PO 561 / IR 502: Latin American Political Parties

Boston University, Spring 2025

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Office hours: Tuesday 3:30–5 p.m., Thursday 12:15–1:45 p.m.

Class location: COM 215
Class time: Tuesday/Thursday 2–3:15 p.m.
Course website: `http://learn.bu.edu/`, for assignments, handouts, and online discussion forum

1 Overview

1.1 Course Description

Political scientist E.E. Schattschneider once argued that "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties." How does this claim apply to Latin America? This course will examine Latin American democracy through the lens of parties and party systems, looking at both historical origins and recent transformations. The first part of the course examines how the political incorporation of organized labor in the early twentieth century served as a "critical juncture" that set Latin American party systems on different paths of development. We will look at the emergence of hegemonic parties, populist parties, and working class parties, and how they shaped party system dynamics in their respective countries. The second part of the course asks whether market reforms of the 1970s–1990s constitute a new critical juncture for Latin American party systems, altering the patterns that prevailed for most of the twentieth century. We will look at the transformation of labor-based parties, the reinvigoration of right-wing parties, the collapse of some countries' party systems, the emergence of Indigenous parties in the Andes, and the rise of a new Left and Right in recent years, including a number of anti-establishment populists. The empirical focus is on Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, though students can write their final papers on any Latin American country or countries.

I assume that students enrolled in this course have taken previous courses in comparative politics or Latin American studies. I have assigned approximately 100 pages of reading per week, and some of it is challenging; students should be prepared to spend the necessary time doing course readings, taking notes, and preparing outlines outside of class.

1.2 Course Objectives

This course teaches students to apply the comparative method to the study of Latin American political parties. In doing so, it fulfills requirements for three BU Hub areas. The general description of each area and course-specific learning objectives are listed below.

1. **Social Inquiry II.** Students will apply principles and methods from the social sciences based on collecting new or analyzing existing data in order to address questions, solve problems, or deepen understanding. They will understand the nature of evidence employed in the social sciences and will demonstrate a capacity to differentiate competing claims in such fields. This includes reflecting on and critically evaluating how social scientists formulate hypotheses, gather empirical evidence of multiple sorts, and analyze and interpret this evidence.

   In this course, students will:

   - evaluate social scientists' competing interpretations of the trajectory of Latin American party systems over the past several decades, whether these trajectories support the "critical juncture" hypothesis, and what sorts of evidence scholars are marshaling to support their claims.
   - collect and analyze new or existing data on the political party systems of one or more Latin American countries in the context of a research paper that presents an original argument addressing a question related to Latin American political parties.

2. **Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy.** Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, an understanding of global diversity as expressed in at least two different languages, cultures, religions, political systems or societies.

   In this course, students will:

   - learn about the political party systems of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.
   - demonstrate knowledge of how political parties in these countries evolved in different ways in response to the rise of organized labor in the first half of the twentieth century and market-oriented economic reforms in the 1970s–1990s.
   - explain how factors such as ethnic diversity and political or economic crises have affected different countries' party systems in different ways.

3. **Research and Information Literacy.** Students will be able to search for, select, and use a range of publicly available and discipline-specific information sources ethically and strategically to address research questions.

   Students will demonstrate understanding of the overall research process and its component parts, and be able to formulate good research questions or hypotheses, gather and analyze information, and critique, interpret, and communicate findings.

   In this course, students will:

   - formulate an original research question, involving a falsifiable hypothesis, that can be addressed over the course of a semester by collecting and analyzing new or existing data as well as secondary literature on the political party systems of one or more Latin American countries
   - review research proposals formulated by their peers, offer suggestions for improvement, and incorporate suggestions from the peer review process into their own research proposals, as appropriate
   - write and submit a research paper that effectively addresses their research question in an ethical fashion with appropriate attribution for material obtained from both primary and secondary sources.

