

Hello everyone,

This week we will start discussing the variation in the political regimes that emerged in Latin America in the 2000s. On Tuesday, we will begin by talking about the so-called “Pink Tide” or, in other words, the rise of Left-wing governments throughout the region. I will begin by providing you, during the first part of the lecture, with different frameworks to think about the similarities and differences of these regimes, as well some background information of the cases. During the second part of the lecture, I would like to start a discussion about the successes and failures of these regimes in terms of economic development and democratic expansion. In particular, we will focus on the comparison between Brazil and Venezuela.

As you go through this week’s readings, I strongly recommend that you read very carefully Castañeda’s and Cameron’s articles. Those are two very different intellectual strategies to make sense of the similarities and differences across these regimes. Try to identify what are the dimensions along which these authors see the Leftist regimes varying. How do these dimensions create a typology that can help us categorize the different governments? What are the implications for a country to be in one or another category?

Secondly, make sure that you also read the chapters on Brazil and Venezuela in the Domínguez and Schifter volume. You will need this background information to participate in the discussion. Remember that the exam will include material covered in the lectures and in the readings.

Additionally, here are some interesting links that you might want to explore to catch up with some of the issues that these countries are currently facing:

Venezuela (read both articles for a complete perspective, they are each presenting one side of the story):

<http://www.literalmagazine.com/bilingual/3832/>

<http://www.literalmagazine.com/bilingual/ten-questions-about-venezuela/>

Brazil:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/22/dilma-rousseff-brazil-protests_n_3483069.html?utm_hp_ref=brazil-protests-2013

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/07/world-cup-brazil-parties-and-protests>

On Thursday, we will move on to study those countries that have not taken the Left turn of the recent years: Mexico and Colombia. These countries also share an additional challenge: insecurity and organized crime.

For Thursday's lecture make sure that you read the chapter on "security concerns" in the Domínguez and Schifter volume, as well as the chapters on Mexico and Colombia. Although security is going to be the guiding thread for our lecture, pay attention to the political context in which these issues have emerged. What are the particularities of the Colombian and Mexican political systems? Where do they succeed and where do they fail? Can you speculate about why the Left has remained weak as an electoral force in both places?

Have a great Sunday!

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