



**Ciencia Política**  
**Facultad de Ciencias Sociales**  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA REPÚBLICA

## CURSO

# Comparative Political Behavior: Elections in Latin America

**Docente:** Lucio Rennó (Universidad de Brasilia)

**Horas totales:** 15

**Créditos:** 3

**Duración:** 21 al 25 de abril de 14 a 17 horas

**Requisito:** El curso está orientado a estudiantes de nivel de maestría y doctorado.

## Descripción y objetivos

Elections are a central trait of Latin America politics. They are an essential aspect of democratic governance in the region and have become increasingly polemic, with contested results and questions about their integrity. Still, all countries in the region, even those who have questionable elections, rely on them as the main source of regime legitimacy. In 2025 eight countries will hold elections, same number that held them in 2024. Hence, understanding how voters choose candidates in elections becomes fundamental in the study of political science in the region.

This class proposes two things. First, we will explore the main explanations of vote choice, focusing specifically on the comparative literature that turns its attention to the Latin American voter. This literature is in close debate with studies that were implemented and designed focusing on the United States. Hence, even though we won't read about the latter case directly, references to the North American literature will be frequent.

Second, we will explore the details and context of elections in each of the countries that held them in 2024 and will hold in 2025 – including general and local elections. These comprise Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Honduras.

In each class we will spend two hours discussing a specific theoretical explanation for vote choice based on a lecture by the professor and student participation relying on assigned readings. The last hour of the session will be dedicated to the analysis of individual countries, with students presenting a detailed description and summary of the countries' electoral context including electoral rules, political parties, political leaders, issues, social cleavages and poll or election results. Presentations will either be in groups or by individuals, depending on enrolment, and each presentation will be based on research conducted by the presenters.



# Ciencia Política

## Facultad de Ciencias Sociales

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### Evaluación

Grades will be based on a final paper, class participation and a seminar presentation with the following distribution:

20% for class participation, including following the readings, actively participating in debates and proposing topics and questions for discussion;

40% for in-class presentation of one of the cases, which will be defined in the first day of class;

40% for final paper on a different case, using some of the theoretical approaches discussed.

### Contenidos

Most readings will be based on the following books:

CARLIN, RYAN E., MATTHEW M. SINGER, and ELIZABETH J. ZECHMEISTER, eds. *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts*. University of Michigan Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.8402589>.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.8402589>

NADEAU, RICHARD, ÉRIC BÉLANGER, MICHAEL S. LEWIS-BECK, MATHIEU TURGEON, and FRANÇOIS GÉLINEAU. *Latin American Elections: Choice and Change*. University of Michigan Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9375465>.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.9375465>

Noam Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, et al. *Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019.

**Class 1** –Introduction to course, Puzzles in Voting Behavior and the Electoral Scenario of the Americas: The Latin American Voter and Theories of Vote Choice

Readings:

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapter 1 and 2.

Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective. Chapter 1.

Latin American Elections: Choice and Change. Chapter 1.

**Class 2** –Demographics and the Vote: Social Cleavages: Religion, Gender, Ethnicity

Readings:

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Introduction to Part II.



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UNIVERSIDAD DE LA REPÚBLICA

Latin American Elections: Choice and Change. Chapter 2.

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **Class 3 –Wealth and Class**

Readings:

Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective. Chapter 4.

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapter 3.

Latin American Elections: Choice and Change. Chapter 3.

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **Class 4 -Issue voting and the Conservative Turn**

Readings:

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapter 7.

Latin American Elections: Choice and Change. Chapter 3.

Rennó L.R. 2020. "The Bolsonaro Voter: Issue Positions and Vote Choice in the 2018 Brazilian Presidential Elections". *Latin American Politics and Society*.;62(4):1-23. doi:10.1017/lap.2020.13

### **Class 5 –Partisanship and Incumbent Performance**

Readings:

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapter 9.

Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective. Chapters 5 and 6.

The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts. Chapter 11.