Political Science 261/261W  
Latin American Politics  
Wednesday 2:00 - 4:40  
Harkness Hall 210

Professor Gretchen Helmke  
Office: 334 Harkness Hall  
Office Hours: Thursday: 2-4, or by appointment  
Email: hlmk@mail.rochester.edu

This course focuses on the process of democratization and the emergence and consolidation of political institutions in contemporary Latin America. The first part of the class discusses the region’s experience with dictatorship and introduces students to competing theories of democratization. The second half of the course concentrates on the performance and functioning of key democratic processes and institutions. The course draws on a broad range of theoretical and methodological perspectives to analyze the quality and stability of democracy throughout Latin America.

Organization and Course Requirements

For students registered to take the class without a writing credit, grades will be based on the following assignments:

Participation: 20%  
Midterm Exam: 40 %  
Final Exam: 40%

For students registered with a “W,” grades will be based on the following assignments:

Participation: 20%  
First Midterm Exam: 25%  
Second Midterm Exam: 25%  
Research Paper 30%

Participation  
Participation makes up a significant part of your grade for this course. This class is a discussion seminar, not a lecture course. It is essential that students be prepared to discuss all of the readings each and every class. Many of the works that we will read are intellectually demanding; be sure to leave yourself enough time to do all of the readings carefully.

Student responsibilities include being prepared each week to discuss news from the Latin American Weekly Reports at the beginning of each class. In addition, each student will sign up to present at least one of the weekly readings during the semester. The student should prepare a 10-15 minute presentation that briefly summarizes the argument and
raises important questions and criticisms for discussion. Please send me via email no later than Tuesday night a one-two hand out of your summary of the readings, which I will copy for the entire class (25 students). The precise number of readings each student is responsible for leading will depend on the size of the seminar. A sign-up sheet will be circulated the first week of class.

Exams
There will be two in-class midterms (October 17, December 12). Both exams will be based on the assigned readings and class discussion. The midterms will contain identification terms, short questions, and essays. A list of possible identification terms will be distributed prior to each exam.

Make-Up Policy
Make-up exams and assignments will be given only under the most exceptional circumstances. Exams will not be re-scheduled to accommodate other courses. Missed exams or assignments due to illness require a doctor’s note.

Term Paper (Only for Students Taking the Course for “W)
Each student will choose a country and topic on which they will write a 10-12 page research paper. To qualify for a W, you must meet each deadline:

9/26 2-3 paragraph statement of your research topic. Please include the question(s) that you want to focus on, the materials that you anticipate using, and your working hypotheses.

10/10 1-2 page annotated bibliography. Please begin with a statement of your research topic and hypotheses and then briefly describe how each of the sources on your bibliography will contribute to your paper.

11/14 Last day to turn in required drafts.

12/5 Research Papers Due at the beginning of Class- LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

Books
The following books are required and available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore:


**Articles**

All articles are available on-line through the University of Rochester library course reserves.

**Weekly Class Schedule:**

**Week 1, September 5:** Course Introduction (short class)

Course Introduction and Presentation Assignments

**Week 2, September 12: Latín American Political Development**


**Week 3, September 19:** Democratic Breakdowns


**Week 4, September 26:** Development, Diffusion, and Democratization


**Week 5, October 3: Games of Transition I**


**Week 6, October 10: Games of Transition II**


Geddes, Barbara. 1999. “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” Annual Review of Political Science. 2:115-44

**Week 7, October 17: First Midterm Exam**

**Week 8, October 24: TBA**

**Week 9, October 31: Accountability and Representation**


**Week 10, November 7: Voting and Elections in Latin America**


Week 11, November 14: Presidential Systems


Week 12, November 21: Thanksgiving Break

Week 13, November 28: Legislative Accountability


Week 14, December 5: Institutional Instability in Latin America

“W” Students Only: Papers are due a the beginning of class today—NO EXCEPTIONS


Week 15, December 12: Second Midterm