

INST 314: Heroes & Villains: Populism in Latin America

TR 9:30-10:50 Croft 306

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Course Description

This is a seminar on populism in Latin America from an interdisciplinary perspective. As a region, Latin America has seen a number of “populist” figures throughout the twentieth century: Juan & Eva Perón in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, José María Velasco Ibarra in Ecuador, Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico, and others. Such figures include military men, middle-class politicians, labor leaders, and traditional landed elites. Seen as heroes and villains (depending on one’s perspective), they shaped political discourse in their countries for decades to come.

Populism is a highly contested concept that is not easily defined. Historians have defined populism by looking at similarities among figures or movements conventionally identified as “populist.” Sociologists have analyzed the relationship between leader and masses, and how this relates to democracy. Political scientists have focused on institutional mechanisms of representation or means of retaining power. The one common thread, of course, was that “populists” pursued statist economic policies. More recently, scholars have wrestled with contemporary figures that behave like earlier populist figures, but pursue neoliberal economic policies. Thus, confusion abounds.

We will first look at different definitions of “populism” and populist figures and movements across Latin America. We will then look closely at a study of populism in Ecuador across the twentieth century. Then we will then turn our attention to the region’s most well known populist figures of the 20th century: Brazil’s Getúlio Vargas and Argentina’s Juan and Eva Perón. If populism is best identified with a period of history (the 1940s-1960s), it is also closely identified with the kind of ideologically vague, highly personalized movements of *varguismo* and *peronismo*. Finally, we will consider three recent figures who some have identified as populists (or neopopulists): Peru’s Alberto Fujimori, Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez, and Bolivia’s Evo Morales.

Students will gain working knowledge of populism in Latin America, from a historical perspective (*who* were “populists”) and from a political-sociological perspective (*what* is “populism”). Students will also apply a conceptual understanding of “populism” in a research paper.

Course Texts

The following books are *required* for this course:

De la Torre, Carlos. 2000. *Populist Seduction in Latin America: The Ecuadorian Experience*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Plotkin, Mariano Ben. 2003. *Mañana es San Perón: A Cultural History of Peron’s Argentina*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources.

Levine, Robert M. 1998. *Father of the Poor? Vargas and His Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional *required* readings (articles, book chapters, and films) are posted online or available on course reserve at the University Library and listed (by author, title) in the course schedule.

Course Requirements

Below is a summary of the course requirements:

Class Participation	20%
Research Paper	20%
Research Prospectus	10%
Research Presentation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
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Total	100%

Attendance Policy. You are expected to arrive on time and stay until class is over. If you will miss class or arrive late/leave early, you must notify me **before** class. You are allowed **ONE** “personal day” absence (for any purpose, including health or family emergencies).¹ Each additional absence results in an automatic 5% reduction from the final semester grade.

Participation. Because this is a seminar, active, engaging, and meaningful class participation is essential. I expect students to complete readings **before** the class for which they are assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them. We will have conversational lectures: I will guide the class through some concepts drawn from the readings, but will also ask questions about the material. Participation accounts for a significant portion of the semester grade (20%). Keep in mind that **attendance is NOT the same thing as participation.** Active, meaningful participation involves answering questions that I pose to the class, raising interesting or relevant ideas for discussion, and asking good questions about material you do not understand.

Exams. There are two exams in this course, a midterm and a final. Each exam is worth 20% of the semester grade, and will be a combination of long essay, short essay, and short answer/identification. I will hand out study guides for each exam a week in advance. The midterm exam will be in class on **February 25**. The final exam will be held during final exams week.

Semester Research Project

Each student is required to write a research paper on a topic related to populism in Latin America. The paper must be structured around a clearly defined research question and must use **scholarly** sources. The paper should be a case study focusing on any Latin American leader, movement, or party, but it should focus on **analysis** (explaining “why”) rather than mere description or biography. Begin thinking about your research paper early in the semester to give yourself time to develop ideas and seek assistance along the way.

Because research paper writing is a multistep process, you will work on two related assignments: a prospectus (with preliminary bibliography) and a research presentation. These assignments are meant to keep you on task and help you develop a quality research paper. This is designed to mirror the Croft thesis process, which also requires a prospectus and a preliminary research presentation. The prospectus and presentation are each worth 10% of the semester grade. This means that the overall research project is worth a combined 40% of the semester grade.

