



University
of Victoria

POLI 372 Latin American Politics

Instructor Spring 2023: Dr. Michelle Bonner

Course delivery: POLI 372 will be delivered on campus and face-to-face.

Course description:

In the 1970s, most countries in Latin America were either under authoritarian regimes, or engaged in civil wars. By 1990, most countries in the region were electoral democracies and no longer involved in official internal wars. Yet aspects of former authoritarian regimes persist and new forms of violence have emerged. Many countries in the region are trying to reconcile with the past while simultaneously fighting rising crime, drug trafficking, gangs, vigilantism, corruption, and police violence. In this way, the study of Latin American politics today forces us to rethink simplistic understandings of democracy and authoritarianism. This course offers the opportunity to understand the politics of this region through a critical examination of democracy and authoritarianism. Building on first and second year courses (particularly Poli 103, 217, and 210), the lens of democracy and authoritarianism is used to analyze the history, governments and political actors of Latin America. Theory is complemented with an examination of politics in selected countries. The countries we will discuss in the course include Mexico, Nicaragua, Colombia, Argentina and Brazil. You have the opportunity to explore an additional country, or issue that emerges from the course, in your final paper.

Prerequisites: None

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Develop knowledge and analysis of the diversity of politics in the region
- Examine how authoritarian regimes transition to democracy and the competing meanings of democracy and democratization.
- Question some of the stereotypes of Latin America
- Develop core undergraduate skills such as effective writing, research, analysis, and argumentation

Topics may include:

Authoritarianism and dictatorship
International economic actors
Human rights in emerging democracies

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.