

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Brazil: Social Justice & Inequality in São Paulo

Course Code / Title: SP/LAST 350 / The Perils of Democracy after Bolsonaro

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Latin American Studies / Sociology, History, Political Science

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

In the early 2000s, Latin America experienced the so-called "pink tide" when leftist governments came to power. In Brazil, this process resulted in consecutive victories by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party), a center-left party with a popular and labor base. Between 2002 and 2016, the party implemented a robust public income transfer policy that was responsible for lifting millions of Brazilians out of extreme poverty. This period became known as "Lulism", in reference to the main leadership of the Workers' Party, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. After fighting against the military dictatorship, Lula was elected president twice (in 2002 and 2006) and appointed his successor Dilma Rousseff, the first woman president in the country, who was elected in 2010 and reelected in 2014 (having been impeached in 2016).

The course focuses on the conservative turn of the "pink wave" towards far-right and anti-democratic tendencies that would result in the election of Jair Bolsonaro (in 2018). Bolsonaro, a retired army captain, was elected extolling torturers of the dictatorship. Using a discourse "conservative in morals and liberal in the economy", he began to act in favor of what has been called in Brazil the lobby of "bullet, beef and bible" in the Congress (in reference to the interests of the arms industry, agribusiness and religious sectors). As a result of his administration, Brazil has faced, since 2019, setbacks in the areas of civil rights, gender equity and racism, reduction of sectoral policies to combat inequality, cuts in education, and measures that weakened the protection of the environment and indigenous rights.

Course discussions and materials include recent mass protests, mega-events, and militarization in the public space, media monopoly, mass media and religion, popular notions of justice, "judicialization" of politics, and current challenges to Brazilian democracy.

Content warning:

At times, this course intentionally invites students to engage with readings and content that are controversial. Students might find this disturbing. The intention is not to endorse perspectives, but rigorously engage with them. If certain material is emotionally challenging, students can discuss with the professor before or after class. Students may also leave the classroom without academic

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penalty, if the discussion becomes too emotionally challenging. Students are, however, responsible for all missed material, and so should arrange to get notes from another student.

Objectives

In this course, students:

- Examine the basic concepts of democracy and interpret them in the Brazilian context.
- Identify the key postulates and interpretations of Brazilian contemporary studies.
- Gain theoretical tools to develop critical assessment of contemporary politics in Brazil.
- Understand social dynamics and contemporary trends in Brazil.
- Engage in theoretical and empirical debates on contemporary social issues in Brazil.
- Understand the roots and contours of Brazilian society.
- Develop awareness of contemporary issues in Brazil and the risks to democracy.

Course Requirements

Students are required to actively participate in class lectures, debates, open discussions, seminars and presentations. All assigned texts should be carefully read prior to each class. Attendance requirements are outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Reading assignments are generally 20-30 pages per class session. Graded assignments include:

- Student seminar presentation: Each student delivers a 20-minute presentation with 30 minutes for Q&A. Presentations will be based on a previously assigned reading.
- Final paper: This 15-page essay will result from an empirical, in-depth investigation of a previously assigned issue. The content of the final paper should address the relationship between a current development issue in the Brazilian scenario and its relevance to any of the main topics discussed in class.
- Participation: Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and case studies.

Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight. Laptops are permitted for note-taking or whenever requested by the professor. Coffee and water are permitted in class.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Student seminar presentation: 30%.
- Final paper: 50% (research proposal 10%, actual research 40%).
- Participation: 20%.

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Readings

Alonso, A., & Mische, A. "Changing Repertoires and Partisan Ambivalence in the New Brazilian Protests". *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 36(2), 144-159, 2017.

Arantes, R. B. "Constitutionalism, the Expansion of Justice and the Judicialization of Politics in Brazil". In *The judicialization of politics in Latin America* (pp. 231-262). Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005.

Avritzer, L. "Participation in Democratic Brazil: From Popular Hegemony and Innovation to Middle-Class Protest". *Opinião Pública*, 23, 43-59, 2017.

Avritzer, L. "The Rousseff Impeachment and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil". *Critical Policy Studies*, 11(3), 352-357, 2017.

Azzi, V. F. "Security for Show? The Militarisation of Public Space in Light of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games". *Contexto Internacional*, 39(3), 589-607, 2017.

Birman, P., & Lehmann, D. "Religion and the Media in a Battle for Ideological Hegemony: the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil". *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 18(2), 145-164, 1999.

Carvalho, N. R. & dos Santos, O. A., Junior. "Bolsonaro and the Inequalities of Geographical Development in Brazil". *Journal of Latin American Geography* 18(1), 198-202. University of Texas Press, 2019.

Freston, P. "Pentecostalism in Brazil: A brief history". *Religion*, 25(2), 119-133, 1995.