Research Prospectus. As a first step of the research project, you will write a 400-500 word research prospectus (about two pages) related to your research paper. The prospectus should

¹ Special consideration will be given under extraordinary circumstances (such as a serious, prolonged illness). But the best defense against absence penalties for unforeseen events is to not miss classes unnecessarily.

clearly specify case selection, research question, and a brief description of relevant literature. Along with the prospectus, you must turn in a **preliminary bibliography** with a **minimum of five scholarly sources** (books, book chapters, and peer-review journal articles). You may use non-academic sources (websites, newspapers, news magazines, etc.) as *supplemental* materials, but these cannot substitute for *scholarly* sources. The prospectus is worth 10% of the semester grade and is due on **February 16**. If the prospectus or bibliography is not acceptable, I will return the prospectus ungraded; it must be resubmitted (multiple times, if necessary) until it is acceptable. I will not accept a final research paper unless I have approved the prospectus and given it a letter grade.

Research Presentation. Each student will also give a brief presentation on his or her research paper to the class. The presentation must be informative and engaging. Students will use PowerPoint (or similar presentation software) to develop a presentation with 7-10 slides presented in 10-12 minutes. The presentation is worth 10% of the semester grade and will be scheduled during the eleventh week of the semester (**April 6-8**).

Research Paper. The research paper must be 2,500-3,000 words (about 10-12 pages), not counting the title page and bibliography. References and citations should follow **Chicago citation style** (we will cover this in class). I highly encourage you to pick up the following book: Lisa Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science* (Belmont, CA: Thomson, 2007). I will give additional instructions throughout the semester. The research paper is worth 20% of the semester grade and is due no later than 5:00 pm on **April 30**.

Croft Grading Policy

Please note that grades lower than “C” in Croft courses will not be counted toward the international studies major.

Additional Issues & Class Rules

I do not allow the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices in class. The same goes for reading newspapers, sleeping, or working on materials for another course. Such behavior disrespects me and other students. If you are unable to actively attend class and participate, do not attend class.

Communication. Email has become the most common way for students and faculty to communicate outside of class. I will attempt to answer your messages promptly, but note that messages sent *after* 6 pm will not be answered until *after* 8 am the following day. Additionally, you should remember to keep your messages “professional” and respectful (e.g. use proper salutations, such as “Professor/Dr. Centellas”). Check your university account (name@olemiss.edu) frequently. I will use that address when sending important messages related to the course.

Special Accommodations. If you have a learning disability or other documented issues, please see me immediately to make appropriate arrangements to help you meet the course requirements.

Academic Integrity. You must follow the University of Mississippi’s Academic Discipline Policy. All work is expected to be original; **plagiarism** (in any form) will not be tolerated. You are expected to behave in a respectful manner, both toward the professor and other students. Violations will be subject to disciplinary action according to University policy, as specified in the University *M Book*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 21

Thursday: Introduction: Hand out syllabus and go over course requirements in class

DEFINITIONS OF POPULISM

Week 2: January 26/28 – Historians & Sociologists

Tuesday: Conniff, “Introduction”
Knight, “Populism and Neo-populism”

Thursday: *Populist Seduction*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-27)
Panizza, “Populism and the Mirror of Democracy”
Arditi, “Populism as an Internal Periphery of Democratic Politics”

Week 3: February 2/4 – Political Scientists

Tuesday: Dix, “Populism: Authoritarian and Democratic”
Weyland, “Clarifying a Contested Concept”

Thursday: O’Donnell, “Delegative Democracy”
Levitsky & Way, “Competitive Authoritarianism”

VARIANTS OF POPULISM

Week 4: February 9/11

Tuesday: Klein, “Military Socialism” (Bolivia)
Alexander, “Tenentismo” (Brazil)

Thursday: Kantor, “Acción Democrática” (Venezuela)
Clinton, “APRA: An Appraisal” (Peru)

POPULISM IN ECUADOR

Week 5: February 16/18

Tuesday: *Populist Seduction*, Chapter 2 (pp. 28-78)
*** **Research prospectus due!!**

Thursday: *Populist Seduction*, Chapters 3 (pp. 80-111)

Week 6: February 23/25

Tuesday: *Populist Seduction*, Chapter 4 & Conclusion (pp. 112-154)

