

Women and Politics in Latin America
WS 651/Pols 651
Professor Lorraine Bayard de Volo

207 Blake, TR, 9:30 am - 10:50 am

Prof. Bayard de Volo's Office Hours: **TR 8:30-9:30AM, T 11-12noon** and by appt.

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This course examines the ways in which Latin American women have engaged in politics in the past two decades. Cases will draw from a variety of countries in Latin America, particularly El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Chile, and Argentina. Prior courses on Latin America are not necessary as background for this course; however, you will be responsible for the background information on politics in the region as presented in assigned readings and in lectures. More importantly, you are expected to develop insights, through comparative analysis, into why women “do politics” in certain ways, the role of the State in women’s politics, the (dis)advantages of various political strategies, and the ways in which political/economic/social changes over time have affected women’s political opportunities and interests.

To reach these course goals, the class will rely heavily on discussion and analysis papers. Please come to class having read the assigned readings—preferably with some notes for discussion. If discussion lags, I will call on people. We will approach the readings in a critical manner, considering the strengths and shortcomings of each. You are expected to develop your own theories/analyses in relation to the readings. These you should discuss in class, and you will be expected to write about them in your take-home exams.

A note of caution from previous students of this class (culled from student evaluations): a significant number of students in this class will be very interested in, even passionate about, some aspect of the subject matter. They will be very self-motivated to do the readings on time and spend an inordinate amount of time on the papers. Many will have a background in women’s politics/activism, politics of developing countries, and/or Latin American culture/society. If you are a hardworking student who generally receives “A”s, such a background and interest will likely not be necessary. But otherwise, you might want to reconsider whether you should take this class. In other words, according to past students of this class, it is not a good class to take if you are “just trying to graduate” or simply because “this class fits in my schedule.”

Required Texts

- ❖ *Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart, the Story of Elvia Alvarado*, translated and edited by Medea Benjamin, (New York: Harper Row, 1987).
- ❖ Lorraine Bayard de Volo, *Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs: Gender Identity Politics in Nicaragua, 1979-1999*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
- ❖ Victoria González and Karen Kampwirth, *Radical Women in Latin America* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2001).

Coursepack, available in the Political Science office, 504 Blake Hall. All coursepack articles are noted below by “*”.

Gender and the Politics of Culture: Marianismo and Machismo

Jan. 25

*Evelyn Stevens, "Machismo and Marianismo," *Society* 10, 1973, 57-63

*Tracy Bachrach Ehlers, "Debunking Marianismo: Economic Vulnerability and Survival Strategies among Guatemalan Wives," *Ethnology*, 1-16.

Jan. 27

*Roger Lancaster, "Subject Honor: Object Shame," in *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 235-264; 271-274.

*Linda Lobao Reif, "Women in Revolution: The Mobilization of Latin American Women in Revolutionary Guerilla Movements," 354-364.

Women and Revolution

Feb. 1

Lobao Reif, cont'd.

González and Kampwirth, "Introduction": pp. 1-7; 11-26.

In class movie: "Maria's Story"

Feb. 3

González and Kampwirth, "Introduction" cont'd.

González and Kampwirth, Ch. 1: Victoria González, "Somocista Women, Right-Wing Politics, and Feminism in Nicaragua, 1936-1979," 41-78.

Feb. 8

González and Kampwirth, Ch. 2: Karen Kampwirth, "Women in the Armed Struggles in Nicaragua: Sandinistas and Contras Compared," 79-109.

Feb. 10

*Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua," *Feminist Studies*, 11:2, Summer 1985, 227-254.

Feb. 15

Bayard de Volo, *The Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs*, Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1 ix-xviii, 1-48.

Feb. 17

BdeV, Ch. 2, 51-83; Ch. 3, 85-103

Feb. 22

BdeV, Ch. 3, 103-113; Ch. 4, 115-152

Feb. 24

BdeV, Ch. 5, 155-180; BdeV, Ch. 6, 183-206

March 1

Video, "Pictures from a Revolution"

Test #1

TAKE HOME EXAM #1 due March 3, 5pm

NO CLASS March 3

Women, Dictatorships, and Democratization

March 8

*Marysa Navarro, "The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo," in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, edited by Susan Eckstein, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, 241-258.

March 10

Video, "Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo"

*Feijoó, María del Carmen, "The Challenge of Constructing Civilian Peace: Women and Democracy in Argentina," *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. Jane Jaquette, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, 72-94.

March 15

*Lynn Stephen, Ch. 2, "Women's Rights Are Human Rights: The Merging of Feminine and Feminist Interests among El Salvador's Mothers' of the Disappeared (Co-Madres)," *Women and Social Movements in Latin America*, Austin, TX: Univ. of Texas Press, 1997, 29-55.

March 17

*Lynn Stephen, "Gender, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity," *Latin American Perspectives* 28:6, Nov. 2001, 54-69.

Spring Break March 21-25

March 29

*Ilja Luciak, "Gender Equality and Electoral Politics on the Left: A Comparison of El Salvador and Nicaragua," *Journal of InterAmerican Studies and World Affairs* 40:1, Spring 1998, 39-66.

González and Kampwirth, Ch. 4: Patricia Hipsher, "Right and Left-Wing Women in Post-Revolutionary El Salvador," 133-164.

March 31

Hipsher, cont'd.

Video, "In Women's Hands" women in Chile.

April 5

*Rita Noonan, "Women Against the State: Political Opportunities and Collective Action Frames in Chile's Transition to Democracy," *Sociological Forum* 10, 252-267.

April 7

González and Kampwirth, Ch. 9: Lisa Baldez, "Nonpartisanship as a Political Strategy: Women Left, Right and Center in Chile," 273-298.

