LDST 390-04: The Business of Ruling: Strongmen, Caudillos and Democracy in the Americas. 1810s to the Present  
Spring 2016

Instructor: Professor Ernesto Semán  
Course Time and Location: Tuesday, Thursday 2:45-4:00pm Jepson 102  
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

This course examines the history of strongmen and caudillos, a critical form of political leadership in Latin America. One of the central questions for this course is how these caudillos, from Simón Bolívar to Juan Perón in Argentina or Lázaro Cárdenas in México, embodied commonly shared political ideas as well as gender and racial representations that shaped the lives of millions for over two centuries. Specially, we will focus on caudillos’ followers, analyzing their motivations, achievements and goals. We will discuss how masses, in their relationships with their strongmen, produced unique and changing notions of democracy, the common good and equality. In the study of historical narratives and fictional representations such as novels and movies from the United States, we will also explore the roots and political functions of the persistent attention to caudillismo in the U.S., and the ambivalences in American public life to the historical legacies of Latin America.

The course will be divided in two parts. During the first half of the semester, we will discuss the basic aspects of caudillismo in the context of the modern history of Latin America and the United States, from the emergence of national states in the early 1800s to the present day. Particular attention will be placed not only on the political and social phenomena, but in fictional representations of caudillos in movies and novels throughout the Americas.

During the second half of the semester, the students will be divided in three groups that as part of an extended role playing exercise: One group will be a caudillo, another group will be “the people,” and the other the local elites. The action will be set in an imaginary Latin American country. The groups will have to decide collectively the name of the country. They will also have to chose whether the actions will take place in the 1850s, during the period of emergence of the nation-states in the region, or during the 1950s, a period characterized by the expansion of the urban working classes in Latin America. Each group will have to decide on the defining features of their characters: The kind of caudillo they will represent (name, gender, political project, economic support, worldview, relationship to the United States, etc.); the configuration of the people (industrial workers, peasants, indigenous groups, populations of African descent, etc.) and of the elites (members of the church, landowners, industrialists, etc.). For the remaining part of the semester, each group will try to advance its own interests,
grounding their actions and discourses in specific readings about the particular history of your chosen period in Latin America. At the end of the semester, each group will write a brief report reflecting on the evolution of their faction and of the country as a whole. The readings for this part of the course will be selected according to the evolution of the role playing exercise.

Requirements and Grades:
1. Class Participation: 15%
I expect that you will participate actively throughout the entire course. Class attendance is absolutely necessary. I also expect that you come to class having read the texts and prepared to engage with debates and discussions pertinent to the class. Specific and incisive discussions of the readings are particularly welcome; general statements that do not relate to the authors' arguments or the other students' points are not.

2. Midterm Exam. 25%
It will consist of questions (short answers or mini essay-like) about the readings assigned up to this point (including those that were not discussed in class.) The midterm exam will take place on March 3rd.

3. Student Journal. 15%
Every other week starting with the second week (deadline is every other Sunday, 8pm.) you will submit through blackboard a one or two-page, double-spaced journal entry, answering three questions: 1) What were the most important things you learned from your reading this week? 2) What were the most important things you learned from class this week? and 3) What would you like to know more about? You can write longer about one topic than another, and you can take the opportunity to comment about a book you have read, a news you have seen or an idea you have, as long as it is relevant to the class. At the end of the course, you will put all the seven entries together with a cover introduction reflecting on your progress during the semester.

2. Role Playing. 20%
Students will be graded according to their participation in the role playing based on: the academic foundations of your intervention through reading and research, the originality of your contribution, your contribution to the group, and the effort put in advancing the interests of your faction.

3. Final Project. 25%
Students will prepare a final project about any dimension related to the study of caudillismo. By mid-semester, students will present a proposal that will have to be approved by me. The range of options for this project is vast and it will depend entirely on the students' preferences, skills and affinities: They include (but are not limited to) the writing of a book review, a movie review, a paper about any specific dimension of caudillismo, the genealogy of one relevant term, the translation into English of a relevant piece originally in Spanish or Portuguese, the creation of a poem or a song. By mid-semester, students will have to have approved by me the primary sources and the topic
that will be the focus of their paper. The deadline for the proposal is April 7th. The deadline for the final research project is April 25th.