Thursday: *** **Midterm exam!!**

POPULISM IN BRAZIL: VARGAS & HIS ERA

Week 7: March 2/4

Tuesday: *Father of the Poor?* Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-49)

Thursday: *Father of the Poor?* Chapters 3-4 (pp. 50-96)

Week 8: March 9/11

Tuesday: *Father of the Poor?* Chapters 5-6 (pp. 97-138)

Thursday: French, “Adhemarista Populism”

***** March 14-20: Spring Break *****

POPULISM IN ARGENTINA: THE PERÓNS

Week 9: March 23/25

Tuesday: *Mañana es San Perón*, Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-38)

Thursday: *Mañana es San Perón*, Chapters 3-4 (pp. 39-82)

Week 10: March 30/April 1

Tuesday: *Mañana es San Perón*, Chapters 5-6 (pp. 83-134)

Thursday: *Mañana es San Perón*, Chapters 7-8 & Conclusion (pp. 135-202)

Week 11: April 6/8

***** Student presentations**

CONTEMPORARY POPULISTS: FUJIMORI, CHÁVEZ, MORALES

Week 12: April 13/15

Tuesday: Film, *The Fall of Fujimori* (in class)

Thursday: Roberts, "Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America"
Levitsky & Cameron, "Democracy without Parties?"

Week 13: April 20/22

Tuesday: Film, *Frontline: The Hugo Chávez Show* (in class)

Thursday: Hawkins, "Dependent Civil Society"
Hidalgo, "Hugo Chávez's 'Petro-socialism'"
Ellner, "Contrasting Variants of Populism"

Week 14: April 27/29

Tuesday: Film, *Cocalero* (in class)

Thursday: Madrid, "Rise of Ethnopolitism"
Domingo, "Democracy and New Social Forces in Bolivia"

***** Research papers due by 5:00 pm April 30**

***** May 2-8: Finals Week – No Classes *****

Additional Required Readings

The following is the list of additional *required* readings posted on the course website:

- Alexander, Robert J. 1956. "Brazilian 'Tenentismo'." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 36 (2): 229-242.
- Arditi, Benjamin. 2005. "Populism and the Internal Periphery of Democracy." In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*. London: Verso.
- Clinton, Richard Lee. 1970. "APRA: An Appraisal." *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 12 (2): 280-297.
- Conniff, Michael L. 1999. "Introduction." In *Populism in Latin America*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Dix, Robert H. 1985. "Populism: Authoritarian and Democratic." *Latin American Research Review* 20 (2): 29-52.
- Domingo, Pilar. 2005. "Democracy and New Social Forces in Bolivia." *Social Forces* 83 (4): 1727-1743.
- Ellner, Steve. 2003. "The Contrasting Variants of the Populism of Hugo Chávez and Alberto Fujimori." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35 (1): 139-162.
- French, John D. 1988. "Workers and the Rise of Adhemarista Populism in São Paulo, Brazil 1945-1947." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68 (1): 1-43.
- Hawkins, Kirk A. 2006. "Dependent Civil Society: The Círculos Bolivarianos in Venezuela." *Latin American Research Review* 41 (1): 102-132.
- Hidalgo, Manuel. 2009. "Hugo Chávez's 'Petro-socialism'." *Journal of Democracy* 20 (2): 78-92.
- Kantor, Harry. 1959. "The Development of Acción Democrática de Venezuela." *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 1 (2): 237-255.
- Klein, Herbert S. 1967. "Germán Busch and the Era of 'Military Socialism' in Bolivia." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 47 (2): 166-184.
- Knight, Alan. 1998. "Populism and Neo-populism in Latin America, especially Mexico." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30 (2): 223-248.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (2): 51-65.
- Levitsky, Steven and Maxwell A. Cameron. 2003. "Democracy without Parties? Political Parties and Regime Change in Fujimori's Peru." *Latin American Politics & Society* 45 (3): 1-33.
- Madrid, Raúl L. 2008. "The Rise of Ethnopoliticism in Latin America." *World Politics* 60 (3): 475-508.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1994. "Delegative Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1): 55-69.
- Panizza, Francisco. 2005. "Introduction: Populism and the Mirror of Democracy." In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*. London: Verso.
- Roberts, Kenneth M. 1995. "Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case." *World Politics* 48 (1): 82-116.
- Weyland, Kurt. 2001. "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics." *Comparative Politics* 34 (1): 1-22.