

## LATIN AMERICAN AUTHORITARIANISM

HCOL 86F, Spring 2019

Tuesday/Thursday, 10:05-11:20 AM, University Heights North 2&3

PROFESSOR SARAH OSTEN

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS, 3-4:30 PM, WHEELER HOUSE 303 (2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR)

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In the United States, Latin America is often associated with authoritarianism, corruption and human rights violations. This course invites students to consider why this is, and the local, regional and global factors that have historically contributed to the rise of authoritarian regimes in the region, as well as their undoing during periods of democratization. In the process, we will study the particular impact of different kinds of authoritarianism, both left and right, on particular populations that were targeted by these regimes, including indigenous people, women, LGBTQ people, and young people in general. This is therefore also a course about long-term struggles in Latin America for human rights in addition to political freedom and civil rights.

### **Detailed description:**

This course is divided into three parts. In the first several weeks of the semester, students will study long-term regional trends of the rise of different forms of authoritarianism Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second part of the course is divided into four case studies of various forms of Latin American authoritarianism, both left and right, from roughly 1960 to the present. These will be studied chronologically, in the following order: Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala. The third part of the course examines region-wide processes of democratization from the 1980s onward, and some of the long-term legacies of authoritarian rule in the past in Latin American countries today.

These case studies have been selected to give students a wide range of examples of the historical reasons for the emergence of authoritarian regimes in different places across Latin America. For instance, students will compare military dictatorships in Argentina and Guatemala, left vs. right authoritarianism in Cuba and Argentina, and less clear-cut examples of non-democratic political systems in places like Mexico.

These case studies have also been selected in order for students to better understand the lived experience of authoritarianism in different places, and particularly the impact on populations that were targeted for persecution and sometimes extermination by the regimes in question: gay men in Cuba, as vividly illustrated by Reinaldo Arenas' memoir, Jews in Argentina, indigenous people in Mexico and especially in Guatemala, and young people and students in nearly all cases. This is therefore also a class that focuses especially on the long-term struggle for human rights and equality in modern Latin America.

Lastly, students will use these case studies to compare democratization (and/or the lack thereof) in each of these cases, and what made it possible as well as what made it so challenging in practice.

### **This syllabus has two purposes.**

- 1) It is your guide to this course throughout the entire semester. Have a question about when something is due, what you need to read this week, or what you need to do if you know you

will be missing class? It's all in here. If you have any question or issue related to this course, CHECK THE SYLLABUS FIRST. Chances are it will contain the information you need. Make sure you have both the paper copy and a digital copy to consult as needed.

- 2) It serves as a contract between you and me that explains what I expect of you, and what you may expect of me. By enrolling in this class, you accept the terms laid out below. Please read them carefully! If at any time I need to make any changes to the syllabus, I will provide as much advanced notice as possible.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING:

You cannot pass this class if you do not complete all of the assignments, quizzes and exams.

- 15% : Participation, including group reading presentations
- 25% : Two short essays
- 25% : Poster and group research presentation (10% group grade, 15% individual grade)
- 10% : Seminar paper draft
- 25% : Final seminar paper

#### DEADLINES

- First short essay: Thursday, February 21, by class time, via both email and hard copy
- Second short essay: Thursday, March 28, by class time, via both email and hard copy
- Final poster submission: Sunday, April 7, before midnight, via email
- First draft of seminar paper: Monday, April 22 at 4 PM, via both email and hard copy
- Final seminar paper: Tuesday, May 7, 4:15 PM, via both email and hard copy

#### OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- Weds., March 20: Poster Plenary, Billings Lecture Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM
- Weds., March 27: Actors of the London Stage, Music Recital Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM
- Weds., April 3: Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, Billings Lecture Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM
- Weds., April 10: Research Presentations I, James Jeffords Hall 127, 5:05-6:20 PM
- Weds., April 17: Research Presentations II, James Jeffords Hall 127, 5:05-6:20 PM
- Weds., April 24: First-Year Research Symposium, UVM Alumni House, 61 Summit Street

#### REQUIRED BOOKS:

Arenas, Reinaldo. *Before Night Falls*. New York, NY: Viking, 1993.

