Democracy is supposed to deliver responsive and accountable government because voters can punish politicians who fail to provide what they want. Most observers agree that most democratic governments in Latin America have failed to provide substantial parts of what citizens want. This class is structured around the big question: Why has democracy in Latin America not performed as many citizens expected?

The study of Latin American politics relies on the same theories as the study of democratic politics in other parts of the world. The most basic theoretical idea is that political institutions interact with the interests and preferences of citizen groups to shape the incentives facing political decision makers. These decision makers then determine policy choices. If voters are dissatisfied with politicians’ policy choices or other behavior, they can throw them out of office. Politicians’ desire to remain in office and to achieve higher positions motivates them to do what voters’ want. The class begins with these basic theoretical ideas as they have been applied to Latin America. We will be interested both in making the logic underlying these arguments clear and also in assessing the evidence said to support them. We will investigate whether specific institutional details explain some failures in popular accountability.

We will then consider the consequences of a number of empirically based challenges to these standard ideas, for example: theoretical representations of what voters want array these demands on a policy spectrum (usually left-right), but real voters may want multiple, uncorrelated things, only some of which have policy implications. Or they may want mutually exclusive things. We will explore how real voters’ interests, preferences, and (lack of) information affect politicians’ behavior and policy autonomy.

The course will encourage comparing, analyzing, and criticizing arguments proposed in the reading. In the process of doing this, students should be able to begin synthesizing their own intellectual approaches and identifying research ideas. Grades will be based on class participation and a research paper, which will be due at the end of the quarter.

Research ideas must be submitted by the sixth week of class and approved. I will hand out an assignment to aid in thinking through paper ideas. Papers may compare a non-Latin American country with one or more Latin American countries. Research papers may not be co-authored, and they may not be papers you have submitted for other classes. Papers need not be “finished” to receive a good grade, but they need to express a clear argument, situate the argument in appropriate literature, find evidence suitable for testing the argument, and describe preliminary results. These papers are intended to be starting points for future qualifying papers, dissertation chapters, or articles.

This class is a discussion seminar. The reading must be done before the seminar meets so that discussion can be lively and informed. If you have substantial knowledge of one or more countries, please share your experience and analysis with the rest of the class during discussions. Your participation will affect your grade.
In organizing the syllabus, I have assumed that students are familiar with the basic arguments in:
Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*
Morris Fiorina, *Congress, Keystone of the Washington Establishment*
David Mayhew, *The Electoral Connection*

If you are not familiar with these ideas, you should prepare for the class by reading the articles and enough of the books to get a sense of the main arguments.

Required reading: Available on the class website or at other URLs, as noted

**Schedule of Reading Assignments**

**Week 1, Jan 8:** Background Information: Dictatorship, Democracy, and Latin American Party System Volatility: How Party Instability Affects Accountability

**Week 2, Jan 15:** university holiday

**Week 3, Jan 22:** Democratic Theory and How Formal Institutions Affect Political Outcomes
Reading: Barbara Geddes, *Politician’s Dilemma*, pp. 7-19, 24-42, 83-130, 182-96, class website
John Carey, “Discipline, Accountability, and Legislative Voting in Latin America,”

Contemporary institutional rules and election results can be found at Georgetown Constitutions and Election Results for Latin America.
[http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/elecdata.html](http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Elecdata/elecdata.html).


Latin American electoral rules change somewhat frequently so you should never assume that a current rule existed decades ago or that something said about an institution in an article from ten years ago is still true.

**Week 4, Jan 29:** Presidential-Legislative Relations: Agenda Setting, Decree Powers, Vetoes (Whose Interests Dominate Policy?)
If you are not familiar with Tsebelis’ veto players argument, it is important to read George Tsebelis, “Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 1995,
Reading: Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins, “The Institutional Determinants of Policy,” class website
Mathew Shugart and John Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*, pp. 131-152, class website


Online appendix at: [http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=5962336&jid=JOP&volumeid=71&issueId=03&aid=5962328&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=5962336&jid=JOP&volumeid=71&issueId=03&aid=5962328&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession)

Week 5, Feb 5: A Challenge to the Standard View: Are Presidents Accountable to International Pressures Rather Than Voters?

Introductory Lecture: The Causes of Economic Liberalization


Susan Stokes, "Democratic Accountability and Policy Change: Economic Policy in Fujimori’s Peru" *Comparative Politics* 29: 2, 209-26, JSTOR

Discussion of Research Topics, template passed out

Week 6, Feb 12: Does Clientelism Challenge the Standard View? How Clientelism Works


RESEARCH TOPIC ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week 7, Feb 19: university holiday

Week 8, Feb 26: Politicians’ Responses to the Various Demands of Voters: Transfers vs. Clientelism and Vote Buying


Daniel Gingerich. 2014. “Yesterday’s Heroes, Today’s Villains: Ideology, Corruption, and Democratic Performance. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 26: 2, 249-82. [http://jtp.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/08/05/0951629813495120](http://jtp.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/08/05/0951629813495120).
Week 9:  Mar 5:  Finding the Resources to Respond to Voters in an Era of Reduced State Intervention in Economies: Corruption, the Supply Side
Reading:  Daniel Gingerich.  2013.  Political Institutions and Party-Directed Corruption in South America: Stealing for the Team, pp. 66-112 and 164-233, class website

Week 10, Mar 12:  Voters and Corruption

FRIDAY, March 23:  Final paper due via email