Comparative Politics in Central America
Government 97: Tutorial – Sophomore Year
Monday 12-2 PM (Lamont 230)
Spring 2024

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Office Hours: M 3:00-4:20 & Tu 1:00-2:00 PM ET (Fisher Family Commons, CGIS K)
OHs Sign-Up Link: https://calendly.com/mmelend/ohs

This tutorial explores politics in Central America to introduce—and often challenge—major theories in comparative politics. How do dictators stay in power? Why do civil wars break out? How do democracies rise and fall? And why are public policy challenges like corruption and insecurity so persistent? In addition to learning about how political scientists have tried to answer these and other big comparative politics questions, you will gain an understanding of broad patterns of political, economic, and social development in five Central American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This tutorial assumes no previous knowledge of Central American politics. The only requirement is an interest in learning about the region and in exploring how comparative politics can help us understand important questions about political outcomes in the developing world.

A. Course Components

Course Meetings: This course will meet once a week for 2 hours from noon to 2pm on Mondays. Our first meeting will be on January 22, which is the first day of the semester.

This is a seminar-style course. You are expected to attend all sessions and actively participate in all class discussions and activities. You will also be expected to substantively engage with the readings through reading responses and class discussions.

In addition to in-depth exploration of the material from the readings, this class includes training in social science research skills, including writing as a social scientist. Some portion of this research skills training will occur asynchronously. Students are expected to complete all assigned skills training activities.

Written Assignments:

1. **Readings and Discussion Posts**: This is a reading-intensive tutorial. On average, you will be assigned about 100 pages of reading per week. You are expected to complete the week's readings ahead of each meeting. You should ordinarily complete the readings in the order in which they are listed in the syllabus. Each week, I will also circulate a list of guiding questions to help you navigate and reflect on the readings. I recommend taking a look at the guiding questions before *and* after you do the readings.

Starting during Week 2, you must post a short reaction to the week's readings on our Canvas site by **9pm on Sunday** (i.e., the night before our class meets). Your post should be 1 or 2 substantial paragraphs addressing one or more of the week's guiding questions with explicit reference to the assigned readings. You should use these posts to share your own questions, critiques, or ideas regarding the week's material.

Other students in the course will be able to see your posts. You can respond to others' posts are not required to do so. While your posts need not make a formal argument, they should have a coherent point that is grounded in the readings; it should be evident that you have done the readings. The posts should not simply be about your personal experience or about current events, although you can tie anecdotal ideas in with a discussion about the readings. I will use your questions and critiques from the online posts in class discussion.

After the first week, there are eleven class meetings with assigned readings. You must post discussions for *at least* nine of the eleven, but you are encouraged to post something every week in order to collect and synthesize your thoughts before class.

2. **Writing as a Social Scientist:** In Gov 97, students will learn how to write like a social scientist, which is an essential part of social science research. To that end, you will write a series of short papers that will accumulate toward a work product central to social science: a research paper. The purpose of the assignments is to make you a skilled consumer of social science claims and evidence and to prepare you to undertake more social science research. Writing these papers is an interactive process and you will meet with me throughout the process.

   For the research prospectus, you will compose a research question that speaks to a topic covered in the course. You will then draw on literature from the course, in addition to literature from outside the course, to consider possible answers to your question. You will propose a research design, data sources, and analysis to answer your question. Qualitative or quantitative research proposals are both permitted.

   a. Pre-Prospectus: The pre-prospectus paper will propose a research question and review the literature related to that question. It will allow you to make a first attempt at writing a compelling introduction and will provide practice with tying a specific research question to a broader theory in the surrounding social science literature. In the pre-prospectus, you will also build from the literature to articulate preliminary hypotheses about the answer to your research question. The pre-prospectus will be 4 to 5 pages in length. You will meet with me at some point in this process, before the due date of the pre-prospectus. You will upload the completed assignment on February 27.

   b. Analysis Reflection Paper: The analysis reflection paper will allow you to explore the strengths and drawbacks of various methodological approaches to answering your proposed research question. In the reflection paper, you will propose **two** potential methodological approaches to answering your research

question. You will identify potential data sources and describe preliminary plans for using them to generate evidence for your hypotheses. You will then discuss the limitations of each approach. This assignment will be 3 to 4 pages in length. You will upload the completed assignment on March 26.

c. Prospectus: The prospectus will be 6 to 7 pages, and will lay out your research question, review the relevant literature, describe your planned methodology to answer the question, and address any limitations with this methodology. You will essentially combine an edited version of the pre-prospectus and a portion of the analysis reflection paper to generate the prospectus. The prospectus will allow you to refine your presentation of the research question and literature review based on my feedback and your growing knowledge of the topic. You will also propose a refined version of *one* of the methodological approaches described in your analysis reflection paper and broaden your discussion of the limitations of your chosen methodology. You will meet with me at some point in this process, before the due date of the prospectus. You will upload the completed assignment on April 30.