Aviña, Alexander. *Specters of Revolution: Peasant Guerrillas in the Cold War Mexican Countryside*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Brennan, James P. *Argentina's Missing Bones: Revisiting the History of the Dirty War*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018.

Green, James and Peter Smith. *Modern Latin America*. 9th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Levenson-Estrada, Deborah. *Adiós Niño: the Gangs of Guatemala City and the Politics of Death*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.

All required books are available for purchase at the university bookstore, and are also on reserve in hard copy at the library. All other readings are available on JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>), Google Books, or the course Blackboard site, as indicated on this syllabus.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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### Short Essays

During the semester you will write two short essays based on assigned readings for the course. These should be no more than 3 pages each, double spaced, including citations.

#### **Essay 1 (due via email and in hard copy by class time, February 21):**

- ❖ *Why did the Cuban state persecute Reinaldo Arenas? What does his individual experience tell us about the nature of Cuban authoritarianism more generally?*

#### **Essay 2 (due via email and in hard copy by class time, March 28):**

- ❖ *Compare the Mexican and Argentine so-called “dirty wars” of the mid-late 1970s. How do you account for both their similarities and their differences?*

### Seminar Paper

As your final project in this course, each of you will write an original research paper, which will likely expand on the individual work you did for your group poster project. This will be based on one of the four case studies we’ve covered in class, and will give you the opportunity to more deeply research an element of that country’s history of authoritarianism that particularly interests you. This paper should be approximately 10 pages long, and should be based on a minimum of six secondary sources not assigned in this course, at least three of which should be scholarly books, preferably written by historians, preferably published within the last 25 years.

You will submit a first draft of the seminar paper in the second half of the semester, which will be graded. I expect you to use the feedback you receive on your draft from both me and your colleagues to substantially refine and revise the final version that you submit to me.

### Group Work and Group Poster Project

One of your main assignments and intellectual tasks in this class is the poster project and group research presentation done by all HCOL 86 students, in groups of five. You will be working as a group on a poster on one of the following topics, drawing on evidence from all of the four case studies of twentieth century authoritarianism that we’ll be studying together as a class (Mexico, Cuba, Argentina and Guatemala):

- ❖ **GROUP 1: Rise of authoritarian regimes**
- ❖ **GROUP 2: Authoritarian ideology and justifications**

- ❖ **GROUP 3: Authoritarian assault on political, civil and human rights**
- ❖ **GROUP 4: Resistance to authoritarianism**

You must decide as a group how you will divide tasks for the poster work you do together, in consultation with me. One model would be that you could each specialize in one of the case studies we will be working on as a class, as each case must be represented in the group project. You will be graded both on the work you do as a group (10%) and the work you do on the project as an individual (15%).

In preparation for the poster project, you will be meeting with your groups regularly in class throughout the semester to discuss how our case studies relate to the theme you will be focusing on.

Lastly, each group will be responsible for leading the first part of our discussion of the readings on two of our four case studies. This leadership of the discussion should include the posing of thoughtful and thought-provoking questions to your fellow students. While you should plan this with your group, your work will count as a third of your individual participation grade in the course.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

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❖ **Participation:**.....

The expectation for active and prepared participation in class discussions is high, and will be taken very seriously into account for your final grade. This means coming to class well-prepared to thoughtfully discuss all of the assigned materials for the week, and to regularly, actively contribute to in-class discussion, exercises and debates, in addition to scheduled presentations.

❖ **Grading:**.....

**Most assignments in this course will be graded blindly.** This is a way for me to be as fair and transparent as possible in evaluating your work. Please mark all of your work only with your 95 number (NOT your NetID or ID barcode), rather than your name.

Grade Scale: 94-100: A, 90-93: A-, 87-89: B+, 83-86: B, 80-82: B-, 77-79: C+, 73-76: C, 70-72: C-, 67-69: D+, 63-66: D, 60-62: D-, 59 or below: F

A/A- =excellent, B+/B/B- =good, C+/C/C- =satisfactory, D+/D/D- =unsatisfactory, F=no credit

❖ **Communications:**.....

