



CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO ARMANDO ALVARES PENTEADO

Course: Contemporary Topics in Latin America	Code: PDCP1
Program: International Relations	

Syllabus

Latin America: Polarization, democratic backsliding, and the crisis of democracy. This course introduces the concepts of democracy, authoritarianism, democratic backsliding, and democratic crisis. The course explores how these phenomena manifest currently in Latin American countries and identifies similarities and differences with global trends.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Conceptualize pernicious polarization, democratic backsliding, and democratic crisis.
- Understand how these issues manifest within the region.
- Compare cases across different countries.

Methodology

Expository lectures and student seminars focusing on topics related to the democratic crisis in the Latin American countries studied.

Program

1. Concepts and problematization: Democracy, authoritarianism, polarization, and democratic backsliding.
2. Conceptualizing the Crisis of Democracy.
3. Crisis of neoliberal capitalism?
4. The Case of Venezuela.



CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO ARMANDO ALVARES PENTEADO

5. Is Brazil experiencing a crisis of democracy?
6. Radicalization in Peru.
7. The far right in Chile.

Grade criteria: Classroom participation, exam, seminar, and final paper.

The final grade is divided into two parts: N1 and N2.

N1 (40%): Exam.

N2 (60%): Seminar (20%), classroom participation (10%), and the final version of the term paper (70%).

Notes:

- Depending on the number of enrolled students, the exam and the term paper may be done in pairs.
- Seminars must cover related topics such as impacts on foreign policy, economy, culture, regional balance of power, or international economic relations.
- The term paper must include its own specific bibliography.

Bibliography

Basic:

Avritzer L, Rennó L. The Pandemic and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 13(3), 2021, pp: 442-457.

Braga, Ruy. *A Rebeldia do precariado: trabalho e neoliberalismo no Sul global*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2017.



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Camacho, Gabriela e Paolo Sosa-Villagarcia. (2021). “Una democracia asediada por sus elites”, in: *El Profe: cómo Pedro Castillo se convirtió en presidente y qué pasará a continuación*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

Carrasco Cortez V. Crisis política en el Perú: cambios profundos y consecuencias importantes del «golpe» de diciembre de 2022. *Acta Herediana*, 2023, 66(1), pp: 25-31. Disponible en: <https://revistas.upch.edu.pe/index.php/AH/article/view/4539>

Castells, M. *Rupture: the crisis of liberal democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018.

Cohen, J.; Fung, A. *Democracy and the Digital Public Sphere*. Em: Bernholz, L.; Landemore, H.; Reich, R. (Eds.). *Digital technology and democratic theory*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2020, pp: 23–61.

Diamond, L. Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, Baltimore, 2002, 13(2), pp: 21-35.

Fraser, Nancy. *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet and What We Can Do about It*, Londres, Verso, 2022.

FREEDOM HOUSE. *Freedom in the World 2026: Methodology Questions*.

García-Guadilla MP, Mallen A. Polarization, Participatory Democracy, and Democratic Erosion in Venezuela’s Twenty-First Century Socialism. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 2019; 681(1):62-77.

Gombata, M; Cameron, M. Endogenous hybridity: regime change in Venezuela (1998–2020). *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Latino-*



CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO ARMANDO ALVARES PENTEADO

Américaines et Caraïbes, 2021, 47(1), pp: 140–159.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2022.2002666>

Haggard, S., and R. Kaufman. The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 2021, 32(4), pp. 27–41.

Lindh, Jaime, Fábrega, Jorge, & González, Jorge. La fragilidad de los consensos. Polarización ideológica en el Chile post Pinochet. *Revista de ciencia política* (Santiago), 2019, 39(1), pp: 99-127.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-090X2019000100099>

Luna JP, Medel RM. Uneven States, Unequal Societies, and Democracy's Unfulfilled Promises: Citizenship Rights in Chile and Contemporary Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society*. 2023; 65(2):170–96. doi:10.1017/lap.2022.59

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Martí i Puig, Salvador. Nicaragua: la crisis de un régimen patrimonial. CIDOB, (2018). Disponible em:
<https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/nicaragua-la-crisis-de-un-regimen-patrimonial>

Martí i Puig S, Serra M. Nicaragua: De-democratization and Regime Crisis. *Latin American Politics and Society*. 2020; 62(2):117–36. doi:10.1017/lap.2019.64

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Molina, Fernando. ¿Golpe o fraude?: 2019 sigue polarizando a Bolivia. *Nueva Sociedad*, 2021. Disponible em:
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Velasco Guachalla, V. Ximena; Hummel, Calla; Nelson-Nunez, Jami Y Boulding, Carew. Compounding Crises: Bolivia in 2020. Rev. Cienc. Polít. (Santiago) [online]. 2021, vol.41, n.2, pp.211-237.

Supplementary:

Avritzer, Leonardo. Política e antipolítica: a crise do governo Bolsonaro. São Paulo: Todavia, 2020.

Cardoso Júnior et al. (orgs). Assédio institucional no Brasil : avanço do autoritarismo e desconstrução do Estado. Associação dos Funcionários do Ipea: EDUEPB, 2022. Disponível em: <https://afipeasindical.org.br/content/uploads/2022/05/Assedio-Institucional-no-Brasil-Afipea-Edupb.pdf>.