2 Instructional Format and Approach to Learning

This course is a seminar-style course that is structured around the readings listed on the syllabus. Students are expected to participate regularly and actively in class discussion. In order to participate effectively, you need to carefully prepare ahead of time. Preparing for class implies completing the assigned readings ahead of time, but reading alone is not sufficient. You also need to have taken notes that you can refer to during class discussion and to come prepared with questions or comments for the group to consider. As you complete readings prior to class, think to yourself: What concepts, questions, or arguments are still unclear to me? How do the various readings speak to or challenge one another or raise new questions? What aspects of the arguments, if any, do I find unconvincing? Reading reactions and response papers, described in more detail below, provide an opportunity to engage critically with the readings prior to in-class discussion.

3 Course Materials

All required readings will be made available electronically via Blackboard as PDFs; you do not need to purchase any course materials. That said, there is one book from which we will be reading a number of chapters, so you might want to buy a physical copy online if you like reading paper for a change:

- Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

4 Assignments and Grading Criteria

4.1 Grade Breakdown

Attendance and Participation: 10%
Response Papers: 10%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%
Research Proposal and Peer Review: 10%
Final Paper: 25%

Final numerical grades will be calculated according to the weights listed above, and they will be translated into letter grades using the following scale:

A: 93.333 and above
A-: 90–93.332
B+: 86.667–89.999
B: 83.333–86.666
B-: 80–83.332
C+: 76.667–79.999
C: 73.333–76.666
C-: 70–73.332
D: 60–69.999
F: 0–59.999

4.2 Attendance and Participation

Half of this grade is based on attendance—regularly showing up for class unless excused in advance—and half if based on participation. Participation entails regularly contributing to in-class discussion and submitting reading reactions.

Reading reactions: prior to every class (except for the days you are doing a response paper—see below), each student should post to the Blackboard Discussion Board one comment or question about that day's reading—something you found interesting, something that was puzzling or confusing, etc. You can start a new thread, respond to a classmate's thread, or both. Your question/comment does not need to be long (a short paragraph is fine) or particularly profound. I just want to get a sense of your reactions to the reading and potentially generate some online discussion. The deadline is the night before class. Reading reactions are not graded and returned, but I keep track of whether you are doing them.

4.3 Response Papers

Twice during the semester, rather than a short comment/question on that day's readings, you will write a short response paper. These papers should be around 3 pages, double-spaced. You should focus on the readings assigned for the day but should also feel free to relate them to other readings we've already covered, especially those that are part of the same block (see the list of readings at the end of the syllabus; each block is numbered sequentially and includes two class days). Response papers should be submitted via Blackboard. Good response papers will do more than just summarize the readings; they will engage with them analytically by critiquing the arguments, comparing and contrasting them, discussing questions that are unclear, and so on. Response papers will be graded and returned with comments.

4.4 Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course. It will be closed-book and held during the scheduled class period, as listed below.

4.5 Final Exam

The final exam will be closed-book and held during the scheduled exam period at the end of the semester. It will be of a similar format to the midterm and will focus on material from the second half of the course, though material from the first half is relevant in terms of background and framing.

4.6 Research Proposal and Peer Review

To encourage an early start to the final paper and provide students with exposure to the ideas and comments of their peers, students will submit a draft research proposal, conduct peer review of other students' research proposals, and submit a final, revised research proposal that responds to comments from peers as well as the professor. The draft research proposal will consist of a short (approximately 1 double-spaced page) statement of a research question, including a falsifiable hypothesis, that is related to political parties in one or more Latin American countries. Draft research proposals will then be distributed to other students in the class for peer review, such that each student comments on two proposals and receives two sets of comments on their own proposal. Peer reviews should consist of a short (approximately 1 double-spaced page) reaction to the draft research proposal, including any suggestions for revision. Finally, students will submit a revised research proposal incorporating feedback from their peers and the professor. The revised research proposal should also include a draft bibliography for the final paper. Each of the three components of this assignment—draft research proposal, peer review, and revised research proposal—will be equally weighted in the grade for this component of the course.

4.7 Final Paper

The final paper will address the research question and hypothesis posed in the revised research proposal. It may draw upon course readings but must also involve substantial outside research (no more than one-third of the sources should be course readings). Papers should be 15–25 double-spaced pages in length.