I read and respond to email **during normal business hours** (roughly, 8 AM–5 PM, Mon - Fri).

I expect emails from my students to be written in a polite and professional manner. **Every email you send me should be addressed to me as “Professor Osten,” and should be signed with your name.** You may not use my first name. You may use “Dr. Osten” if you prefer that for whatever reason. Mrs. Osten is my mother and Ms. Osten is my sister, so those are not appropriate unless you happen to be emailing them (note: please don’t). I will make every effort to respond to your polite and professionally worded email by the next business day.

I will also be sending you email throughout the semester: sometimes to all of the students in the course, and sometimes to just you. Make sure to check your UVM email regularly and to read

these messages carefully (and always double check for any attachments). It is your responsibility if you miss something important (an assignment reminder, a schedule change, a reading, etc.) because you didn't read your email.

**By far the best way to talk to me is to come to my office hours.** That's what they are for! If you cannot make my regular office hours, please contact me to schedule another time.

❖ Attendance:.....

You are responsible for arriving to class on time and signing the attendance sheet at the beginning of each class session. Each student is permitted **one unexcused absence** during the semester without penalty. Please treat these as you would a personal day or a sick day at a job, and plan accordingly. **Each additional absence after that will result in the loss of a point from your final grade. You will automatically fail this course if you have ten or more unexcused absences, including the one that is permitted.**

*Example: if you earn an A- (90 points) in the course but you are absent five times (four more absences than is allowed), your final grade for the semester will be a B (85 points).*

Excused absences include family or medical emergencies, or university sanctioned activities (such as away games for athletes) that come with university documentation. All other absences count as unexcused. Please let me know in advance when you know you will be absent. *If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates to me via email by the end of the second week of classes.* You will be permitted to make up work by a mutually agreed-upon time. Any work in class that you miss because of an unexcused absence or tardiness cannot be made up. Signing anyone other than yourself in to class is a violation of academic integrity.

❖ Accessibility:.....

Any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS (formerly ACCESS), the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students to create reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to their professors. **In addition to this letter**, please discuss any requests for SAS accommodations with me, **in person**, within the first two weeks of the course. This can be either before/after class, or at my office hours.

❖ Electronic Devices:.....

**Phones and all other devices must either be silent or turned off and put away once class starts.**

**This includes laptops.** Multiple studies have conclusively shown that taking notes by hand is a much more effective way to learn and to retain new information than typing. Laptops are also inevitably distracting to the students using them and to those around them. That said, please speak with me in person within the first two weeks of class if you would like to request permission to use a laptop in this class for a specific reason (including SAS accommodations: see below).

**Forget that you own a phone for the duration of each of my classes.** If there is an urgent reason that you must look at your phone, please be courteous to me and to your fellow students by stepping out into the hallway to do so.

❖ Extensions and Late Work:.....

Late papers will be marked down by 5 points (half a letter grade) per day. **Work that is more than 3 days late, including weekends, won't receive any credit.**

*Example: you submit a paper that earns an A- (90 points). One day late = B (85 points). Two days late = B- (80 points). Three days late = C (75 points). Four days late = F (zero points).*

You may ask me for one deadline extension during the semester. Extensions will typically be no more than 3 days. Reasonable requests for extensions will be considered if they are received a **minimum** of 48 hours in advance of the deadline (except in the case of emergencies or serious illness). If you have an extension, you must pass in the work by the agreed-upon date and time (the late work policy no longer applies).

There will be no extensions on the final paper, except in the case of emergencies that are documented by the dean's office. The deadline for submitting the final poster is non-negotiable.

❖ **Academic Honesty:**.....

Plagiarism is intellectual theft, when someone presents someone else's work or ideas as their own, either willfully or ignorantly. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty or cheating will not be tolerated under any circumstances in this course. Work that includes plagiarism will receive zero credit, and at my discretion such incidents will additionally be reported to university authorities as academic integrity violations.

