

Dissent in Latin America

Gov 2464 / LAS 2538
Bowdoin College
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1) Course Description

This course explores the contemporary politics of dissent in Latin America by engaging with dissent as not simply a moment of protest or resistance, nor the collective plea for rights. Going beyond institutional politics settings, we will take as a premise that dissent is in the moments when a given social order or way of living/thinking is challenged or modified. This way, we will look at moments of dissent in various areas, including political theory, development policy, indigenous philosophy, radical pedagogy, film, art, and literature.

2) Learning Goals and Objectives

- a) **Broader outlook on Latin America:** Because this course focuses on marginal theories and voices, I will encourage you to remain attentive to alternative portrayals of Latin America to those promoted by mainstream media and education. In addition, Latin America in this course is broadly construed to include Latinx peoples and cultures in the US. In your assignments, you will be asked to demonstrate aspects of Latin American culture and politics that have challenged your previous conceptions of the continent.
- b) **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is not simply about questioning the status quo, but also understanding the very terms we use to make sense of reality. For this reason, this course calls on us to reflect on how looking at various texts from Latin America can teach us something about our own lives, independently of where we are from or are located at this moment. I encourage you to develop such connections in your assignments (weekly reflections, discussion board, and papers/projects).
- c) **Interdisciplinarity:** By focusing on dissent as the reconfiguration of ideas and ways of living, the course opens the possibility of going beyond the disciplinary boundaries of political science as the study of government and power. This way, we will be

able to explore this reconfiguration in different media formats and disciplines, from conventional written text to film and music; from Philosophy and Anthropology, to performance and art. Conversely, you are free to explore interdisciplinarity in your assignments by using alternative formats to writing, and by engaging with sources outside of political science.

3) Synchronous sessions

For synchronous sessions, this course will be divided into two groups to allow for a more intimate discussion. Each group will join one synchronous session on Zoom per week. Here is the [link](#) for the meetings, also available on Blackboard. You must be logged into your Bowdoin Zoom account if you want to bypass going through Blackboard.

Group 1: Tuesdays 11AM-12:20PM EST

Group 2: Fridays 1PM-2:20PM EST

4) Assignments

a) **Recurrent:**

- a.1) Discussion board on our course Padlet (weekly)
- a.2) Ten 300-word (or 3-5 min audio/video) weekly reflections and question on your personal Padlet.
- a.3) *Optional:* Keep a course journal on your personal Padlet.

b) **One time:**

- b.1) Moderate discussion board on Course Padlet
- b.2) Midterm paper
- b.3) Final paper or independent project

5) Grade Distribution

- a) **Participation:** 40% (Weekly reflection 20%, Synchronous meetings 10%, Discussion board 10%)
- b) **Discussion board moderation:** 10%
- c) **Midterm paper:** 20%

d) **Final paper/project:** 30%

6) Where to find assistance

a) **Contact me:** Do not hesitate to contact me if you need help! I am available via email at tzille@bowdoin.edu and office hours to discuss matters related to the course, or any other matter you think I may be able to assist you with. I will point you to appropriate resources if I am not able to assist you. I will strive to respond to your emails within 24h, but I will generally not be available on evenings and weekends. Use [this](#) link to book an office hours appointment with me, and [this](#) Zoom link for the meeting (Links also available on Blackboard). Please contact me via email if you don't find a time slot that works for you.

b) **Reach out to your peers:** I have set out a zoom link for you to "meet" outside of class time if you would like. Every day from 4pm-6pm. I called it *Café Dissent*, and [here](#) is the link (also on Blackboard). This space is just for you, I won't be there.

c) **Other campus resources:**

c.1) **Counseling and Wellness Services:** These are very stressful times, just know that you are not alone. Counseling is a great resource and you don't have to be in crisis to use it! Here is the link to [CWS](#) and phone number: 207-725-3145.

c.2) **Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching:** The [BCLT](#) offers many forms of academic assistance, such as peer academic coaching and writing assistance.

c.3) **Accommodations:** Please feel free to discuss your need for accommodations with me. For more info on what the college offers, check out the Student Accessibility Office [here](#).

7) Course Policies:

a) **Timeliness:** I know that things happen, and I also know that the pandemic has affected our personal lives in various ways. However, please notify me in advance if you must be absent from synchronous meetings and asynchronous activities. And if you must submit your work late, please let me know in advance so we can work out alternatives together.

b) **Readings and other materials:** The quality of discussion and your learning will depend heavily on you being able to read/watch the assigned instructional material. I try to assign a realistic amount of readings, and I am willing to reconsider the amount assigned if necessary. In return, I ask that you stay on track with the material to the best of your ability.

- c) **Plagiarism:** Don't do it... Just don't. It's really easy to figure it out. Seek assistance if you need help with an assignment. Here is a link to Bowdoin's [Academic Honor Code](#).
- d) **Netiquette:** I realize we are all kind of zoom fatigued. However, for the sake of the quality of discussions, I require that you keep your camera on during our synchronous sessions, unless you have particular circumstances that justify leaving it off. If this is the case, you must ask me for permission ahead of time. Moreover, since this is not a lecture based course, be prepared to participate frequently and help us maintain a cordial and inclusive discussion environment. I also ask that you check your Bowdoin email and the Blackboard page for this course daily for announcements and updates.