Ercan, A. ; Gagnon, J. The Crisis of Democracy: Which Crisis? Which Democracy? Democratic Theory, 2014, 1(2).

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Norris, P.; Inglehart, R. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge; Nova York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Runciman, D. *How democracy ends*. Profile Books, 2019.

Singer, A. *The Failure of Dilma Rousseff's Developmentalist Experiment: A Class Analysis*. Latin American Perspectives, 2019, 47(1).

Streeck, W. *Buying time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*. Londres: Verso, 2017.

Urbinati, Nadia. *Me the people: how populism transforms democracy*. Cambridge: Harvard university Press, 2019.

V-Dem Varieties of Democracy Methodology.

Program content and schedule	
3/8	Course Introduction
10/8 17/8	Concepts and problematization: Democracy, authoritarianism, polarization, and democratic backsliding Bermeo, N. On Democratic Backsliding. <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 2016, 27(1). Diamond, L. Thinking about hybrid regimes. <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, Baltimore, 2002, 13(2), pp: 21-35.



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	McCoy, Jennifer (2019). La polarización perjudica la democracia y la sociedad. La revista del Instituto Catalán Internacional para la Paz, 36. Somer, Murat, McCoy, Jennifer L., Luke, Russell E. (2021): Pernicious polarization, autocratization and opposition strategies. Democratization. Haggard, S., and R. Kaufman. "The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding". Journal of Democracy, 2021, 32(4), pp: 27–41.
24/8 31/8	Conceptualizing the crisis of democracy Merkel, W. Is There a Crisis of Democracy? Can We Answer The Question? In: Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Berlin, 2013. Fung, Archon, Moss, David & Westad, Odd Arne (orgs.). When Democracy Breaks: Studies in Democratic Erosion and Collapse, from Ancient Athens to the Present Day. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024. Capítulo 1. Przeworski. A. Crises of democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Introdução e parte II. FREEDOM HOUSE. Methodology Questions. V-Dem Varieties of Democracy. Methodology.
21/9	Crisis of neoliberal capitalism? Fraser, Nancy. Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and



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	the Planet and What We Can Do about It, London: Verso, 2022. Capítulo 5. Braga, Ruy. A Rebeldia do precariado: trabalho e neoliberalismo no Sul global. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2017. Introdução.
28/9	N1
5/10	N1 feedback
19/10	The case of Venezuela Corrales, J. Venezuela's Autocratization, 1999-2021: Variations in Temporalities, Party Systems, and Institutional Controls. In: Fung, Archon, Moss, David & Westad, Odd Arne (orgs.). When Democracy Breaks: Studies in Democratic Erosion and Collapse, from Ancient Athens to the Present Day. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024. García-Guadilla MP, Mallen A. Polarization, Participatory Democracy, and Democratic Erosion in Venezuela's Twenty-First Century Socialism. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 2019, 681(1), pp: 62-77. doi:10.1177/0002716218817733 Gombata, M; Cameron, M. Endogenous hybridity: regime change in Venezuela (1998–2020). Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue Canadienne



CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO ARMANDO ALVARES PENTEADO

	Des Études Latino-Américaines et Caraïbes, 47(1), 2021, pp: 140–159.
26/10	Is Brazil experiencing a crisis of democracy? Nobre, M. Limites da democracia: de junho de 2013 ao governo Bolsonaro. São Paulo: Todavia, 2022. Caps: “From the “New Rights” to Bolsonaro’s Election in 2018” e “Final Considerations”. Avritzer L, Rennó L. The Pandemic and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil. Journal of Politics in Latin America. 2021;13(3):442-457. doi:10.1177/1866802X211022362
9/11	Radicalization in Peru Camacho, Gabriela e Paolo Sosa-Villagarcia. (2021). “Una democracia asediada por sus elites”. El Profe: cómo Pedro Castillo se convirtió en presidente y qué pasará a continuación. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos Carrasco Cortez V. Crisis política en el Perú: cambios profundos y consecuencias importantes del «golpe» de diciembre de 2022. Acta Herediana, 2023, 66(1), pp: 25-31. Disponible en: https://revistas.upch.edu.pe/index.php/AH/article/view/4539 + Defining N2



CENTRO UNIVERSITÁRIO ARMANDO ALVARES PENTEADO

16/11	The far right in Chile Lindh, Jaime, Fábrega, Jorge, & González, Jorge. La fragilidad de los consensos. Polarización ideológica en el Chile post Pinochet. Revista de ciencia política (Santiago), 2019, 39(1), 99-127. https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-090X2019000100099 Luna JP, Medel RM. Uneven States, Unequal Societies, and Democracy's Unfulfilled Promises: Citizenship Rights in Chile and Contemporary Latin America. Latin American Politics and Society. 2023;65(2):170–96. doi:10.1017/lap.2022.59
23/11	Seminars (Preliminary final work)
30/11	N2 Submission
8/12	Makeup exam
7/12	Makeup exam feedback
14/2	Student advising/Office hours