Hunter, W. & Power, T. J. "Bolsonaro and Brazil's Illiberal Backlash". *Journal of Democracy* 30(1), 68-82. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

Kalil, I., Silveira, S. C., Pinheiro, W., Kalil, Á., Pereira, J. V., Azarias, W., & Amparo, A. B. "Politics of fear in Brazil: Far-right conspiracy theories on COVID-19". *Global Discourse*, 11(3), 409-425, 2021.

Lapper, Richard. *Beef, Bible and Bullets: Brazil in the age of Bolsonaro*. Manchester University Press, 2021.

Machado, C., Kira, B., Hirsch, G., Marchal, N., Kollanyi, B., Howard, P. N., ... & Barash, V. "News and Political Information Consumption in Brazil: Mapping the First Round of the 2018 Brazilian Presidential Election on Twitter". Data Memo 2018, 4, Oxford, UK: Project on Computational Propaganda, 2018.

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Moreira, S. V. "Media Ownership and Concentration in Brazil. Who Owns the World's Media?" *Media Concentration and Ownership around the World*, 606-640, 2016.

Nogueira, Aico Sipriano. "Lulism and the Institutionalization of Social Movements in Brazil: Strengthening Democratic Inclusion and Perpetuating Hegemony". *Tempo Social*, v. 29, p. 229-260, 2017.

Pinheiro-Machado, R., & Scalco, L. M. "From Hope to Hate: The Rise of Conservative Subjectivity in Brazil". *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 10(1), 21-31, 2020.

Power, T. J., & Raile, E. D. "Coalitional Presidentialism and Side Payments: Explaining the Mensalão Scandal in Brazil". *Occasional Paper*, Number BSP-03, 8, 2008.

Rapozo, P. "Necropolitics, State of Exception, and Violence against Indigenous People in the Amazon Region during the Bolsonaro Administration". *Brazilian Political Science Review*, 15, 2021.

Rocha, C., Solano, E., & Medeiros, J. "The Institutionalization of the Nascent New Right". In: Rocha, C., Solano, E., & Medeiros, J. *The Bolsonaro Paradox. The Public Sphere and Right-Wing Counterpublicity in Contemporary Brazil*. Cham: Springer, 2021.

Schneider, N. "Breaking the Silence of the Military Regime: New Politics of Memory in Brazil". *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 30(2), 198-212, 2011.

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1: "From hope to hate": An overview of the transition from Lulism (2002–16) to Bolsonarism (2018–)

- Elections of Lula (2002 and 2006)
- Lulism and the trajectory of Worker's Party (2002-2014)
- Collapse of Lulism (2014-2016)
- Definitions of Bolsonarism
- Election of Bolsonaro (2018)

Topic 2: "Mensalão" Scandal: The structure of the political game in Brazil

- Historical origins of corruption in Brazil
- Presidentialism, coalitions and the relations between Executive and Legislative
- The impact of corruption scandal on Worker's Party legacy
- The Meaning and implication of "Mensalão" (parliamentary vote-buying scandal)
- Public scandal and the role of mainstream media
- The role of the Supreme Court

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Topic 3: “Memory, Truth, and Justice”: The transition to democracy and its challenges in the 21st century

- Historical background of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985)
- Second wave of memory and justice mobilization throughout Latin America
- Human rights policies in Brazil (2000-2010)
- National Plan for Human Rights: gender, race, and sexuality

Topic 4: Religion and media concentration in Brazil

- Media ownership and concentration in Brazil
- Pentecostalism in Brazil
- The relations between religion, media, and political power

Topic 5: The new Brazilian right

- Origins and history of the new Brazilian right
- New Brazilian right in the public sphere and the digital media
- Lulism and the paradox of institutionalization of social movements in Brazil
- The institutionalization of the new right

Topic 6: Street protests and the collapse of Lulism

- 2013 street protests
- 2014 World Cup protests
- Changing repertoires and partisan ambivalence in the protests
- 2016 impeachment protests
- The collapse of Lulism

Topic 7: Judicialization of politics: “Car Wash Operation”

- Constitutionalism
- Judicialization of politics in Brazil
- Spectacularizing politics
- The effects of the Car Wash Operation on Petrobras (Brazilian national oil company)

Topic 8: Rousseff’s impeachment process

- Crisis of democracy in Brazil
- Temer’s government
- The rise of Bolsonaro

Topic 9: Challenges to democracy in Brazil: fake news and 2018 elections

- 2018 Brazilian Presidential elections
- News and political information consumption in Brazil
- Fake news and post-truth politics

Topic 10: Brazil under Bolsonaro’s government I

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- Beef, bible, and bullets lobby
- Gender, race, and the illiberal backlash
- Anti-rights politics in contemporary Brazil

Topic 11: Brazil under Bolsonaro's government II

- Inequalities of geographical development in Brazil.
- Violence against indigenous people in the Amazon region
- Environment and climate denialism

Topic 12: Brazil under Bolsonaro's government III

- COVID-19 pandemic and antivaccine governmental policies
- Public policies based on COVID-19 conspiracy theories
- Bolsonaro and the allegations of election fraud
- The increase of political violence in Brazil