Brazil is the largest country in Latin America with a population of 207 million inhabitants. Brazilian territory is bigger than the continental United States; its population is greater than Russia. The country undertook significant changes during the last six decades. It became more urbanized, more middle-class and more politically active, although poverty and inequality still constitute big challenges. The Brazilian economy also became more diversified as the country turned into one of the world’s biggest exporters of commodities, including: iron ore, soil beans, cotton, coffee, packed beef, as well as sophisticated industrial goods such as jet plains, cars, and computer games.

The Brazilian political system also changed a lot since the 1980s. The transition from a military dictatorship to a democratic regime commanded by the civilians enabled the emergence of a competitive political system which permitted the opposition to get to power when the Workers party won the presidential elections in 2002. Despite such changes, governance still depends on large coalitions, as more than twenty political parties are active actors in the state and national scenarios.

Currently, Brazil is undertaking great political instability. The impeachment of President Dilma Roussef and the raising of Michel Temer to the presidential chair were involved in controversy, as economic recession and cuts in the federal and state budgets affected the economic recovery taking place in the 2000s. Charges of corruption and judicial processes have occupied the main spaces in daily newspapers, internet sites, and TV shows along with crime reports. Despite such problems Brazil still is the six or seventh world economy and has been reducing substantially the levels of poverty.

This course would introduce students to the government and politics of Brazil. My approach to the topic would be chronological, starting from the mid 1980s to the present. The course would also analyze Brazilian development thematically through the examination of current issues, including corruption and political reform, as we explore Brazil’s political and social development under democracy. The course would focus on the political conflicts and enduring tensions arising from pervasive socioeconomic and
regional inequalities. It offers critical perspectives on the struggle for political accountability, and the democratization of public policymaking, social relations, and economic activities.

**Scope and Objectives**

The main goal of the course is to introduce undergraduate students to some of the main debates, visions, and hypothesis regarding Brazilian politics and foreign policy, with a focus on the country’s second democratic experience initiated in 1985.

**Learning outcomes**

The main learning outcomes are two: (1) to have students learn the main facts and trends of Brazilian politics and foreign policy; and (2) to provide students with analytical tools to identify the nature, challenges, and main outcomes of Brazilian politics and foreign policy.

**Course Goals:**

- To expand student’s knowledge of the historical processes that have taken place in Brazil over the course of the last four decades.
- To strengthen student’s reading and analytical skills through the introduction of historical monographs by leading scholars of Brazil on diverse topics.
- To encourage student’s creativity in writing critical and analytical essays.
- To foster student’s ability to express their ideas in seminar settings.
- To promote writing and research skills through the preparation of a research paper on a topic related to Brazil.
- To understand the major economic, social, political, and cultural processes involved in the formation of the Brazilian nation the last six decades: the military dictatorship, the establishment of a democratic republic, and the development of a modern state.
- To follow recent political and economic developments in a country that internationally has been acclaimed as an emerging world power.

**Evaluating Performance:**

Students will be graded on the basis of the following: a midterm examination (25%), a final research paper or project (50%), and Attendance and Participation (25%). Because participation is important to your grade, attendance is mandatory! No make-up exams or quizzes will be given unless there is a verifiable act of god, serious illness, or a family emergency. Students will be excused when they provide documentation of such emergencies. Family vacation is not an excuse to miss an exam date or class.

Research Paper or Project (50% of grade). You will do a fifteen-page research paper or an equivalent project about some aspect of the History of Brazil. It must be properly
annotated (Chicago Manual of Style), with a complete bibliography. You must use at least two primary sources.

If you are having troubles that are interfering with your ability to keep up with course work, come to me as soon as possible to discuss them. My door is open to you to discuss problems and seek humane but fair solutions, but a student should not wait until the date of an exam or an assignment’s due date to discuss such difficulties.

Reading is fundamental to the study of history. You should plan on setting aside six hours outside of class per week to read and take notes on your reading. I have tried to keep readings short week by week but the reading schedule is lumpy, and some weeks will require more of your time. In exchange for keeping reading materials brief I expect you to complete the reading and reflect upon it before lecture. It is important to follow the reading schedule in this syllabus so that you do not fall behind. Readings are to have been completed before lecture on the corresponding date in the syllabus. My lectures will not simply regurgitate information that you will digest on your own in the readings, rather they will build upon them and assume your comprehension of them. My lectures include discussions that engage the reading material which requires that you be prepared to discuss them. To encourage you to faithfully keep up with the reading schedule I will randomly administer pop quizzes in the first five minutes of class. No make-up quizzes will be allowed for those late to class or absent. Be in class and be on time if you want to do well in your final evaluation. Some quizzes may be in the form of an exercise that you will have to complete in class.

It is not enough to show up in class and watch your professor perform. You need to take notes because as I indicated above, lectures will not regurgitate readings. This is a skill you need to develop without it, you will find it difficult to perform well in this class.

**Reading and Lecture Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Class</td>
<td>Feb. 1st</td>
<td>Rise of the Left.</td>
<td>McCann (2008), Introd. and chapt. 1; Goirand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 The professor is free to conduct occasional assessments without prior notice to student(s).


8th Class  Mar. 8th.  Midterm exam.

    Mar. 15th.  Spring Break


10th Class  Mar. 29th  Public Security and Human Rights  McCann (2008), chapt. 3; Arias (2006).

11th Class  Apr. 4th  Foreign Policy  Montero (2014), chapt. 7; Lima and Hirst (2006).

12th Class  Apr. 11th  Foreign Policmaking  Cason and Power (2009), Malamud (2011).

13th  Apr. 18th  Accountability  Montero (2014), chapt. 8; Praça and Taylor (2010).

14th  Apr. 25th  The Demise of Developmentalism. Deliver of the final research paper or project.  Schutte (2013); Schneider (2015).

Required Readings


Professor’s mini-resume

Vitor Izecksohn: BA in History from the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (1886). MA in Political Science from the Rio de Janeiro Graduate Research Institute (IUPERJ, 1992), and PhD in History from the University of New Hampshire at Durham (2001). He is currently associate professor at the Program of Social History at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. He was a visiting professor at Brown University (2011),
and visiting scholar at the Gilder Lehrman Center (Yale), and the John Carter Brown Library (2016). His research interests include comparative history, military history, historical sociology and state-building in Latin America.