Politics and Policy in Latin America

This course will cover the politics of policy making in Latin America. The first part will focus on understanding the problems of economic development in the region. It will address how and why Latin America is different by looking at its economic outcomes, economic and social policies and political institutions. It will also look at different examples of how political institutions shape policy outcomes. The second part will ground the distinctiveness of Latin America in its history, and show why understanding this is critical for comprehending why it is so different from the United States. It will explore how these historical factors persist, for example, how the legacy of authoritarianism shapes redistributive policies and how these historical foundations have created the weak Latin American states we see today. The third part of the course will look at how groups such as civil society or violent actors can also shape policymaking and welfare in this region. Finally, it will discuss some perspectives on whether some countries in the region have managed to find ways to change their political institutions and subsequently their social and economic policies with the prospect of creating a more prosperous society. The aim of this course is for students to gain empirical knowledge on the region’s politics and policies as well as a practical understanding of political factors that shape policy outcomes.

Book

1. Why don’t things work in Latin America?

The Water War in Cochabamba
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hn9wujK0ho4
http://democracyctr.org/bolivia/investigations/bolivia-investigations-the-water-revolt/bolivias-war-over-water/

http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/04/08/leasing-the-rain


2. How is Latin America Different? Economic Outcomes

Present evidence on economic growth, poverty, social mobility, inequality, social capital, trust and attitudes etc.


Present evidence on education, infrastructure, redistribution and social policy, tax policy, policy dynamics (policy changing continuously).


Present data from Latin America from the Polity Project. Also from Besley and Pearson’s website: [http://www-2.iies.su.se/pop/Data_1.html](http://www-2.iies.su.se/pop/Data_1.html)


5. **What is the connection between Political Institutions and Policy Outcomes?**


6. **Why is Latin America Different: Deep Historical Trajectories**


Mariátegui, José Carlos (1928) *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*. University of Texas Press, Austin.

7. **Connecting the Past to the Present**


8. **Military Regimes and their Legacies**

Bautista, Maria Angelica (2014) “Political Effects of State-led Repression: The Chilean Case” (working paper)


9. **The Weak Latin America State**


10. Civil Society


11. Crime and Violence


12. A New Latin America?


