

# *Honors 305/306*

## *Politics & Media in Latin America*

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*Office Hours: M 10:30 – 1:30*

*T/Th 11:00 – 12:00*

*Fall 2010: Class meeting time: Monday 2:30 – 5:20 p.m. PJ 220A*

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As the world becomes more connected through the processes of globalization, it is increasingly more important for students to understand the complexities of governments around the world to be better prepared as global citizens. Recognizing that news and other media play an integral role in shaping domestic political opinions as well as international perceptions and foreign policy decisions, “Politics & Media in Latin America” will explore the inherently important relationship between political development and the mass media systems in selected Latin American countries.

The course will focus on Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela. Each country will provide an opportunity to look particular social and political issues that exist in Latin America. Cuba will provide a glimpse of a communist system and examine the use of the media as a propaganda tool. In addition, students will explore the current political relationship between Cuba and the United States while looking at the role the news media play in sustaining that relationship. Mexico will be highlighted to investigate the role of the media in advancing or hindering the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Our examination of Mexico will also include the effects of the current drug war on journalism and media coverage of drug-related violence. Studying Brazil will offer us an opportunity to investigate some of the social problems that exist in that country and understand how the how entertainment media (e.g., the telenovela or soap opera) help shape public opinion and hence political attitudes. Finally, we will look at Venezuela’s efforts to curtail freedom of the press under the rule of President Hugo Chavez.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

**Upon completion of this course, successful students will be able to:**

- Describe the different types of Latin American media systems
- Recall the political history and diversity of the countries under study.
- Develop an in-depth understanding of issues facing journalists in Latin America.

## **Course Texts:**

All readings will be posted on e-res through Copley Library. The password for this class is: LAPOLMEDIA

## **Course Requirements**

**Attendance/Participation:** Being an active participant in classroom discussions is essential to an active learning environment therefore you are required to attend this class. If absent, not only will you miss out on the opportunity to participate in the class discussions, you will also may miss a film, which will impede your ability to complete future assignments. There will be no opportunity to make up missed discussion points, nor will the professors be responsible for making the films available outside the class. Students are also expected to keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss the issues.

**Electronic Devices:** Turn off cell phones, lap tops and any other electronic devices in the classroom.

**Academic Honesty:** You are expected to do your OWN work for this class. To be clear, you cannot plagiarize -- use others' ideas, thoughts, or language as if they are your own. You are encouraged to learn from others, but you must fully attribute the idea, thought or words to the appropriate person. You are encouraged to use the Web for gathering information, but remember to evaluate credibility and properly cite the information. Also, you cannot use work written for another course and use it for this class without substantial changes and new research. If you have questions about how to properly attribute material to its source, please ask one of us, or a reference librarian.

*If you are caught cheating you will receive a zero for the assignment and/or fail the class and possibly face more severe consequences as outlined in the undergraduate bulletin.*

**Exams:** There will be two essay exams. You must take the exams on their scheduled days. The midterm is in class on October 25 and the final is December 20 from 2:00 - 4:00pm. There will be no opportunity to make up missed exams.

**Film Responses:** The purpose of these papers is to allow students the opportunity to integrate the material introduced in the readings and lectures with that presented in the films. Papers that merely summarize the readings, discussions and/or film plots will not receive passing grades. Papers that demonstrate how the films illustrate issues and concepts in the readings will receive the highest grades. Papers should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 1" margins and 12-point font. All papers must be submitted to turnitin.com before the due date or they will not be graded and the student will receive a zero on the assignment.

**Final Project:** Small groups of students will work together on a final project to be presented at our final class meeting. These projects will examine some aspect of the relationship between politics and media in Latin America. The final project can take a variety of forms (e.g., a short film, a blog, a poster, a painting/other form of fine art). Students will be assigned to their groups by the third week of class and are expected to work together throughout the semester on the project. In addition to the final product, students will need to turn in a supplemental paper that discusses their research and the production process. Each group will have approximately 20 minutes to present their work to the class.

**Grade: Breakdown of points:**

Class Participation.....	50
Six Film Responses.....(6 @ 20)	120
Midterm.....	100
Final Project/Presentation.....	150
Final Exam.....	100
Total.....	520 points

Your final grade is calculated on a traditional percentage of the total points.  
(A = 100-90%, B = 89-80%, etc.)

**Tentative course outline:**

**Class 1: Introduction (9/13)**

Relationship between politics and media  
Background on Latin America  
Four Theories of the Press

Reading:

- Vanden and Prevost, “Democracy, Dictators, and Tío Sam” (p.41-78)
- Vanden and Prevost “Political Actors” (p. 205-237)
- Ostini & Fung “Beyond the Four Theories of the Press: A New Model of National Media Systems,” *Mass Communication & Society*, 2002, 5(1) (only need to read pp. 41- 48)

**Class 2: Cuba I (9/20)**

Background on Cuban Revolution  
Watch: *Motorcycle Diaries*

Reading:

- Vanden and Prevost, “Cuba” p.339-367
- Andrew Sinclair, “Background of a Revolutionary” (p.1-19)
- Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey Around Latin America*,( p. 49-64; 69-72; 131-155).
- Ernesto “Che” Guevara, “General Principles of Guerrilla Fighting,”( p. 50-63.)

