Middle East Technical University – METU

Course Title: Contemporary Issues in Latin American Politics – Fall 2012

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is concerned with the study of topics of contemporary relevance to Latin American politics and societies. It will be divided into three parts. The first part will focus on regional studies and analyses of regional arrangements and institutions. The second part will discuss the emergence of social movements in the region, presenting case studies from specific countries. The final part will focus on special topics like migration within the region, youth displacement and violence, and recent security concerns, once again with the aid of case studies (such as the Triple Frontier and Haiti, among others). At the end of the course, students should display a thorough understanding of the current political and social dynamics of the region.

Course Requirements:

Students will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Attendance and Participation (20%) – Regular attendance is essential for the completion of the class. Students are also expected to show in-depth reading of the texts and actively contribute to class discussions.
2. Midterm evaluation (30%) – On the first day of class, students will be divided into two groups and assigned one of the following books by Ernesto Che Guevara: “Motorcycle Diaries” or “Latin American Diaries”. On the day of the exam, each student will hand in a short paper (individual analysis, 5-8 pages) and each group will deliver a presentation of the contents of the books, with the aid of maps (which reconstitute Guevara´s trajectory) and other pertinent materials.
3. Final paper (50%) – Students must choose a topic related to the course and develop it into a 15-20 page paper. They are encouraged to discuss the choice of topic with the instructor, as well as seek assistance with the development of the research.

The reference materials described below constitute the essential readings for the course. Additional documents and texts will be assigned according to the topics and case studies discussed each week.

Week 1. Presentation of the Course. Objectives and Requirements. Distribution of assignments. Discussion of Research Topics for Final Paper.

Part I – The Regional Context and Institutions

Week 2. Latin American Regionalism: Framework of Analysis.

Week 3. Institutional Arrangements: Origins, Evolution and Challenges. Organization of American States (OAS), Caribbean Comunity (CARICOM).

Week 4. Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), Mercosur, Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra America (ALBA).

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Week 5. Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana (IIRSA), South American Defense Council (SADC), Unasur.

Readings:

## Burges, S. (2007). “Building a Global Southern Coalition: The Competing Approaches of Brazil's Lula and Venezuela's Chávez”. Third World Quarterly. Vol. 28, No. 7, pp. 1343-1358.

## Carranza, M. (2006). “Clinging Together: Mercosur's Ambitious External Agenda, Its Internal Crisis, and the Future of Regional Economic Integration in South America”. *Review of International Political Economy*. Vol. 13, No. 5 pp. 802-829.

Fawcett, L. and M. Serrano (2005). *Regionalism and Governance in the Americas: Continental Drift*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan. (Selected chapters).

Gardini, G. L. (2009). *Latin America in the 21st. Century*. London: Zed Books. (Selected Chapters).

Mace, G. (2010). *Inter-American Cooperation at a Crossroads.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Selected Chapters).

Mera, L. (2005). “Explaining Mercosur's Survival: Strategic Sources of Argentine-Brazilian Convergence”. *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 109-140.

O’Toole, G. *Politics Latin America* (2011). Edinburgh: Pearson. (Selected chapters).

[Riggirozzi, P, and](http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref%3Dntt_athr_dp_sr_1?_encoding=UTF8&search-alias=books-uk&field-author=P%C3%ADa%20Riggirozzi)  D. Tussle (2012). *The Rise of Post-Hegemonic Regionalism: The Case of Latin America*. London: Springer. (Selected chapters).

Sanchez. A. (2012). “Unasur Defense Agencies Search for Relevance”. *World Politics Review.* (PDF downloadable at WPR site).

Week 6. Midterm evaluation.

The purpose of this exercise is two-fold. First, to allow for a preliminary assessement of the students’ development. Second, to offer students the opportunity of exposure to a “genuine” voice of Latin America against a specific historical and social background. Guevara’s personal experiences gradually led to the awakening of the author’s social conscience and directed him to the path of political activism. As such, the readings will function as an introduction to the following weeks’ themes, which revolve around popular mobilization and organization.

Readings:

Guevara. E. C. *Motorcycle Diaries* and *Latin American Diaries.* Any edition available to the students.

Part II - Civil Society and Social Movements

Week 7. Overview of the Region: Power, Social Movements and and New Forms of Resistance.

Week 8. Grassroots Movements. Indigenous Movements. Case Studies: Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru.

Week 9. Gender and Women’s Movements. Case Studies: Argentina, Brazil, Chile.

Week 10. Guerrilla Movements. Case Studies: Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru.

Readings:

Abbassi, J. and Lutiens, S. *Rereading Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Political Economy of Gender.* (2002). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (Selected chapters).

Eckstein, S. (2001). *Power and Popular Protest. Latin American Social Movements.* Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selected chapters).

Eckstein, S. and Wickham-Crowley, T. (2002). *Struggles for Social Rights in Latin America.* London: Routledge.

Stahler-Sholk, R., Vanden, H. and Kuecker, G. (2008). *Latin American Social Movements in the Twenty-First Century.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (Selected chapters).

Part III – Special Topics

Week 11. Youth Displacement and Violence.

Week 12. Migration: Regional and International

Week 13. Security. Foreign Relations. Case Studies: Argentina and the Malvinas-Falkands; Haiti; the Triple Frontier.

Readings:

# Jones, G. and D. Rodgers. (2010). *Youth Violence in Latin America: Gangs and Juvenile Justice in Perspective.*

# Koonings, K. (2004). *Armed Actors: Organised Violence and State Failure in Latin America*. London: Zed Books. (Selected chapters).

# McIlwaine, C. (2011). *Cross-Border Migration among Latin Americans: European Perspectives and Beyond.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Selected chapters).

O’Toole, G. *Politics Latin America* (2011). Edinburgh: Pearson. (Selected chapters).

Wiarda, H. and H. Kline (2011).  *Latin American Politics and Development.* Boulder: Westview Press (Selected chapters).

Winn, P. (2006). *The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean.* Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selected Chapters).