B. Deadlines, Submission Guidelines, and Grading

All assignments *except the discussion posts* are due by 11:59 PM ET on the due date. Discussion posts are due by 9:00 PM ET on Sundays. Note that I am not responsible for corrupted or otherwise unreadable files; it is your responsibility to make sure that I am able to read your submissions. All assignments must be submitted via Canvas; I will not accept Google Drive links or email attachments.

Assignment Due Dates and Contribution to Final Grade:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
1. Class Participation	35%	
1.1 Discussion Section Participation	15%	
1.2 Reading Discussion Posts	15%	
1.3 Skill-Building Activities	5%	
2. Written Assignments	65%	
2.1 Pre-Prospectus	15%	2/27
2.2 Analysis Reflection Paper	15%	3/26
2.3 Prospectus	35%	4/30

To reduce potential bias, all written assignments are graded using a standardized Gov 97-wide rubric.

C. Other Policies

Laptop policy: You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in this class as long as it contributes to your learning. Our class meetings are discussion-based. This means that all students are expected to actively listen to one another and to participate in the conversation. If you are unable to contribute to the discussion or are otherwise distracted by your computer or tablet, I will ask that

you refrain from using it in class. The use of cellphones or other electronics is not allowed, unless covered by a documented DAO accommodation.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Appropriate excuses for missing class (e.g., health or family emergencies) will be permitted with documentation from HUHS, your Resident Dean, or another Harvard advisor. If you communicate with me in an open and timely manner, I will do my best to be flexible and try to accommodate your situation. In general, excused absences will not be granted for extracurricular or athletic activities.

Late Assignments: Weekly reading posts turned in after the deadline (9 PM ET on Sundays) will receive a maximum of half credit if submitted before the beginning of class, and zero credit if submitted later than that.

For all other written assignments, you have a 24-hour bank of extension time that you can use at your own discretion. You can use all of your extension time on one assignment or split it between assignments. You do not need to notify me if you are using your extension bank, but you are responsible for making sure that you do not exceed your total extension time.

In the extraordinary event of an unforeseen and unavoidable circumstance that prevents you from turning in assignment on time, please reach out to me as soon as possible with appropriate documentation. Any university or instructor approved extensions due to unforeseen circumstances will not be deducted from your late bank.

If you have used up your extension bank and you do not receive an additional extension from me, your assignment grade will decrease by one third of a letter grade (i.e., from A- to B+) for each 12-hour period it is late.

Reaching Me Outside of Class: Email is the fastest and most efficient way to reach me. Please include [Gov 97] at the beginning of your subject line so that I see your message as soon as possible. During the week, I will always answer your emails within 24 hours, but please note that I may need the full 24 hours to respond, so do not wait until the last minute to ask any urgent questions. If you email me after 10am on a Friday, I may not be able to get back to you until Monday. If I do not respond to an email from you within these time frames, there has been some sort of blip—please resend your message.

Office Hours: My office hours are on Mondays from 3-4:15 PM in the Fisher Family Commons (1st floor of CGIS K). The Calendly sign-up link is at the top of this document. If the times on the Calendly do not work for you, please shoot me an email and we will find a different time to talk. My goal is to make sure that scheduling issues never get in the way of us having a conversation.

Twice during the semester, I will ask that everyone in the class schedule an office hours appointment to discuss progress toward the final prospectus. I will share more information about those meetings in class. Other than that, I encourage you to come to office hours early and often! At OHs, we can discuss any questions you have about the course, but you do not need an agenda or a specific question to drop by.

Providing Feedback: I welcome your feedback about our tutorial, both positive and negative. You can share your thoughts with me at any time via email or during office hours. In addition, I will distribute an anonymous section feedback during week 5. I will use these forms, as well as any other feedback I receive from you, to make our class as productive and enjoyable as possible.