**General expectations:**
1. Class attendance is absolutely necessary. Each unexcused absence will lead to 2 percent taken off your final grade.
2. You should arrive at class on time, no exceptions. You should not leave class before it ends, no exceptions. Late arrivals (more than 3 minutes) or early departures (more than 3 minutes) will affect the percentage of your grade corresponding to class participation.
3. You should make sure to go to the restrooms before class, or either wait until the class ends.
4. No food in the classroom.
5. The use of laptops, ipads or phones during class is prohibited. If you cannot take notes without an electronic device, you need to contact me as soon as possible with a Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) provided the university (see below.)
6. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours of receiving them, but I will not respond to emails sent to me after 5pm until the following day. I can also give you feedback about your projects, but I will not read rough drafts sent 24 hours before they are due.
7. Plagiarism: Any plagiarism is grounds for failure for the assignment in question, for the course, and for the school as well. When the ideas or writings of others are presented in assignments, these ideas or writing should be attributed to that source. Special care should be taken to cite sources correctly and to use quotation marks. Resources such as the library and the Writing Center are available on campus to assist you. You are encouraged to take advantage of these resources.

**Required Readings:**


**Course Schedule**

**Part I: Introduction: What's a caudillo after all?**

**Week 1: Origins of Caudillismo in Latin America**
January 12th
Presentation.
Rich Lowry, "Barack Obama, American Caudillo. Roles are for lawyers; all must submit to the will of El Jefe." National Review Online, November 21, 2014.
http://www.nationalreview.com/article/393253/barack-obama-american-caudillo-rich-lowry

January 14th

**Week 2: Caudillos and followers in Latin America; U.S. concern.**

January 19th

January 21nd

**Part II: Civilization or Barbarism**

**Week 3: Freedom, Violence and Personalism during Latin American State Formation.**

January 26th
- Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*, part. 5: Caudillos and Followers: The Forms of a Relationship, pp. 94-112. (blackboard)

January 28th
- Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Life In the Argentine Republic In the Days Of The Tyrants; Or Civilization and Barbarism.* Chapter III, Association, pp. 47-56. (ebook)

**Week 4: Shaping Modern Latin America. The cosmopolitan turn.**
February 2nd
Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Life In the Argentine Republic In the Days Of the Tyrants; Or Civilization and Barbarism*. Chapter IV, pp. 57-73. (ebook)

February 4th
Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Life In the Argentine Republic In the Days Of the Tyrants; Or Civilization and Barbarism*. Chapter V, pp. 73-89. (ebook)

**Week 5: National Sovereignty, Fragmentation and Strongmen.**
February 9th
In class: *The Liberator*, movie. part I.

February 11th
In class: *The Liberator*, movie. part II.

**Part III: The Caudillo and the Masses**
**Week 6: Our Son of a Bitch**
February 18th
Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat.*

February 18th
Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat.*
Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History*. Chapters 18. (blackboard)

**Week 7: The Lonely Crowd. Modern Science and the individual**
February 23rd
Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat.*

February 25th
Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History*. Chapter 18. (blackboard)
Week 8: The Quest for Modernity.
March 1st. Revision

March 3rd.
Mid Term Exam

Week 9
March 8th
SPRING BREAK NO CLASS
March 10th
SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

Part IV: El Caudillo del Pueblo

Week 10: Populism
March 15th

March 17th

Week 11: Caudillos and Social Revolution
March 22th

March 24th
Daniel James, Resistance and Integration. Part One: The Background. Peronism and the working class, 1943-55. P, 7-40. (blackboard)

PART V: Powerbrokers and individual freedom.
Week 12: The New Deal Revisited
March 29st
Robert Penn Warren, All The King’s Men
Introduction, p. 2-23(blackboard)
March 31st
Robert Penn Warren, *All The King's Men*

**Week 13th**
April 5th
Spruille Braden, State Department Document: "Policy re Dictarships and Disreputable Governments." (blackboard)
Texts specifically assigned for the role playing exercise.

April 7th
Texts specifically assigned for the role playing exercise.

**Week 14th**
April 12th
Texts specifically assigned for the role playing exercise.

April 14th
Final Presentation

**Week 15th**
April 19st
Final Presentation
April 21rd
Final Presentation

**Jepson School of Leadership Studies**

*Awarding of Credit*
To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.
http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html

*Disability Accommodations*
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html
Honor System
The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”
http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/

Religious Observance
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html

Staff members from these resources are available to students for consultation regarding the points delineated below.

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

Academic Skills Center (http://asc.richmond.edu, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement.

Career Services (http://careerservices.richmond.edu/ or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing your first job. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during your first year.

Counseling and Psychological Services (http://caps.richmond.edu or 289-8119): Assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Speech Center (http://speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center (http://writing.richmond.edu or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians (http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876): Assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM a librarian, or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.