April 12

González and Kampwirth, Ch. 10: Margaret Power, "Defending Dictatorship: Conservative Women in Pinochet's Chile and the 1988 Plebiscite," 299-324.

April 14

*Waylen, Georgina, "Women and Democratization: Conceptualizing Gender Relations in Transition Politics," *World Politics* 46, April 1994, 327-354.

April 19

*Baldez, Lisa, "Women's Movements and Democratic Transition in Chile, Brazil, East Germany, and Poland," *Comparative Politics* 35:3, April 2003, 253-272.

April 21

Don't Be Afraid, Gringo, Intro (xv-xxiv), Chs. 1-5 (1-49) (Honduras)

Rural/Agrarian Women's Politics

April 26

Video, "Elvia: The Fight for Land and Liberty"

Takehome exam #2, Due April 26, 5pm

April 28

"Don't Be Afraid, Gringo," Chs. 6-9 (51-98)

May 3

"Don't Be Afraid, Gringo," Chs. 10-14 (101-146)

May 5

*Alvarez, Sonia E. "Latin American Feminisms 'Go Global': Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium," in S.E. Alvarez, E. Dagnino, A. Escobar, eds., Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Revisioning Latin American Social Movements. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997, 293-324.

May 10

*Ewig, Christina, "The Strengths and Limits of the NGO Women's Movement Model: Shaping Nicaragua's Democratic Institutions," *Latin American Research Review* 34:3, 1999, 75-102.

May 12 LAST DAY!

Test #3

Take-home Essay Exam #3, due Thursday, May 19, 5pm

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**GRADING:\***

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|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Tests (3)</b>           | <b>15 points (5 points each)</b> |
| <b>Take-home Exam #1</b>   | <b>20 points</b>                 |
| <b>Take-home Exam #2</b>   | <b>20 points</b>                 |
| <b>Take-home Exam #3</b>   | <b>25 points</b>                 |
| <b>Class participation</b> | <b>15 points</b>                 |
| <b>Presentation</b>        | <b>5 points</b>                  |
|                            | <b>=100 points</b>               |

\*Undergraduates only. Graduate students will have different assignments and a different grading system.

**Take-home essay exams (65 points total):** These 3 take-home essay exams will be handed out in class and students will have at least 6 days to complete them. In class there will be time to collectively discuss the possibilities and parameters of the assignment. The exams will basically

be essay questions (the essay should 5-7 pages) that require critical analysis of the readings. Creative and original thought is encouraged.

Because you will have kept up with the readings so carefully throughout the semester, no last minute readings and cram sessions will be needed to complete these exams! It will be based on the semester's lectures, class handouts/question sheets, in-class discussions, and readings and will reflect those topics and concerns that the students and professor have emphasized throughout the semester.

**Tests (15 points total):** Tests will involve 25-30 questions in the form of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blanks. While the take-home exams will be pushing you toward creative, original analysis, these tests will be quizzing you on facts. My advice: do the readings on time and take notes in class.

Do not miss these quizzes—you'll get a zero. Any crises causing you to miss class that you are able to document should be brought to my attention as soon as possible (preferably before the quiz).

**Class participation (15 points):** Attendance and class participation will be an important aspect of this course. Absences will be noted. Students who miss more than 3 classes can expect to have their class participation grade decline one grade per absence (for example, from B to B-).

Students are expected to come to class having read the assignment and prepared to discuss. At times, I will randomly call on students to answer a question or give their opinion on an issue. This will be more likely to occur if discussions lag. Students who find it very difficult to speak in front of the class should come see me, and we can try to work around the problem.

**Presentation (5 points):** presentation of one reading assignment. You should give a clear, concise, and thorough presentation of the material, highlighting the important information and themes and clarifying any difficult concepts. Read the guidelines below for help in preparing the presentation. You are also asked to bring a handout summarizing the readings (**no more than 2 pages; bring 32 copies**).

Think of this handout as a study sheet that will help prepare your fellow students for the exams. Both the presentation itself and the preparation that went into it will be a factor in the grading. For example, if your presentation is top-notch, yet your handout is weak, you will not receive an "A". After your presentation, you will be considered the "student expert" on the reading and will be expected to actively contribute to discussion. This short presentation should last 5-10 minutes. Signups will be early in the semester.

Guidelines for critical reading:<sup>1</sup>

Learning how to read critically and efficiently will make your life much easier and your work much better. In reading the assigned materials for this course, answer the following questions as a means of understanding each author's argument and of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. By doing this, you will also establish a basis from which to compare arguments from various authors and develop your own argument. Identify the answers and locate them specifically in the text, for reference in class discussions and for papers.

1. What is the title? What clues does it give you about the content and approach of the piece?
2. What clues does the introduction provide?
3. What is the central question the author is addressing?

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines were created by Lisa Baldez, Dartmouth College.

4. What is the author's argument? What is the author arguing against?

5. What evidence does the author present to support her/his claims? What kind of evidence is it: empirical? quantitative? qualitative? intuitive? something else? How timely is the evidence? Is it out of date? Does the evidence presented actually support the argument that the author is making?

6. Is the argument compelling/convincing? In other words, does the evidence the author presents convince you that she's right? If not, what would make it more compelling? What competing evidence might the author have considered? What alternative explanations should the author have considered?

7. A footnote on footnotes: Why do authors use footnotes?

Verification: good science, reproducible claims, results

Attribution: give credit where credit is due

Collaboration: contributing to production of knowledge

Democracy: I am not the Source on High, but one of many sources...

Should you read the footnotes? If you want to know the source of a particular idea or if you want to learn more about a particular topic, get more sources, books to read