Course name: Contemporary Politics in Brazil
Course number: POLI 3102 RDJO
Programs offering course: Rio de Janeiro Open Campus (International Relations and Political Science Track)
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2019

Course Description

How is it that the Party of the Brazilian Woman consists only of men? What is a physiological party? How to explain the election of Grumpy, a professional clown, to Brazil’s national legislature? In this course students will survey the fascinating and at times tragicomic landscape of political organizations and practices in Brazil, while also gaining insight into Brazilian perspectives on the role of government in civil society. Students learn about current initiatives toward greater transparency and rule of law—including the largest corruption investigation in Brazil's history—and changing expectations about what constitutes good governance.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
● Compare and contrast Brazilian politics and power structure with the United States or other nation with which the student has knowledge.
● Synthesize and discuss nuances of the racial and ethnic dimension of contemporary Brazilian society.
● Differentiate prevalent forms of corruption and political violence in contemporary Brazil.
● Compare and contrast the institutional design of the Brazilian political system with the United States.
● Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Brazilian Federalism and correlate this with examples from Brazilian policies.

Course Prerequisites

Student should have completed an introductory level course in International Relations or Political Science before enrolling in this course.

Methods of Instruction
The methodology will be characterized by lectures, presentations and class discussions based on the assigned readings. Lectures will be enhanced by PowerPoint presentations whenever these are helpful to explain international conflicts and controversies. The class debates will be prepared and conducted in such a way that they can serve as preparation for discussions and meetings with politicians, civil servants, NGO representatives as well as independent experts. Classroom activities will include individual, partner and group work and will be complemented by homework exercises.

Assessment and Final Grade

The final grade will be made up of the following components:

- Two response papers: 20%
- Midterm Quiz: 10%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- FlipGrid Video Presentation: 10%
- Group presentation in last session: 20%
- Participation: 20%

Course Requirements

Two Response Papers:

Students write two short response papers (each 750 words min./max. 1000 words) based on readings and information from out of class activities. Please type papers using 12-point font and double-spaced (Total credit for 2 papers = 20% of final grade).

Midterm Quiz:

The midterm quiz will be a 20 minutes in-class test based on the material covered by then. The focus is on assessing to what degree students’ active knowledge is improving. The quiz will include no more than 15 brief identification questions on the readings and three or less prompts for short answer/essay format questions.

Midterm Exam:

The midterm will be a take-home, open-book exam consisting of “prompts”, or questions that require synthesizing information and topics developed in the course. “Take home” means students will complete the exam outside of class, but without the help of any other person except the readings and notes (= “open book”). Most answers to prompts will vary between one and four paragraphs, depending on the complexity of the question and answer. There will be between three and six prompts.

FlipGrid:
Students will choose a topic for which they will prepare a short oral presentation of about 10 minutes uploaded to Canvas using the FlipGrid integrated app. Students must sign up for a topic by the end of Week 2. Student presentations will be assessed by their ability to demonstrate in the video a concise synthesis of the topic in terms relevant to the course curriculum and clear for all classmates new to the topic.

**Final Group Presentation:**
In small groups (ideally three per group), students will develop an in-class presentation that expands upon one of the topics discussed in class and compares it to the political system of the US. Presentations should be no more than 15 minutes in length.

**Participation**
Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

**Attendance Policy**
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students
who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>3 content classes, or 5 language classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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**Weekly Schedule**

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.
Week 1: Course Introduction

1.1 Introduction - Contemporary Brazil after the mass protests in 2013

Opening lecture about the current political and economic crisis in Brazil, starting with the mass protests in 2013, covering the 2014 elections and the 2016 impeachment process, as much as the basic conflict lines in Brazilian Politics.

Week 2: The Evolution of the Modern Democratic Republic

2.1 Brazil’s Long Trajectory from a Portuguese Colony to a 21st Century Republic

This lecture exploits the perpetuation of political and economic elites, both on the social and the geographical level, in a short review of the evolution of the Brazilian Republic from 1824 on. Students will be acquainted with the Brazilian concept of “Coronelismo” and the still impressively strong oligarchic structure of Brazilian democracy. Visit to the Museum of the Indian OR to Palace of the Republic.

Readings for class:


https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old_files/documents/091_0.pdf

2.2 Re-democratization and the 1988 Constitution

This lecture will cover the transition process starting in the late 1970s until the 1988 elections fully re-establish the democratic order. Special interest is laid on the “diretas já” movement and the public claim for direct elections, the 1987
constituent assembly and its product, the 1988 “citizen constitution”. In addition, participatory elements of Brazilian democracy will be addressed.

Readings for class:


Due in class: first (of two) response paper.

Week 3: The Brazilian Society

3.1 Democratic Brazil

This session examines the dramatic neoliberal reforms in the 1990s, the international dimension of internal affairs in an aspiring new global player and the political background (and consequences) of the two-party dichotomy PSDB vs. PT.

Readings for class:


3.2 Brazilian Society: Inequality, Race, Gender

In this lecture students will obtain knowledge about the racial and ethnic dimension of contemporary Brazilian society as much as the difficulties for women in a highly patriarchal society. They will gain both quantitative insights with regard to ethnic and gender representation in politics and the economy, as much as the qualitative conflicts in a torn society.

Readings for class:

3.3 Civil Society, Social Movements, Religion

This class discusses the organized civil society, institutions, movements and particularly the role of religion in Brazilian politics. Out of class event for this week: Visit to the Town Council and a talk with a female black representative.

Readings for class:


Assignment Due: FlipGrid Video

Week 4: The Brazilian Political System

4.1 The Brazilian Government and Party System: Coalitional Presidentialism

This lecture explores the institutional design of the Brazilian Political System as much as the particularities of the party system. Students will learn about the outer and inner structure of checks and balances and the political protocols that constrain the strength of each power.

Readings for class:

Midterm quiz due

4.2 The Brazilian Electoral System

This lecture explores the institutional setting that shapes political representation in Brazil. It picks up where the previous lecture stopped and points out how Brazil votes and how this leads to many interesting side-effects. In addition, students will learn about the weight that the issue “political reform” has had in Brazilian politics and political science.

Readings for class:


4.3 Political Reform

This class examines the constant discussion about political reform in Brazil. Students will learn about the most prominent, as much as the most significant reform attempts in the last two decades and discuss their political dimension.

Readings due:


Week 5: Policies

5.1 The Policy Cycle in Brazilian Federalism

This class introduces how Brazilian Federalism functions and how its dynamics influence policies.

Readings due:

in Latin America, edited by Edward L. Gibson, 85 –130. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (an earlier version online: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e110/86747f748a705938e65701afbb5583e65938.pdf)


Due in class: midterm exam

5.2 Social Policies: From Fome Zero to Bolsa Familia and Affirmative Action in Education

In this class students will learn about the major social (transfer) programs that have received international acclaim and led to Brazil vanishing from the world hunger map. In addition, they will discuss the attempts to democratize the access to public higher education for students who come from public schools, low-income families and who are of African or indigenous descent by means of “quotas”. Out-of-class event: visit to a public high-school OR visit to the UERJ for a group discussion about the “quota system”.

Readings due:


Week 6:

6.1 The Struggle with Accountability: Corruption, Lava-Jato and Political Violence

In this class students will learn about the different prevalent forms of corruption and political violence in contemporary Brazil. A specific focus is laid on the current investigation “Lava Jato”.

Reading due:


**Due in class: Second response paper**

6.2 Final group presentations

Students will present their group projects and finish the course comparing the Brazilian political system to the United States (e.g. party system, constitution, electoral participation, society etc.)

**Final Presentations Due**

**Readings**


Recommended Additional Readings