**When in doubt, follow these rules of thumb:**

- If an idea, a piece of information or any quantity of text is not an original idea expressed in your own words that were generated by your own brain, you must give credit to the author in a citation.
- Whenever you are quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's words or ideas, you must explain whose work it is and where you found it by citing the source, including the page number(s).
- You must put every quote inside quotation marks, whether it is 2 words long or 50.

**Anything that falls short of these standards is plagiarism, even if that wasn't your intention.**

❖ **Citation:**.....

In all of the written work for this course, you must put all citations in Chicago style footnotes (notes/bibliography), which is the standard for the discipline of history.

Citation is a critically important part of historical research and writing, and history papers without citations are incomplete. **This is why you will only receive full credit on your written work in this class if you cite your sources fully and appropriately: in Chicago style, with page numbers, in footnotes at the bottom of each page—no in-text/parenthetical references or endnotes please.**

Do not treat citation as an afterthought. Leave yourself enough time to do it right!

MS Word automatically generates footnotes. Go to **Insert > Footnote** to put them wherever a citation is needed. There is a quick guide to Chicago style citation on the course Blackboard site, as well as many online resources dedicated to it. I recommend citationmachine.net, which will create and format your citations for you: just cut, paste and add the page numbers in the footnote.

If you do not know when or how to adequately quote or cite a source, or how to create Chicago style footnotes, do not hesitate to ask me for help! This will be a learning process for many of you who are relatively new to historical writing and Chicago style citation, and that's ok. If you have never done this kind of citation, at minimum I expect to see best effort on the first assignment, improvement on next one (with my feedback and assistance), and mastery by the end of this course. "Best effort" on the first assignment includes reading these instructions closely, making use of all of the citation resources mentioned above, asking me for help if you need it, and/or going to the Writing Center. Less than that will result in you receiving partial credit for your work.

Yes, good and responsible citation is a lot of work and takes a lot of time. Yes, footnotes take up space at the bottom of the page. Yes, they need to be there. Yes, I read all of them, closely. Yes, you can do this.

❖ **Formatting:**.....

**All written work for this class should be:**

- double spaced, 1" margins, 12 point font
- stapled
- submitted via both email and hard copy by the deadline

PLEASE RESPECT THE PAGE LIMITS DESCRIBED FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT. At most, you may go a single, short paragraph over the page limit. Do not change the formatting described above in order to meet the page limits!

## READINGS

### Week 1 (January 15 & 17): Introduction to Twentieth Century Latin America

Discussion topics: Introduction to the course, questions that it will address, background on the history of authoritarianism in Latin America

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 1 (p. 3-15)

### Week 2 (January 22 & 24): Precedents and Historical Legacies

Discussion topic: dictatorship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and democratization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 2 (p. 16-44) and Chapter 14 (p. 412-446)

### Week 3 (January 29 & 31): Modern Forms of Latin American Authoritarianism

Discussion topic: different types of Latin American authoritarianism (left, right, populist, military)

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 12 & first half of Chapter 13 (p. 359-399), and Chapter 15 (p. 447-479)

### Week 4 (February 5 & 7): Cuba: Causes

Discussion topics: what was the Cuban revolution about? What did it seek to change? What was it up against? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 2.

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 5 (p. 115-145)
- *Before Night Falls*: p. ix-136

### Week 5 (February 12 & 14): Cuba: Consequences

Discussion topics: what was Cuban communism like in practice, and why? Why did this lead to the eventual persecution of various types of people, including gay men? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 3.

- *Before Night Falls*: p. 136-317

### Week 6 (February 19 & 21): Mexico: Causes

First short essay due Thursday, February 21, via both email and hard copy

Discussion topic: how and why is Mexico different from other cases of non-democratic political systems? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 1.

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 3 (p. 47-79)
- *Specters of Revolution*, p. 1-67

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#### Week 7 (February 26 & 28): Mexico: Consequences

Discussion topic: why did the Mexican state begin to behave more like a traditional dictatorship in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Who resisted this, and how? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 4.