5 Class and University Policies

It is our shared responsibility—professor and students alike—to ensure a positive learning environment. Please be respectful of each other and treat your colleagues and instructors as you would like to be treated if the shoe were on the other foot.

5.1 Excused Absences

Absence from class can be excused, and exam or paper due dates rescheduled, only for religious observances (following BU's Policy on Religious Observance), unexpected or major life events (e.g., a wedding or funeral of a close relative, a medical emergency or appointment), and BU extracurricular activities such as sporting competitions and arts performances. Please inform the professor by email as soon as you are aware of a conflict. In some cases I may require verification of the reason for the absence. No absence can be excused after the fact, except for unforeseen emergencies.

5.2 Assignment Completion and Late Work

Late assignments without a pre-authorized extension will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., B+ to a B) per 24-hour period, starting with the due date; this includes weekends and holidays. The absolute deadline for submitting late final papers is the date of the final exam, since grades are due shortly thereafter.

If the midterm exam is missed without an excused absence, students should contact the professor to arrange for an alternate make-up exam, which will be penalized 2 letter grades (e.g., A to C). Given the short time period between the final exam and when grades are due, final exams cannot be made up.

5.3 Academic Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work and to accurately and honestly give credit for information, ideas, and words obtained elsewhere. Plagiarism will be dealt with strictly according to the Academic Conduct Code; please review the website for examples of what counts as plagiarism so you know how to avoid it. If you have questions or concerns about how to properly cite outside sources, please let me know and I will be happy to assist.

5.4 Resources and Support

If you have questions about course materials or assignments or are in need of extra help, you are encouraged to visit the professor during office hours, as listed at the top of the syllabus. In particular, I can offer feedback on outlines, drafts, or thesis statements of research papers prior to the due date, as long as you do not wait until the last minute.

Students with disabilities (physical or learning) who need special accommodation in the course should contact Disability & Access Services to request an appropriate accommodation.

6 Schedule and Required Readings

Jan. 21. Introduction

No readings.

6.1 Part I. Historical Origins

6.1.1 Overview and definitions of parties and party systems

Jan. 23:

Mainwaring, Scott, Fernando Bizzarro, and Ana Petrova. 2018. "Party System Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse." In Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mainwaring, Scott. 2018. "Party System Institutionalization, Predictability, and Democracy." In Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gunther, Richard, and Larry Diamond. 2003. "Species of Political Parties: A New Typology." *Party Politics* 9, 2: 167–199.

Jan. 28:

Coppedge, Michael. 1998. "The Evolution of Latin American Party Systems." In Scott Mainwaring and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Politics, Society, and Democracy: Latin America.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

6.1.2 Labor incorporation as a critical juncture

Jan. 30:

Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Republished in 2002 by University of Notre Dame Press. Pp. 3–10, 27–39, 59–65, 100–106, 161–172, 196–201, 314–315.

Feb. 4:

Continue with above reading, pp. 353–359, 360–367, 403–406, 469, 498–506, 507–512, 571–574, 609–610, 692–693.

6.1.3 Hegemonic parties and party systems: Mexico and Venezuela

Feb. 6:

Collier, Ruth Berins. 1992. *The Contradictory Alliance: State-Labor Relations and Regime Change in Mexico.* Berkeley: International and Area Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Chs. 2-3: "The Critical Juncture: Founding the Mexican Regime" and "The Legacy of Radical Populism: The Mexican Regime at Mid-Century."

Feb. 11:

Kornblith, Miriam, and Daniel H. Levine. 1995. "Venezuela: The Life and Times of the Party System." In Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

6.1.4 Personality-centered populist parties: Peru and Argentina

Feb. 13:

Graham, Carol. 1992. *Peru's APRA: Parties, Politics, and the Elusive Quest for Democracy.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Ch. 2, "APRA 1924-1968: Confrontation, Compromise, and Counter-reform" (entire) and Ch. 3, "APRA and the Military Docenio: The Stolen Revolution, 1968-1980" (pp. 53–57 and 60–71 only).

