Course Description:

This course will offer an overview of Latin American development, with a focus on social and political change since the neoliberal turn in the 1980s. Previously, the state had played a central role in economic development since the 1930 in a top-down and mostly authoritarian model of politics. In the larger countries of the region, focused on import-substitution industrialization, (ISI), the state-centered model came to depend heavily on foreign indebtedness and proved unsustainable economically and politically. By the 1980s, the debt crisis forced a shift in the development model toward reducing state intervention, enhancing the role of private firms and market liberalization. Most Central American countries, however, remained focused on agro-exporting economies, with deep cleavages between landlords and peasants, often resulting in bloody repression and civil wars. Yet, democracies of varying characteristics have supplanted dictatorships and diverse social actors have articulated longstanding grievances in new ways. The region remains plagued by levels of social and economic polarization, which were deepened by the neoliberal reform. Trade liberalization and biotechnology have led to new patterns in food production, dependency and crisis. Hence, some of the most important social movements in the region are based in the countryside.

Since the 1990s, new political forces coming from a broadly-defined “left” have won political office or exercised hefty influence from civil society and tried to transcend the neoliberal model with varying degrees of success. New centre-left governments talk of a post-neoliberal development model, but they have also introduced a new impetus in promoting foreign direct investment in the extractive industries. To what extent is neo-extractivism a route to sustainable development or to a new form of imperialism? This graduate seminar aims to familiarize students with the key characteristics of contemporary Latin American politics and society and to situate the rise of the left historically. Readings analyze a wide range of countries and draw from several disciplines in the social sciences and history.

Required Texts: (plus some articles)


**Grades** will be assigned based on the following formula:

- Five Discussion Papers: 25% (over five weeks, 5% each)
- Five Responses: 5% (over five different weeks, 2% each)
- Draft Presentation: 10% (on December 5)
- Participation: 15%
- Final Review Essay: 45% (due December 7)

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students are expected to read and understand the university’s policies with regard to academic dishonesty (T10.02 and T10.03). These policies are available through the following url:

[http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html)

Forms of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:

- Submitting all or a portion of the same work for credit in more than one course.
- Representing another person’s work as your own for course assignments.
- Failure to acknowledge sources of facts, information, analyses, interpretations, and arguments that you incorporate in your work, whether from a source that is written, spoken communication, or the internet and whether it is published and unpublished. Appropriate documentation of your sources is necessary when you quote, paraphrase or incorporate information and ideas generated by others. In particular, please be aware that “patchwriting” is unacceptable.

All students in SIS classes are expected to read the SFU Library lesson on “What is Plagiarism?” and take the interactive tutorial, “Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism”

SFU Library: What is plagiarism?  
[http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/plagiarism](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/plagiarism)

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism:  