Collaboration Policy: The exchange of ideas is essential to strong academic research. You may find it useful to share sources or discuss your thinking for any of these papers with peers, particularly if you are working on similar topics. You may even read each other's drafts and provide feedback. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own thinking and approach to the topic. You must be sure to cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, or other material that you draw on. Furthermore, while you may seek the advice or help of your peers, your data analysis must be performed on your own and you should consult with your Teaching Fellow to make sure you are not duplicating the analysis of any other student in your section.

Generative AI Policy: All of the work you submit for this course, including reading responses and longer assignments, must be your own. The use of ChatGPT or any other generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. Keep in mind that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is your responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Inclusion and Non-Discrimination: In the spirit of maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment for all, our tutorial will have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination, including—but not limited to—on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, creed, age, nationality, or disability. If you have any concerns regarding issues of inclusion at any point during the semester, I am committed to listening to your concerns and doing my best to address them, and to doing so as respectfully and discreetly as possible.

More generally, if you ever feel uncomfortable in the classroom or nervous to express your views, please come to office hours or send me and email so that we can discuss how to make sure that our class environment encourages participation for everyone.

With all that said, please keep in mind that, as per Harvard's university-wide policy, if you share information with me about an experience that could violate the University's sexual and gender-based harassment policy, I am required to share that information with the Office for Gender Equity. If you would like to learn about other options for reporting Title IX-related concerns, including some confidential options, please visit the following link: https://oge.harvard.edu/.

Accessibility: Please let me know as soon as possible and no later than the 3rd week of the semester if you are registered with the Disability Access Office so we can work together to make any and all necessary accommodations.

D. Course Schedule and Readings

You will find an outline of the course schedule below. The course is divided into four parts. Part I provides a brief introduction to Central America. Part II examines two 19th-century developments that had long-lasting consequences: the failure of the Central American federation and the liberal reform period. Part III focuses on the three processes that defined Central America in the 20th century: authoritarianism, insurgency, and democratization. Finally, Part IV examines four issues in contemporary Central America: party-building, corruption, criminal violence, and democratic backsliding.

You should generally complete the readings in the order in which they are listed on the syllabus. All readings will be available on Canvas, except where external links are provided.

Part I. A Brief Introduction to Central America

Week 1. Snapshots from Contemporary Central America (1/22)

In our first meeting, we look at a handful of recent developments in Central America. In addition to providing snapshots of where the region's countries are today, these brief newspaper articles introduce many of the general themes, concepts, and questions we will return to throughout the semester. They also help illustrate why this is such a fascinating—and often puzzling—part of the world to study. If you have trouble accessing any of these articles, remember that Harvard gives you free access to The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Economist. If you hit a paywall, make sure you have activated and logged into your account.

Readings:

"How TikTokers and Swifties Became Political Power Brokers in Guatemala." *The Washington Post*, December 1, 2023. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/how-tiktokers-swifties-became-political-power-brokers-guatemala/

"Nicaragua's Dictator Goes After Miss Universe." *The Economist*, December 10, 2023. https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2023/12/10/nicaraguas-dictator-goes-after-miss-universe

"Costa Rica, the Once-Peaceful Land of 'Pura Vida,' Battles Violence as Cocaine Trade Grows." *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 2023. https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-09-14/costa-rica-battling-record-violence-cocaine-trade

"El Salvador Decimated Its Ruthless Gangs. But at What Cost?" *The New York Times*, April 9, 2023. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/09/world/americas/el-salvador-gangs.html.

"How Honduras's Congress Split in Two." *Foreign Policy,* February 1, 2022.

https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/01/honduras-congress-split-crisis-xiomara-castro-inauguration-corruption-libre-national-party/

"A New Answer for Migrants in Central America: Bus Them North." *The New York Times*, November 8, 2023.
https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/world/americas/costa-rica-migrants-busing.html

Week 2. A Brief History of Our Cases (1/29)

* This is the first week for which you can write a reading discussion post.

We will spend the rest of the semester thinking about the roots and consequences of a wide range of political outcomes in five Central American cases: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. To set ourselves up for that, this week we learn about the key periods, processes, and events in each country's history.

Readings:

Booth, John A., Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker. 2020. *Understanding Central America: Global Forces and Political Change* (7th edition). Routledge. Read only Chapter 3 ("The Common History"), pp. 57-73.