Clinton, Richard Lee. 1970. "APRA: An Appraisal." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 12, 2: 280–297.

Feb. 18: No class (Monday schedule)

Feb. 20:

Levitsky, Steven. 2003. *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2: "Origins and Evolu-

tion of a Mass Populist Party."

McGuire, James W. 1995. "Political Parties and Democracy in Argentina." In Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

6.1.5 Working-class parties and polarization: Chile

Feb. 25:

Scully, Timothy R. 1995. "Reconstituting Party Politics in Chile" (pp. 100–122 only). In Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Valenzuela, Arturo. 1978. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (pp. 3–49 only).

6.2 Part II. Modern-Day Transformations

6.2.1 Market reform: A new critical juncture?

Feb. 27:

Edwards, Sebastian. 1995. *Crisis and Reform in Latin America: From Despair to Hope.* New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 3: "The Emergence of a New Latin American Consensus."

Williamson, John. 1990. "What Washington Means by Policy Reform." In John Williamson, ed., *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.

March 4: MIDTERM EXAM; covers Part I

March 6:

Coppedge, Michael. 2001. "Political Darwinism in Latin America's Lost Decade." In Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Roberts, Kenneth M. 2012. "Market Reform, Programmatic (De)alignment, and Party System Stability in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 46, 11: 1422–1452.

Boas, Taylor C. 2022. "Potential Mistakes, Plausible Options: Establishing the Legacy of Hypothesized Critical Junctures." In David Collier and Gerardo L. Munck, eds., *Critical Junctures*

and Historical Legacies: Insights and Methods for Comparative Social Science. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

6.2.2 Transforming labor-based parties: Chile, Argentina, and Brazil

March 18: Draft research proposal due

Roberts, Kenneth M. 1995. "From the Barricades to the Ballot Box: Redemocratization and Political Realignment in the Chilean Left." *Politics & Society* 23: 495–519.

Levitsky, Steven. 2003. "From Labor Politics to Machine Politics: The Transformation of Party-Union Linkages in Argentine Peronism, 1983–1999." *Latin American Research Review* 38, 3: 3–36.

March 20:

Samuels, David. 2004. "From Socialism to Social Democracy: Party Organization and the Transformation of the Worker's Party in Brazil." *Comparative Political Studies* 20, 10: 1–26.

Hunter, Wendy, and Timothy J. Power. 2007. "Rewarding Lula: Executive Power, Social Policy, and the Brazilian Elections of 2006." *Latin American Politics and Society* 49, 1: 1–30.

6.2.3 Reinvigorating right-wing parties: Chile and Mexico

March 25: Research peer review due

Gibson, Edward L. 1992. "Conservative Electoral Movements and Democratic Politics: Core Constituencies, Coalition Building, and the Latin American Electoral Right." In Douglass A. Chalmers, Maria do Larmo Campello de Souza, and Atilio Boron, eds., *The Right and Democracy in Latin America.* Westport, CT.: Greenwood Publishing. Pp. 13–29 ONLY.

Luna, Juan Pablo, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2014. "Introduction: The Right in Contemporary Latin America: A Framework for Analysis." In Juan Pablo Luna and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, eds., *The Resilience of the Latin American Right.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Siavelis, Peter M. 2014. "Chile: The Right's Evolution From Democracy to Authoritarianism and Back Again." In Juan Pablo Luna and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, eds., *The Resilience of the Latin American Right.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

March 27:

Mizrahi, Yemile. 2003. *From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. Chs. 3–4: "The PAN as a Sectarian Party" and "The PAN as an Electoral Party."

6.2.4 Party system collapse: Venezuela and Peru

April 1: Revised research proposal due

Tanaka, Martín. 2006. "From Crisis to Collapse of the Party Systems and Dilemmas of Democratic Representation: Peru and Venezuela." In Scott Mainwaring, Ana María Bejerano, and Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, eds., *The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lupu, Noam. 2014. "Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America." *World Politics* 66, 4: 561–602.

April 3:

Weyland, Kurt. 2021. "How Populism Corrodes Latin American Parties." *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 4: 42–55.

