Politics, Policies, and Economic Prosperity in Latin America

Prof. Sebastian M. Saiegh
ssaiegh@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: Monday 11:00AM-1:00PM, office SSB #370

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 American 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. The formal examinations consist of a mid-term exam in week five and a final exam at the end of the term. The midterm exam accounts for 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 from the following book (available for purchase):


Additional readings come from articles available online through the UCSD Library System (marked in this syllabus by *). Finally, some others are drawn from book chapters and non-electronic journals. These readings (marked by **) can be downloaded from the course’s Ted webpage.

Course Outline and Readings

Week 0 (September 27)

Introduction

Week 1 (September 30 - October 4)

September 30: The Quest for Prosperity
October 2: Mechanics of Growth I (Easterly, ch. 2)
October 4: Mechanics of Growth II (Easterly, ch. 3)
Week 2 (October 7 - October 11)

October 7: Increasing Returns (Easterly, ch.8)
October 9: Technological Change (Easterly, ch. 9)
October 11: Contextual Factors (Easterly, ch.10)

Week 3 (October 14 - October 18)

October 14: Politics, Policies and the Economy
October 16: Bad Governments (Easterly, ch. 11)
October 18: Predatory Governments (Easterly, ch. 12)

Week 4 (October 21 - October 25)

October 21: Latin America’s track record
October 23: Populism
October 25: The Washington Consensus

Week 5 (October 28 - November 1)

October 28: Argentina’s economic implosion
Documentary – The empty ATM
October 30: Review Session

November 1: Midterm Exam
Week 6 (November 4 - November 8)

November 4: The “Pink Tide”


November 6: Economic Policies I


November 8: The Great Recession


Week 7 (November 13 - November 15)

November 11: NO CLASS - VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY

November 13: Sustaining Prosperity


November 15: Informal Economy


Week 8 (November 18 - November 22)

November 18: Argentina, once again


November 20: Global Outlook

November 22: Economic Policymaking I
Documentary – Chicago Boys

Week 9 (November 25 - November 29)
November 25: Economic Policymaking II
Documentary – Chicago Boys
November 27: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 29: NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 10 (December 2 - December 6)
December 2: Policymaking III


December 4: Institutions

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

December 6: Final Overview

Final Exam: Wednesday December 11 - 08:00AM - 10:59AM