Politics, Policies, and Economic Prosperity in Latin America

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Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30PM-2:30PM, office SSB #365.

Course Description

This course focuses on the political economy of Latin America. We will examine the
development policies followed by the countries in the region. Following a review of
simple economic models of growth, we will analyze the track record of Latin Ameri-
can economies. Finally, we will discuss how public policies and political institutions
affect economic prosperity.

Format

The class will meet three times per week for the duration of the quarter. Each
meeting will be devoted to a new theme/idea. Every topic presented in class is
paired with one required reading. The lectures will review the concepts discussed
in these readings, but should be taken neither as a duplication nor as a substitute
for them. In other words, you should not assume that because you came to class,
you can skip the readings, and/or that because you made the readings you may not
attend the lectures.

Assignments

Each week students are expected to read the materials. Students are expected to
take a midterm exam, and final exam. The midterm exam is worth 35% of the
final grade, and the final exam accounts for 50% of the final grade. Discussion and
general class participation accounts for the remaining 15%. Extensions, incompletes,
etc. will be given in accordance with UCSD policy. Except under very pressing
circumstances, they will be discouraged.
Course Policies

Academic Integrity. Students in this course are expected to comply with UCSD’s Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. In particular, plagiarism is considered a dishonest practice and a serious academic offense. Hence, there will be a zero tolerance policy with respect to these practices: any student violating the obligation of academic integrity during the term will automatically fail the class. Copies of the current version of the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, also commonly referred to as the Academic Dishonesty Policy, may be found on the Academic Senate webpage: http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/AcademicIntegrity/AcademicIntegrity.htm

Disabilities. If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify the OSD, call (858) 534-4382 to schedule an appointment.

Course Materials

Readings for weeks 1-3 are drawn the following book (available for purchase):


The other readings come from articles available online through the UCSD Library System (marked in this syllabus by *). In addition there are some readings drawn from book chapters, and non-electronic journals. These articles (marked by **) can be downloaded from E-Reserves or will be made available by the instructor.

Course Outline and Readings

Week 0 (September 25)

Introduction.

Week 1 (September 28- October 2)

September 28: The Quest for Prosperity
September 30: Mechanics of Growth I (Easterly, ch. 2)
October 2: Mechanics of Growth II (Easterly, ch. 3)
Week 2 (October 5 - October 9)

October 5: Increasing Returns (Easterly, ch. 8)
October 7: Technological Change (Easterly, ch. 9)
October 9: Contextual Factors (Easterly, ch. 10)

Week 3 (October 12 - October 16)

October 12: Politics, Policies and the Economy
October 14: Bad Governments (Easterly, ch. 11)
October 16: Predatory Governments (Easterly, ch. 12)

Week 4 (October 19 - October 23)

October 19: Latin America’s track record
October 21: Populism
October 23: The Washington Consensus

Week 5 (October 26- October 30)

October 26: Argentina’s economic implosion
Documentary – “The empty ATM”
October 28: Review Session
October 30: Midterm Exam
Week 6 (November 2 - November 6)

November 2: The “Pink Tide”


November 4: Economic Policies I


November 6: Economic Policies II


Week 7 (November 9 - November 13)

November 9: The Great Recession


November 11: NO CLASS - VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY

November 13: Growth in the Face of Global Headwinds


Week 8 (November 16 - November 20)

November 16: Sustaining Prosperity


November 18: Informal Economy

November 20: Argentina, once again


Week 9 (November 23 - November 27)

November 23: Rethinking Reforms I


November 25: Rethinking Reforms II


November 27: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 10 (November 30 - December 4)

November 30: Policymaking


December 2: Institutions

** Kingstone, Peter. 2011. The Political Economy of Latin America, Ch. 5.

December 4: Final Overview

**Final Exam: Friday December 11 - 8:00AM - 10:59AM**