Levitsky, Steven. 2018. "Peru: The Institutionalization of Politics without Parties." In Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Muñoz, Paula. 2021. "Latin America Erupts: Peru Goes Populist." *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 3: 48–62.

6.2.5 Indigenous parties: Bolivia and Ecuador

April 8:

Madrid, Raúl L. 2012. *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1, "Ethnicity and Ethnopopulism in Latin America," and Ch. 2, "The Ascent of the MAS in Bolivia."

April 10:

Madrid, Raúl L. 2012. *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3, "The Rise and Decline of Pachakutik in Ecuador."

6.2.6 New Left, new Right? Argentina and Venezuela

April 15:

Levitsky, Steven, and Kenneth M. Roberts. 2011. "Latin America's "Left Turn": A Framework for Analysis." In Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts, eds., *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Etchemendy, Sebastián, and Candelaria Garay. 2011. "Argentina: Left Populism in Comparative Perspective, 2003–2009." In Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts, eds., *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Monestier, Felipe. 2019. "The successful building of a conservative party in Argentina." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 108: 175–191.

Oliveros, Virginia, and Emilia Simison. 2023. "Why Did Argentina Just Elect a Radical Right-Wing Political Outsider?" *Journal of Democracy*, November 21.

April 17:

Hetland, Gabriel. 2017. "From System Collapse to Chavista Hegemony: The Party Question in Bolivarian Venezuela." *Latin American Perspectives* 44, 1: 17–36.

Cyr, Jennifer. 2022. "'Normal' Parties in Extraordinary Times: The Case of Primero Justicia and Voluntad Popular in Venezuela." In Juan Pablo Luna, Rafael Piñeiro Rodríguez, Fernando Rosenblatt, and Gabriel Vommaro, eds., *Diminished Parties: Democratic Representation in Contemporary Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bautista de Aleman, Paola. 2024. "Why This Time Is Different for Venezuela" *Journal of Democracy*, July.

6.2.7 Institutionalization and Crisis: Mexico and Brazil

April 22:

Greene, Kenneth F., and Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer. 2018. "Authoritarian Legacies and Party System Stability in Mexico." In Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Greene, Kenneth F., and Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer. 2018. "Latin America's Shifting Politics: Mexico's Party System Under Stress." *Journal of Democracy*, 29, 4: 31–42.

Combes, Hélène. 2022. "The Complex Interaction between Vertical Interest Aggregation and Horizontal Coordination: The PRD and MORENA in Mexico." In Juan Pablo Luna, Rafael Piñeiro Rodríguez, Fernando Rosenblatt, and Gabriel Vommaro, eds., *Diminished Parties: Democratic Representation in Contemporary Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

April 24:

Mainwaring, Scott, Timothy J. Power, and Fernando Bizzarro. 2018. "The Uneven Institutionalization of a Party System: Brazil." In Scott Mainwaring, ed., *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay, and Collapse.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hunter, Wendy, and Timothy J. Power. 2019. "Bolsonaro and Brazil's Illiberal Backlash." *Journal of Democracy* 30, 1: 68–82.

Hunter, Wendy, and Timothy J. Power. 2023. "Lula's Second Act." *Journal of Democracy* 34, 1: 126–140.

April 29: No class (professor in Brazil for a conference)

6.2.8 The Anti-Establishment Trend: Chile

May 1:

Olivier Dabène, Stéphanie Alenda, and Javiera Arce-Riffo. 2023. "New Political Cycle in Chile: From Centrist Consensus to the Struggle for Cultural Hegemony." In Olivier Dabène, ed., *Latin America's Pendular Politics: Electoral Cycles and Alternations.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Piscopo, Jennifer M., and Peter M. Siavelis. 2023. "Chile's Constitutional Chaos." *Journal of Democracy* 34, 1: 141–155.

Alemán, Eduardo, and Patricio Navia. 2023. "Chile's Failed Constitution: Democracy Wins." *Journal of Democracy* 34, 2: 90–104.

May 4 (Sunday): Final papers due

6.3 Tuesday, May 6, 3–5 p.m.: Final exam