PS 134AA: COMPARATIVE POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICA, or DEMOCRATIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Spring 2004
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REQUIRED READING

• Peter H. Smith, *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective* (Course Readers I and II)

RECOMMENDED READING

• Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, fifth edition (2001), or

• Equivalent thereof (e.g., LATI 50 or a course on the modern history or contemporary politics of Latin America), or

• Exposure to recent scholarship on processes of democratization (e.g., in Eastern and Southern Europe).
EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS

• Mid-term: Monday, May 3 (33% of grade)

• Final: Monday, June 7 (67% of grade)

• Optional paper: Monday, May 17 (30% of course grade, reducing mid-term to 20% and final to 50%)
COURSE SCHEDULE

• Mar 29: Introduction/Concepts of Democracy
• Apr 05: Cycles and Transitions
• Apr 12: Changing Roles of Military
• Apr 19: Presidential Systems and Electoral Institutions
• Apr 26: Parties and Legislatures
• May 03: Economic Policies and Governmental Performance

• May 10: Who’s In, Who’s Out/What’s In, What’s Out

• May 17: The People’s Verdict

• May 24: What Now?
BOOK OUTLINE

• Introduction
  Dimensions of Democracy

• Part I: Historical Perspectives, 1900-2000
  1. Cycles of Electoral Democracy
  2. Transitions and Continuities
  3. The Military: Heading for the Exits?
  4. Global Contexts, International Forces
• Part II: The Electoral Arena
5. Exploring Institutional Alternatives
6. Varieties of Presidentialism
7. Elections: Voters, Winners, Losers
• **Part III: Qualities of Democracy**
  8. State Capacity and Policy Performance
  9. State and Society
  10. Freedoms, Rights, and Illiberal Democracy
  11. The People’s Verdict

• **Conclusion**
  The Challenge of Democracy
I SEEK YOUR HELP!

REGARDING, for instance,

• Typographical errors

• Unclear/confusing passages

• Questionable arguments

• Ponderous prose.
PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

**Participation**, such that no substantial segment of the population is excluded from the effective pursuit of political power

**Competition**, such that there are free, fair, and regular contests for gaining support from the populace

**Accountability**, such that political rulers and elected representatives serve as “agents” of their constituents and must justify their actions and decisions in order to remain in office.
INSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. The right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. The right of political leaders to compete for support and votes
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on elections and other expressions of popular preference.
TWO KEY DIMENSIONS

• Elections
  Items 3-5, 7-8

• Rights
  Items 1-2, 6

• Question: What if they don’t go together?
CATEGORIES OF ELECTORAL REGIMES

Electoral democracy = free and fair elections

Semi-democracy = elections free but not fair; or, effective power not vested in winner of elections

Competitive oligarchy = candidates restricted to socio-economic elite and suffrage restricted to minority of population

Autocracy/authoritarianism = no elections, or elections neither Free not fair.
Figure 1. Cycles of Political Change in Latin America, 1900-2000
Figure 5. Cycles of Political Change by Region:
Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, 1900-2000