- *Specters of Revolution*, p. 68-180

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#### Week 8 (March 7): Argentina: Causes

Discussion topic: why did the Argentine military overthrow the government in 1976, and with what aims and justifications? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 2.

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 9 (p. 241-282)
- *Argentina's Missing Bones*, Chapters 1 and 2 (p. 1-35)

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#### WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK

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#### Week 10 (March 19 & 21): Argentina: Consequences

**Wednesday, March 20: Poster Plenary, Billings Lecture Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM**

Discussion topics: how and why did the so-called "Dirty War" in Argentina become so brutal that it resulted in the forced disappearance of 30,000 people? What kinds of people were disappeared, and why? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 3.

- *Argentina's Missing Bones*, Chapters 3-8, and Epilogue (p. 36-117)

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#### Week 11 (March 26 & 28): Guatemala: Causes

**Second short essay due Thursday, March 28, via both email and hard copy**

**Wednesday, March 27: Actors of the London Stage, Music Recital Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM**

Discussion topics: how and why did the military take power when it did in Guatemala? What domestic and international factors contributed to the rise of military authoritarianism there? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 1.

- *Modern Latin America*, Chapter 4 (p. 80-114) and "The Revolutionary Path" (p. 396-400)
- *Adiós Niño*, p. 1-52.

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Week 12 (April 2 & 4): Guatemala: Consequences

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**Wednesday, April 3: Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, Billings Lecture Hall, 5:05-6:20 PM**

**Final Due Date for Posters: Sunday, April 7, before midnight, via email**

Discussion topics: how and why did authoritarianism in Guatemala devolve into a genocide against the Maya? How does that history contribute to long-term legacies of violence in Guatemala today, including the rise of gangs there? Thursday's discussion of the readings will be led by GROUP 4.

- *Adiós Niño*, p. 53-144.

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Week 13 (April 9 & 11): Dictatorships Defeated

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Discussion topics: how and why are dictatorships defeated? How and under what conditions is democracy restored?

**Wednesday, April 10: Research Presentations I, James Jeffords Hall 127, 5:05-6:20 PM**

Tuesday: Group I practice poster talks

Thursday: watch "No"

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Week 14 (April 16 & 18): New Democracies and Old Ghosts

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**Wednesday, April 17: Research Presentations II, James Jeffords Hall 127, 5:05-6:20 PM**

Tuesday: Group II practice poster talks

- Garrard, Virginia. "Living with Ghosts: Death, Exhumation and Reburial Among the Maya in Guatemala." In *Memory, Truth and Justice in Contemporary Latin America*, 133-144. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. (Blackboard)

- Strejilevitch, Nora. "Collective Memory in Action (and in Motion): The Argentine Case." *The Massachusetts Review* 52, no. 3/4 (2011): 532-44. (JSTOR)

Week 15 (April 23 & 25): Legacies of Authoritarianism in the Present

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**First draft of seminar paper due by Monday, April 22 at 4 PM, in both email and hard copy**

**Wednesday, April 24: First-Year Research Symposium, UVM Alumni House, 61 Summit Street**

- Freitas, Federico. "The Brazilian Nostalgia for Dictatorship." *Current Affairs*, October 10, 2018. <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2018/10/the-brazilian-nostalgia-for-dictatorship>
- Goodfriend, Hilary. "The Honduran Nightmare." *Jacobin Magazine*, December 12, 2018. <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/12/honduras-coup-lobo-human-rights-us-obama-trump>
- Kyle, Brett J. and Andrew G. Reiter. "Militarization Redux." *NACLA*, July 27, 2018. <https://nacla.org/news/2018/07/27/militarization-redux>
- Philips, James. "Complicating the Narrative on Nicaragua." *NACLA*, September 24, 2018. <https://nacla.org/news/2018/09/24/complicating-narrative-nicaragua>

Week 16 (April 30 & May 2): Individual research presentations

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