8) Assignments, explained:

a) **Recurrent assignments:**

a.1) Discussion board on our Class Padlet (weekly): Padlet is a platform that allows for a more fluid discussion than Blackboard, and you can post in many formats. The links to your Padlets are listed on the left side bar on the course's Blackboard page. Please contribute at least 1-2 times a week, and no later than Thursdays at 10pm. Ways to participate include, but are not limited to: responses to questions by facilitators, comments to your peers' responses, thoughts on course material or items discussed in class, connections with current events, news links (with comments) related to the course and region, images and videos relevant to discussion. Padlet lets you post video or audio messages in addition to written posts, so feel free to experiment with formats. I will also participate in the discussion, although it will be mostly moderated by you. **You are required to actively participate in the discussion board for ten (10) weeks of your choice.**

a.2) Weekly reflection and questions: Please post a 300-word or 4-5 min audio/video response and a question related to the week's material on your Personal Padlet, due by 10pm EST the night before your synchronous session (except otherwise noted on your course schedule). Only you and I will have access to this Padlet. This response must demonstrate that you have thought about the material you have read/watched, but the exact format is open. Rather than a summary of readings, think of this as a chance to ask the following guiding questions: why were you particularly moved by specific points in the readings? How do different materials speak to each other? In what ways did they invite you to think differently? These are pass/fail, and I will give you feedback on them every two to three weeks. Please add the date and reflection number (#) to the title of your post. **You are required to submit ten (10) reflections over the course of the semester.**

a.3) Optional course journal: For extra participation credit, you can keep a course journal on your personal Padlet. This is how it will work: in addition to your weekly reflection, use your personal Padlet to compile all your work for this class, including discussion board posts, synchronous meeting notes, readings notes, paper outlines, thoughts, etc. This is not meant to give you extra work. This is a way for me to track your progress at the end of the course, as well as for you to leave the course with a tangible collection of what we did throughout the semester, which you will be able to download if you choose.

b) One-time assignments:

b.1) Discussion board moderation on course Padlet: You will sign up with one or two of your peers, once during the semester, to moderate the discussion board on our course Padlet. In order to moderate the discussion, please collaborate with each other to offer a brief set of provocations (in the form of questions, a short video, image, news link, etc., or a combination of these), pertaining to the relevant week's material by Mondays at 10pm. During the week, you should monitor the discussion once a day by offering comments on your peers' responses and posts, suggesting connections between posts, etc. In short, you are expected to be more active in the discussion board on the week you moderate it.

b.2) Midterm paper: a 3 to 4-page paper to be submitted on Friday, Oct 16 at 5pm EST. You will have the option to respond to a prompt that I will circulate in advance, or to write your own reflection in consultation with me.

b.3) Final paper/project: a 5 to 6-page paper or an independent project (individual or group) to be submitted on the last day of finals, Monday Dec 21, at noon EST. Prompts will be circulated in advance. Please consult with me in advance (by Thanksgiving week) if you choose to do an independent project.

9) A note on Participation:

I will do short interventions during our synchronous sessions to go over the material, and/or record brief lectures in the form of podcasts. However, I anticipate this course to be primarily discussion based. Your participation is key (hence 40% of your grade) and should include active contributions to the class discussion board on Padlet and to our synchronous meetings, as well as timely submission of your weekly reflection and question, in addition to attendance of office hours. I will also offer extra credit opportunities during the semester.

Course Schedule

(The following table contains a description of each week of the semester along with a schedule of readings and assignments. All materials are available on Blackboard unless otherwise noted)

Week	Title	Objectives	Instructional Materials	Assignments
1 8/31-9/4	Introduction	On week 1 we will meet on the same day (Friday, Sep 4, 1pm) to get to know each other briefly, have an informal discussion about current events, and ask any questions about the course	(Optional news articles posted on Blackboard)	None
2 9/7-9/11	The Idea of Dissent	On week 2 we will begin to explore common ideas of politics and dissent we may have, and also alternative ways to think about these concepts	<u>Read:</u> a) Rancière, "10 theses" b) Galeano, "To Be like Them" <u>Listen to:</u> c) Calle 13, "Latinoamérica" <u>Watch:</u> d) Nandy, "The Untamed Language of Political Dissent"	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
3 9/14-9/18	Coloniality and Decoloniality	On week 3 you will be introduced to Latin American critiques of the legacies of colonialism in contemporary society	<u>Read:</u> a) Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality" b) Mignolo, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize?" c) Villanueva, "Why Decolonial Feminism?" d) Saraiva, "Toppling Statues Isn't Enough in Latin America"	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board

