understand something, ask. It is very important that we discuss issues related to government and their impact on the community. You should be exposed to a variety of opinions that may differ from your own. Respect those opinions and use them to help you reflect on why people hold different views.

Class lectures provide the basis for the course. Concepts and information that I deem important will be presented in class. Regular and consistent attendance is essential if you want to do well in the course.

Class Attendance:
All students are expected to attend EVERY class. The major valid excuses for missing a class are illness and death. In order to maximize attendance, I will take random roll call using sign-in sheets throughout the semester. If you have an excused absence (university-related, illness with M.D. excuse), you must bring me documentation. I may issue extra credit points at random based on attendance at my discretion.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise.
Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. August 2nd is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Academic Etiquette:
There are certain rules that apply to my classes. It is difficult to learn in an environment that is not conducive to leaning. Such activities include: talking to neighbors during class, reading newspapers, walking in late and going up the central aisle, napping, walking out of class prior to being dismissed. It is disrespectful to me and to the class. If you do not abide by these rules, you will be asked to leave my class. Please silence your cell phones during my class.

Incompletes:
A grade of incomplete will be given only for extreme emergencies and will necessitate appropriate documentation. You must request a grade of “incomplete” and sign a form agreeing to the terms for a grade of I. However, you must have completed 75% of the coursework.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are
prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Grade Appeals Process**
Grade Appeals Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that she or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf).
For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Aug 28: **Introduction**

Aug 30-Sep 1: **The Political and Economic History of Latin America**

Sep 4: **Labor Day** (no class)
Sep 6-8: The Political and Economic History of Latin America

Sep 11-15: The Political and Economic History of Latin America
O’Toole Chapter 1

Sep 18-22: Waves of Democracy
O’Toole Chapter 2
One page paper proposal due September 22nd at the beginning of class.

Sep 25-29: Presidentialism and Executives
O’Toole Chapter 6

Oct 2-6: Legislatures
O’Toole Chapter 7

Oct 9-13: Film: The Motorcycle Diaries

Oct 16-20: Courts and Bureaucracies
O’Toole Chapter 7

Oct 23-27: Political Actors
O’Toole Chapter 8
The Motorcycle Diaries Essay Due Oct 27

Oct 30-Nov 3: Debt Burden
O’Toole Chapter 15

Nov 6-10: Central America and the US in the Cold War
Pardo, Rafael. 2000. “Colombia’s Two-Front War.” (Available on blackboard)

Nov 13-17: Drugs

Nov 20-22: Mexico-US: An Evolving Relationship
Boyle

Nov 24: Thanksgiving (no class)
Nov 27-Dec 1: Immigration

Boyle

Dec 4-6: Politics of Latin America into the Twenty-First Century

Tortilla Curtain Essay Due: Dec 6th

Research Paper Due: Wednesday, December 13th, at 11:00 AM in my office. Bay Hall 303.