And read at least three of the following chapters:
- "Costa Rica", pp. 75-100.
- "Nicaragua", pp. 101-148.
- "El Salvador", pp. 148-190.
- "Guatemala", pp. 191-234.
- "Honduras", pp. 235-271.

Part II. The Long Shadows of the Past: The 19th Century

Week 3. Federalism and State-Building: The Federal Republic of Central America (2/5)

Following independence from Spain, the governments of Central America tried—and failed—to establish a single federal republic. We examine this episode in light of political science theories about federalism and state-building.

Readings

Ziblatt, Daniel. 2004. "Rethinking the Origins of Federalism: Puzzle, Theory, and Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Europe." *World Politics* 57(1): 70-98.

Centeno, Miguel Angel. 1997. "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6). Read pp. 1565-1570 only; skim the rest.

Pérez-Brignoli, Héctor. 1989. *A Brief History of Central America*. University of California Press. Chapter 3 ("In Search of Progress," pp. 66-78 only).

Karnes, Thomas L. 1976. *The Failure of Union: Central America, 1824-1975*. University of North Carolina Press. Chapter 2 ("Dios, Unión y Libertad," pp. 29-68) and Chapter 3 ("Francisco Morazán," pp. 69-95).

Recommended

Foster, Lynn V. 2007. *A Brief History of Central America (Second Edition)*. Facts on File, Inc. Chapter 7 ("The Federation of Central America," pp. 134-151).

Week 4. Critical Junctures & Path Dependence: The Liberal Reform Period (2/12)

* Anonymous feedback form opens on February 13.

This week we introduce two powerful ideas in political science—path dependence and critical junctures—to think about the complex relationship among choices, history, and political change. We use these ideas to understand how decisions made in the second half of the 19th century continue to shape Central America today.

Readings

David, Paul A. 1985. "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY." *American Economic Review* 75(2): 332-337.

Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94(2): 251-267.

Collier, Ruth Berins and David Collier. 2002. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. University of Notre Dame Press. Chapter 1 ("Framework: Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies," pp. 27-39).

Mahoney, James. 2001. "Radical, Reformist and Aborted Liberalism: Origins of National Regimes in Central America." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33(2): 221-256.

Mahoney, James 2001. "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36: 111-141.

Recommended

Mahoney, James. 2001. *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 369-404.

Slides by David Collier and Gerardo Munck available at http://www.critical-juncture.net/.

Week 5. No Class Due to Presidents' Day (2/19)

* *Meet with me in OHs this week to discuss your progress toward the Pre-Prospectus.*

Part III. Dictatorship, Insurgency, and Democratization: The 20th Century

Week 6. How Does Authoritarianism Work? Military vs Personalistic Dictatorships (2/26)

* *Assignment 1 (Pre-Prospectus) due on February 27 at 11:59 PM ET.*

How do authoritarian regimes work? What strategies do dictators use to stay in power, neutralize rivals, and avoid mass revolt? This week, we apply core insights from political science to two of Central America's 20th century dictatorships: the military regime of Hernández Martínez in El Salvador and the personalistic Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua.

Readings

Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144.

Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 ("Introduction: The Anatomy of Dictatorship"), pp. 1-18.

Ching, Erik. 2014. *Authoritarian El Salvador: Politics and the Origins of the Military Regimes, 1880-1940*. University of Notre Dame Press. Chapter 7 ("Politics Under the Military Regime, 1931-1940"), pp. 246-286.

La Botz, Dan. 2016. *What Went Wrong? The Nicaraguan Revolution*. Chapter 3 ("The Somoza Dynastic Dictatorship"), pp. 74-108.

Week 7. What Causes Insurgency? Civil War & Revolution (3/4)

In the second half of the 20th century, mass-based insurgencies emerged in three of our cases (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua) but not in the others (Costa Rica and Honduras). Moreover, whereas Nicaraguan revolutionaries succeeded in overthrowing the regime, their counterparts in El Salvador and Guatemala were only able to secure stalemates. Why?

Readings

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and War." *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.

Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. 1989. "Winners, Losers, and Also-Rans: Toward a Comparative Sociology of Latin American Guerilla Movements." In Susan Eckstein ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, pp. 132-181.

Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2012. *The Politics of Modern Central America: Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 ("Civil War, Revolution, and Economic Collapse"), pp. 30-65.

Recommended

> Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and War in El Salvador.* Cambridge University Press.

Week 8: Democratization (3/18)

How do countries democratize? Are some "modes" of democratization more successful than others? We explore these long-standing political science debates by comparing efforts to negotiate democracy in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

Readings:

> Karl, Terry Lynn. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 23(1): 1-21.

> Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Read only pp. 15-47 and pp. 65-72.

> O'Shaughnessy, Laura Nuzzi and Michael Dodson. 1999. "Political Bargaining and Democratic Transitions: A Comparison of Nicaragua and El Salvador." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 31(1): 99-127.

> Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2001. "An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador." *Comparative Political Studies* 34(8). Read only pp. 862-875 and pp. 883-885.

> Jonas, Susanne. 2000. "Democratizing Through Peace: The Difficult Case of Guatemala." *Journal of Interamerican Studies of World Affairs* 42(4): 9-38.

Part IV. Hopes and Failures of Democracy: Contemporary Central America

Week 9. Why Does Democracy Need Strong Parties? And How Do You Build One? (3/25)

* *Assignment 2 (Analysis Reflection Paper) due on March 26 at 11:59 PM ET.*

Political scientists have long argued that strong political parties are essential for making democracy work. Yet we know surprisingly little about where strong parties come from. This week, we examine some theoretical perspectives and efforts to build strong parties in Central America after democratization.

<u>Readings</u>

Levitsky, Steven, James Loxton, and Brandon Van Dyck. 2016. "Introduction." In Steven Levitsky et al. eds, *Challenges of Party Building in Latin America*, Cambridge University Press. Read pp. 1-26, skim pp. 26-33, skip pp. 33-35, and scan pp. 35-48 for the Central American cases.

And choose <u>at least one</u> of the following:

- **On El Salvador's ARENA**: Loxton, James. 2021. *Conservative Party-Building in Latin America: Authoritarian Inheritance and Counterrevolutionary Struggle.* Oxford University Press. Chapter 5 (pp. 126-165).

- **On Guatemala's PAN**: Loxton, James. 2021. *Conservative Party-Building in Latin America: Authoritarian Inheritance and Counterrevolutionary Struggle.* Oxford University Press. Chapter 6 (pp. 166-187).

- **On El Salvador's FMLN**: Holland, Alisha. 2016. "Insurgent Successor Parties: Scaling Down to Build a Party after War." In Steven Levitsky et al. eds, *Challenges of Party Building in Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 273-304.

<u>Recommended</u>

Allison, Michael E. 2006. "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48(4): 137-162.

Bateson, Regina. 2022. "Voting for a Killer: Efraín Ríos Montt's Return to Politics in Democratic Guatemala." *Comparative Politics* 54(2): 203-228.

Daly, Sarah Zukerman. 2019. "Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections." *World Politics* 71(4): 747-805.

Week 10. How Do You Fight Corruption? (4/1)

Corruption and violent crime have plagued democracy in Central America. This week we focus on corruption. Why isn't democracy—a system in which voters are free to kick out corrupt politicians—always an antidote to corruption? And what can *be done to curb corruption? We review some of the key political science findings on these questions and put them up to scrutiny by looking at the Guatemalan case study.*

<u>Readings</u>

Fisman, Ray and Miriam A. Golden. 2017. *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 8 (pp. 203-231).

Schwartz, Rachel A. 2021. "How Predatory Informal Rules Outlast State Reform: Evidence from Postauthoritarian Guatemala." *Latin American Politics and Society* 63(1): 48-71.

Schwartz, Rachel A. 2019. "Guatemala's Anti-Corruption Struggle Teeters on the Edge." *NACLA—Report on the Americas* 51(2): 200-205.

Blitzer, Jonathan. 2022. "The Exile of Guatemala's Anti-Corruption Efforts." *The New Yorker*, April 29, 2022. https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-exile-of-guatemalas-anti-corruption-efforts

<u>Recommended</u>

Fisman, Ray and Miriam A. Golden. 2017. *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 7 (pp. 173-201).

Week 11. What Causes Criminal Violence? (4/8)

This week we turn to organized crime. We focus on two questions: How do the Central American maras *operate? And why are these and other criminal organizations much stronger (and much more violent) in some Central American countries than in others?*

Readings

Martínez, Óscar, Efren Lemus, Carlos Martínez, and Deborah Sontag. "Killers on a Shoestring: Inside the Gangs of El Salvador." *The New York Times*, November 20, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/world/americas/el-salvador-drugs-gang-ms-13.html.

Yashar, Deborah. 2018. *Homicidal Ecologies: Illicit Economies and Complicit States in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Read Chapter 4 (pp. 100-132).

And choose at least one of the following chapters from Yashar 2018:
- "High Violence in Post-Civil War Guatemala" (Ch. 5, pp. 149-200).
- "High Violence in Post-Civil War El Salvador" (Ch. 6, pp. 208-274).
- "Circumscribing Violence in Post-Civil War Nicaragua" (Ch. 7, pp. 279-337).

Recommended:

Bateson, Regina. 2012. "Crime Victimization and Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 570-587.

Lessing, Benjamin. 2015. "Logics of Violence in Criminal War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1486-1516.

Week 12. How Do You Fight Criminal Violence? (4/15)

Building on Week 11's insights, this week we examine debates on how to counter organized crime. We apply and challenge theoretical insights by examining the case of El Salvador.

<u>Readings:</u>

Lessing, Benjamin. 2017. *Making Peace in Drug Wars: Crackdowns and Cartels in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Read Chapter 1 (pp. 1-27).
- If you are interested in a good example of how to use formal models in political science, read Chapter 4 (pp. 82-118).

Cruz, José Miguel and Angélica Durán-Martínez. 2016. "Hiding Violence to Deal with the State: Criminal Pacts in El Salvador and Medellín." *Journal of Peace Research* 53(2): 197-210.

And these short pieces on the Bukele crackdown:

- Carlos Martínez, Efren Lemus, and Óscar Martínez. 2023. "Bukele Government Dismantled Gang Presence in El Salvador." *El Faro*, February 3, 2023. https://elfaro.net/en/202302/el_salvador/26694/Bukele-Government-Dismantled-Gang-Presence-in-El-Salvador.htm
- Papadovassilakis, Alex. 2023. "'Too Many Soldiers': How Bukele's Crackdown Succeeded Where Others Failed." *InSight Crime*, December 6, 2023. https://insightcrime.org/investigations/too-many-soldiers-how-bukele-crackdown-succeeded-where-others-failed/
- Meléndez-Sánchez, Manuel. 2023. "Bukele Has Defeated El Salvador's Gangs—for Now. How? And What Does It Mean for the Region?" *Lawfare*, March 27, 2023. https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/bukele-has-defeated-el-salvadors-gangs-now-how-and-what-does-it-mean-region

<u>Recommended</u>

Cruz, José Miguel. 2011. "Government Responses and the Dark Side of Gang Suppression in Central America." In Thomas Bruneau et al., eds, *Maras*: *Gang Violence and Security in Central America*, 137-157.

Week 13. What Drives Democratic Backsliding (and Resilience)? (4/22)

* Meet with me in office hours this week to discuss your progress toward the Prospectus.

In the past fifteen years, democracy has suffered major challenges in most of our cases. In Nicaragua and El Salvador, democracy broke down and gave way to dictatorship and competitive authoritarianism, respectively. Honduras and Guatemala experienced serious democratic crises, though democracy has ultimately bounced back in both cases. And there are some signs that democracy may even be wobbling in Costa Rica. We explore emerging debates in comparative politics about why democracies die to understand the current crisis of democracy in Central America—and how democracy appears to be fighting back in some of our cases.

Readings:

Haggard, Stephan and Robert Kaufman. 2021. "The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 32(4): 27-41.

Levitsky, Steven and James Loxton. 2013. "Populism and Competitive Authoritarianism in the Andes." *Democratization* 20(1): 107-136. Read only pp. 107-113.

Mayka, Lindsay and Amy Erica Smith. 2018. "Could Corruption Investigations Undermine Democracy in Latin America?" *Vox*, May 27, 2018. https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2018/5/17/17363436/corruption-latin-america.

Gamboa, Laura. 2022. *Resisting Backsliding: Opposition Strategies Against the Erosion of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 22-49).

And at least two of the following case studies:

- Colburn, Forrest D. and Arturo Cruz S. 2018. "Latin America's Shifting Politics: The Fading of Costa Rica's Old Parties." *Journal of Democracy* 29(4): 43-53.
- Meléndez-Sánchez, Manuel. 2021. "Millennial Authoritarianism in El Salvador." *Journal of Democracy* 32(3): 19-32.
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