“The economic development of Latin America since independence is a story of unfulfilled promise.” - Victor Bulmer-Thomas.

“Las naciones, como los hombres, no tienen alas; hacen vus viajes a pie, paso por paso.” - Juan Bautista Alberdi.

Study Guide

Course Description

This course is an overview of political economy and economic integration in Latin America. It is very broad in its scope. We will cover economic history, development theories as applied to Latin America, trade, debt, structural adjustment, poverty, rural development, and regional trade agreements including NAFTA, Mercosur, and the FTAA. While not abandoning standard economic theory, we will emphasize the role of institutions and path dependence throughout the course. No one “ideological” tradition will be given emphasis over others.

Learning Outcomes

To understand the historical trajectory of Latin American economic development and the role of policies in this trajectory.

To understand the way that the world economy has impinged upon Latin America and affected its development patterns.

To understand the role of regional integration, including preferential trade agreements, in the development of Latin America.

Main Texts


Course Requirements and Grading

Evaluation of performance in the course will be based on a midterm exam (30 percent), a final exam (30 percent), a country briefing paper (20 percent), and participation (20 percent).
Course Outline and Readings/Esquema del Curso y Lecturas

Week 1 (January 22): Introduction/Introducción

Chapter 1 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Latin America in the World Economy.”

{Chapter 1 of Franko, “Development in Latin America.”}


Recommended:


Week 2 (January 29): History/Historia

Chapter 4 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Latin American Economic History.”

Chapter 2 of Franko, “Historical Legacies.”

Recommended:

Handy timeline.


Mann, CC. (2011) 1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created, Knopf.


Week 3 (February 5): Import Substitution Industrialization/Industrialización por Sustitución de Importaciones

Chapter 5 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Latin America and Primary Commodities.”
Chapter 6 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Import Substitution in Latin America.”
Chapter 3 of Franko, “Import Substitution Industrialization.”

Recommended:


*Week 4 (February 12): Debt and Stabilization/La Deuda y la Estabilización*

Chapter 8 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Exchange Rate Policy.”

Chapter 9 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Financing Current Account Deficits.”

Chapter 10 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Macroeconomic Policy in Latin America.”

Chapter 11 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Macroeconomic Stability.”

Recommended:


Chapter 4 of Franko, “Latin America’s Debt Crisis.”

Chapter 5 of Franko, “Macroeconomic Stabilization.”


*Week 5 (February 19): The State and Growth in Latin America/El Estado y el Crecimiento en América Latina*

Chapter 2 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Economic Growth and Latin America.”

Chapter 6 of Franko, “The Role of the State.”

Chapter 9 of Franko, “Policies Underpinning Growth.”

Recommended:


**Week 6 (February 26): The New Openness/La Nueva Apertura**

Chapter 7 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Latin American Trade Policy.”

Chapter 7 of Franko, “Financing for Development.”

Chapter 8 of Franko, “Contemporary Trade Policy.”

Recommended:


Week 7 (March 5): Midterm Exam: Briefing Paper Paragraph Due via Email
Week 8 (March 12): No Class Due to Spring Break
Week 9 (March 19): NAFTA/TLCAN (Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte)


Recommended:


Week 10 (March 26): CATFA-DR, Mercosur, Andean Community and the FTAA


Recommended:


*Week 11 (April 2): Rural Development/El Desarrollo Rural*

Chapter 10 of Franko, “Rural Development.”


Recommended:


*Week 12 (April 9): Poverty and Inequality/La Pobreza y la Desigualdad*

Chapter 12 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Poverty and Inequality.”
Chapter 11 of Franko, “Poverty and Inequality.”


Recommended:


Week 13 (April 16): No Class, Work on Papers!

Week 14 (April 23): Health and Education/La Salud y La Educación

Chapter 12 of Franko, “Health Policy.”

Chapter 13 of Franko, “Education Policy.”

Recommended:


**Week 15 (April 30): Review of Semester/Revista del Semestre**

Chapter 13 of Reyes and Sawyer, “Economic Policy Debates in Latin America.”

Chapter 15 of Franko, “Lessons Learned.”

Recommended:


**Week 16 (May 7): Final Exam/Examen Final, Papers Due via E-Mail by 9:00 AM on Friday May 10.**

**Briefing Paper/Documento Informativo**

One requirement of this course is for you to write a briefing paper on a country in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. The paper is to be no longer than 4,000 words. It is to be written in non-technical language suitable for a policy-maker. The paper must include an Excel-prepared chart based on the World Bank’s *World Development Indicators (WDI)* or on CEPALStat. A paragraph describing your paper is due via email on March 5. The paper is due via email by 9:00 AM on May 10.

The briefing paper is to include sections on recent macroeconomic history, exchange rate management (check the IMF classification), balance of payments issues (check IMF balance of payments statistics), trade policy including (check WTO Trade Policy Review Reports) preferential trade agreements (PTAs, check the WTO RTA database), poverty and human development (check the World Bank’s WDI).

Try your best to include some quality research sources in your briefing paper. Here, Google is not your friend! Google Scholar is your friend. So too is the e-journals resource of Mason’s library system.

Ph.D. student have the option of working with me to develop a paper assignment that supports their progress in their program. Please contact me as early as possible in the semester to discuss this alternative option.

**SPGIA Policy on Plagiarism/El Plagio**

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.
Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPGIA policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Nondiscrimination Statement/Afirmación de Antidiscriminación

It is my personal policy not to discriminate among students based on race, ethnicity, religious faith, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

Disabilities/Incapacidades

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Bookshelf/Libros


Mann, C.C. (2011) *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, Knopf.


**Relevant Websites/Sitios del Internet Pertinentes**

- Acción Internacional
- CEPAL Review Articles
- El País, LatinoAmérica
- Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)
- Inter-American Development Bank
- Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association
- Mercosur
- Organization of American States
- Organization for Tropical Studies
- Pan American Health Organization
- ProMujer
- United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean