LDST 390: The Business of Ruling: Strongmen, Caudillos and Democracy in the Americas. 1810s to the Present.
Spring 2017

Instructor: Professor Ernesto Semán
Course Time and Location: JPSN 101/118, Monday-Wednesday 1:30-2:45pm.
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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. It explores also why the image of the caudillo has captured the attention of U.S. intellectuals and policymakers and how it reverberates in contemporary U.S. politics. One of the central questions for this course is why these caudillos, from Simón Bolívar to Juan Perón in Argentina or Jorge Elíceer Gaitán in Colombia, 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 about the historical legacies of Latin America.

In order to discuss these issues from multiple perspectives, this class will regularly merge with Professor Maria Esparanza Casullo's class, “Leaders or demagogues? The Construction of Populist Leaders in South America, the US and Europe in the new Century” (specific dates are indicated below.) While our class will have a clear historical approach to the issue of populism and strongmen, Professor Casullo's class will give us the opportunity to incorporate contemporary discussions and definitions about populism and strongmen in sociology and political science.

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 also 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 as part of an extended role-playing exercise: One group will be "el caudillo"; another group will be “the people”; and the other "the 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 choose 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. Readings for this part of the course will be added and 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** 20%
   It will consist of questions (short answers or mini essay-like) about the readings assigned up to this point (including those not discussed in class.) The midterm exam will take place on March 1st.

3. **Student Reflection** 15%
   Students will write four short reflection papers throughout the semester about any preferred reading: 1) What were the most important things you learned from your selected reading? 2) What were the most important things you learned from the related class discussion? and 3) What would you like to know more about? Reflection papers should typically be two-page long, double-space. 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.

4. **Role Playing** 25%
   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.

5. **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 9th
Presentation

January 11th

Part II: El Caudillo and his followers

Week 2: Caudillos and followers in Latin America; U.S. concern
January 16th. No Class. MLK Day.

January 18th (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)

Week 3: Freedom, Violence and Personalism during State Formation in the Americas
January 23rd
Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*, part. 5: Caudillos and Followers: The Forms of a Relationship, pp. 94-112. (blackboard)

January 25th
Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Life In the Argentine Republic In the Days Of the Tyrants; Or Civilization and Barbarism*. Chapter III, Association, pp. 47-56 and Chapter IV, pp. 57-73. (ebook)

Week 4: The Ruler and the mob in Latin America and the United States
Jan 30th. (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)
(Optional: Watch at home "Hero," directed by Zhang Yimou, 2002)
Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (Selections) (blackboard)
(Snippets from Zhang Yimou’s movie *Hero* will be discussed in class.)

February 1st
Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Life In the Argentine Republic In the Days Of the Tyrants; Or Civilization and Barbarism*. Chapter V, pp. 73-89. (ebook)
James Madison, Federalist 10.

**Week 5: National Sovereignty, Fragmentation and Strongmen**
February 6th (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)

Alberto Arévalo (director), *The Liberator* (movie, to be watched at home.)
Simon Bolivar, *The Jamaican Letters*. (blackboard.)

February 8th (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)

**Part III: The Modern Caudillo and the Masses: The quest for citizenship and the rationale individual**
**Week 6: Our Son of a Bitch**
February 13th

February 15th
Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History*. Chapters 18. (blackboard)

**Week 7: The Lonely Crowd. Modern Science and the individual**
February 20th (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)
February 22nd

**Week 8:**
Feb 27th.
Revision

March 1st.
*Mid Term Exam*

**Week 9**
March 6th
**SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**
March 8th
**SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

**Part IV: El Caudillo del Pueblo**
**Week 10: Populism**
March 13th *(Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.)*


March 15th *(Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.)*

*(Optional, watch at home "Cocalero," directed by Alejandro Landes, 2007)*


Raul Madrid. The Rise of Ethnopopulism in Latin America” In World Politics, Vol. 60, nr. 3. (2008) (Boatwright Library Online)

**Week 11: Caudillos and Social Revolution**
March 20th


Making of a Man in the Middle." (ebook)

March 22th

**PART V: Powerbrokers and individual freedom**

**Week 12: The threat in the Western Hemisphere: The uses of history**
March 27st
Lecture by Professor Mark Healey (University of Connecticut, Department of History)
*Populism(s) in the Americas*

March 29th
Robert Penn Warren, *All The King's Men*

**Week 13: American Populist: The Threat at Home? Or the chance for reform?**
April 3rd (*Class merges with Professor Casullo's class.*)

April 5th
Robert Penn Warren, *All The King’s Men*

**Week 14: Populist and Demagogues: Whose interests, whose freedom?**
April 10th (*Class merges with Professor Casullo’s class.*)
Robert Penn Warren, *All The King’s Men.*

April 12th
Final Presentation

**Week 15:**
April 17st
Final Presentation
April 19th
Final Presentation
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.
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.
disability.richmond.edu/

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.”
studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html

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

*updated 8/10/2016