<p>4 9/21-9/25</p>	<p>Development and Post-development I</p>	<p>On week 4 we will begin an overview of critiques and alternative visions of development that have emerged in Latin America, by looking at key works that have sought to expose development's very premises</p>	<p><u>Read:</u> a) Escobar, <i>Encountering Development</i> b) Illich, "Needs"</p>	<p>a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board</p>
<p>5 9/28-10/2</p>	<p>Development and Post-development II</p>	<p>On week 5, we will continue the work from the previous week to focus analyzing the modern premises of development, while also getting introduced to alternatives proposed by Andean indigenous and non-indigenous peoples</p>	<p><u>Watch:</u> a) Moscoso, "A Wild Idea" <u>Read:</u> b) Phillip, "Sumak Kawsay as an Element of Local Decolonization in Ecuador" c) Escobar and Esteva, "Post-development @ 25"</p>	<p>a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board</p>
<p>6 10/5-10/9</p>	<p>Development: Resistance and Persistence</p>	<p>On week 6, we will look at two study cases: the construction of the Belo Monte dam in the Brazilian Amazon, and the role of NGOs in Guatemala to better understand how local populations have responded to development projects</p>	<p><u>Read:</u> a) Zille, excerpts from <i>The River is my Teacher</i> b) Movimento Xingu Vivo, selected documents c) Beck, <i>How Development Projects Persist</i></p>	<p>a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board</p>
<p>7 10/12-10/16</p>	<p>Midterm paper week</p>	<p>No content assigned or synchronous sessions this week</p>	<p>Please use this time to rest and work on your papers</p>	<p>a) Midterm paper due on Oct 16 at 5pm, please upload it to Blackboard</p>

				b) No reflections or discussion board this week
8 10/19-10-23	Indigenous and local cosmologies I	On week 8, we will begin to explore alternative ways of relating with nonhumans, especially those advocated by indigenous peoples in the continent, that are not premised in the separation between humans and nature	<u>Read:</u> a) de la Cadena, <i>Earth Beings</i> <u>Watch:</u> b) "La Abuela Grillo"	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
9 10/26-10-30	Indigenous and local cosmologies II	On week 9, we will continue the work of the previous week by attending to the voices of indigenous leaders	<u>Read:</u> a) Castellanos, "Berta Cáceres in Her Own Words" b) Krenak, "On Time" c) Rivera Cusicanqui, "Indigenous Anarchist Critique..." d) Paige, Interviews with indigenous leaders e) Lake, "The Voices of Amazon Women..."	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
10 11/2-11/6	Social movements and resistance: what is going on now	On week 10, we will look at the contemporary state of politics in Latin America, with special attention toward civil unrest in recent times as well as enduring social movements such as EZLN in Mexico	<u>Read:</u> a) Zibechi, "The State of Social Movements in Latin America" b) Subcomandante Marcos, <i>Beyond Resistance: Everything</i>	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board Note: Feel free to use this week's reflections and space on the

			c) <i>Open Democracy</i> , 2019: Protests and Disruptive Change in Latin America" <u>Watch:</u> d) Larraín, "No"	discussion board to share your thoughts on the presidential elections and its connections with Latin America.
11 11/9-11/13	Social movements and resistance: Radical Pedagogy	On week 11, we will reflect on the role of education in social change, and how social movements such as the MST in Brazil have used radical pedagogy as a tool of empowerment	<u>Read:</u> a) Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> b) Zibechi, <i>Territories in Resistance</i> c) Pureza, "Brazil's Student Upsurge"	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
12 11/16-11/20	Memory, Trauma, and legacies of dictatorship	On week 12, we will discuss some of the creative ways that Latin Americans have used to confront the enduring memories of political violence that permeated much of the continent in the 20 th century	<u>Watch:</u> a) Guzmán, <i>Nostalgia for the Light</i> <u>Browse:</u> b) Germano, <i>Proyecto Ausencias</i> c) Levenson, <i>Missing Identity</i> <u>Read:</u> Galeano, <i>Days and Nights of Love and War</i>	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
13 11/23-11/27	Thanksgiving week	No synchronous sessions this week. Start reading Anzaldúa	<u>Read:</u> a) Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> , <i>Light in the Dark</i>	a) Use your weekly reflection to start thinking about your final paper/project. Prompt to be distributed in the prior week.

				b) No discussion board this week
14 11/30-12/4	Defying Borders	On week 14, we will read the work of chicana author Gloria Anzaldúa to question conventional notions of border and identity	<u>Read:</u> a) Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> , <i>Light in the Dark</i>	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
15 12/7-12/11	Culture and the Social Order	On week 15, we will reflect on the role of culture in challenging our given understandings of society. In this case we will look specifically at the connection between identity, gender expression and social norms. We will also take the chance to wrap up the course.	<u>Read:</u> a) Muñoz, <i>Disidentifications</i> <u>Listen to:</u> b) Liniker, Selections c) Pabblo Vittar, Selections	a) Weekly reflection and questions b) Discussion Board
12/21				Final Paper/Project Due at noon.

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