### **Class 3: Cuba II (9/27)**

#### **Due: Film Response #1 (*Motorcycle Diaries*)**

Discussion of *Motorcycle Diaries*

Cuban mass media

Video Report: Cuban Bloggers

Reading:

- Jorge Ruiz Miyares, 1999. "A Look at Media in Cuba" *Peace Review* 11:1, p. 77-82.
- "Special Report: Chronicling Cuba, bloggers offer fresh hope" ([www.CPj.org](http://www.CPj.org))
- Juan Orlando Pérez "The Media in Castro's Cuba: Every Word Counts" in *The Media in Latin America* (p. 116-130).

### **Class 4: Cuba III (10/4)**

Cuba today

Watch: *Habana Blues*

Discussion of film

Reading:

- Catherine Moses, *Real Life in Castro's Cuba*, p.7-84
- Brian Latell, *After Fidel: Raul Castro and the Future of Cuba's Revolution*, p. 251-264

### **Class 5: Mexico I (10/11)**

#### **Due: Film Response #2 (*Habana Blues*)**

Politics in Mexico: The PRI and its demise

Watch: *Ley de Herodes*

Reading:

- E. Edmonds-Poli and D. Shirk, *Contemporary Mexican Politics*, chapter 3 (p.65-91), and , chapter 4. (p.93-120).
- Chappell Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and The Rise of a Free Press in Mexico*, (p. 25-58).

### **Class 6: Mexico II (10/18)**

#### **Due: Film Response #3 (*Ley de Herodes*)**

Mexican journalists and the drug war

Guest Speakers: Amy Isackson, Border Reporter, KPBS Radio

Vicente Calderón, Editor, TijuanaPress.com

Readings:

- Darren Wallis, "The Media and Democratic Change in Mexico" *Parliamentary Affairs*, 5(1) 118-130.
- Astorga and Shirk, "Drug Trafficking Organizations and Counter-Drug Strategies in the U.S.-Mexican Context"
- Tracy Wilkinson, "Under threat from Mexican drug cartels, reporters go silent, *LA Times*, August 16, 2010.
- Drug Trade, Violent Gangs Pose Grave Danger ([www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)).

**Class 7: Mexico III (10/25)**

Watch: *El crimen de padre amaro*

Discussion of film

Midterm Review

Reading:

- Emily Hind “Post-NAFTA Mexican Cinema,” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, 23, 95-111.
- “Letter From Mexico: Sexuality, Censorship and the Church in Mexico” by Mejía & Mendoza
- Kenton Wilkinson, “Democracy Sponsored by Nafta? Mexican Television in the Free Trade Era” in *Negotiating Democracy*.

**Class 8: Midterm 2:30-4:30 (11/1)**

**Due: Film Response #4 (*El crimen de padre amaro*)**

**Class 9: Brazil I (11/8)**

Brazilian Politics since 1985

Watch: *City of God*

Reading:

- David Fleischer, “Brazil: From Military Regime to a Workers’ Party Government,” in *Latin America: Its Problems and its Promise*, Jan Knippers Black, ed. (p. 470-500).
- Paul Chevigny. “Defining the Role of the Police in Latin America” (p.49-68)
- Peter Fry. “Color and the Rule of Law in Brazil,” (p.186-206)

**Class 10: Brazil II (11/15)**

**Due: Film Response #5 (*City of God*)**

Discussion of *City of God*

Structure and Economy of Brazilian Entertainment Media

Return Midterms

Reading:

- Olga Guedes-Bailey and Othon F. Jambeiro Barbosa “The Media in Brazil: An Historical Overview of Brazilian Broadcasting Policis” in *The Media in Latin America* (p. 47-60).
- Mauro Porto, “TV news and political change in Brazil: The impact of democratization on TV Globo’s journalism, in *Journalism: Theory, Practice, and Criticism*, (p. 363-384).

**Class 11: Brazil and Venezuela (11/22)**

Brazilian telenovelas

Watch: *Telenovelas: Love, TV and Power*

Reading:

- Thomas Tufte, “The Brazilian Telenovela” in *Living with the Rubbish Queen*, (p.87-120).
- Juan Forero, “Love! Power! Squalor! TV Dramas Tune in Politics” *The New York Times*
- Isben Martinez, “Romancing the Globe”, Yale Global Online.

### **Class 12: Venezuela (11/29)**

Political history and the rise of Hugo Chavez

Watch: *The Hugo Chavez Show*

Reading:

- Steve Ellner, “Venezuela: A ‘Model’ Democracy in Crisis,” in *Latin America: Its Problems and its Promise*, Jan Knippers Black, ed. (p.409-421)
- Guillermo Gibens, “The Mass Media in Venezuela: History, Politics, and Freedom” in *The Handbook of Spanish Language Media* (p.77-87).
- Patricia Santa Marina “The Hidden Hand of Chávez,” *Global Journalist*
- Andrés Cañizalez, Robert Ménard and Benoît Hervieu “Closure of *Radio Caracas Televisión* paves way for media hegemony.” *Reporters without Borders*.

### **Class 13: U.S. Media Coverage of Latin America (12/6)**

Watch: *South of the Border*

Discussion of film

Reading:

- “Media Misperceptions” on [www.southoftheborder.com](http://www.southoftheborder.com)  
From Media Accuracy on Latin America ([www.mediaaccuracy.org](http://www.mediaaccuracy.org))
- “Colombia and Venezuela: Testing the Propaganda Model”
- “Media Skirts Policy in Argentine Election Coverage”
- Pragmatic Raúl, Irrational Fidel: Media Disortions on Cuba”

### **Class 14: Student Project Presentations (12/13)**

**Due: Film Response #6 (*South of the Border*)**

**Final Exam: 12/20, 2:00-4:00pm**