

Mauro P. Porto
Department of Communication
Tulane University
mporto@tulane.edu

Office: 219K1 Newcomb Hall
Office hours: Tue and Fri, 10:30-11:30 am
or by appointment
Phone: 862 3059

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA COMM 481 - Fall 2004

Course Description

This course is aimed at analyzing the role of the mass media in contemporary Latin American democracies. We will investigate whether communication industries and institutions have contributed to promote or to impede democratic consolidation in the region. After introducing the main features of the region's press and broadcasting systems, the course analyzes the political role of the media in different countries, focusing on the cases of Mexico and Brazil. The course then investigates the complex links between media scandals, corruption, and the consolidation of democratic institutions and attitudes in the region, emphasizing the role of investigative journalism. The course also discusses the political role of entertainment-oriented genres, including popular journalism and *telenovelas* (soap operas). Finally, the last part of the course explores the barriers to and perspectives for the full democratization of media and political spheres in the region, covering some important issues: the role of the media in promoting democratic attitudes among Latin-American citizens; the obstacles for media opening in the region; the perspectives for the democratization of media and political systems.

One of the central goals of the course is to provide conceptual tools that will enable students to develop a critical and comprehensive analysis of the role of the mass media in contemporary Latin American democracies.

Course Texts:

Silvio Waisbord, *Watchdog Journalism in South America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Chappell Lawson, *Building the Fourth State: Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Evaluation:

Your final evaluation will be based on the following:

- 1) Midterm exam: Students will take an in-class exam on parts I, II and III of the course;
- 2) Final paper: Students will be required to write a 10-13 page paper on one of the topics that will be proposed. The paper should be based on course materials and notes and not only on outside research sources;

- 3) Participation in class discussions: You should bring your notes and questions to enhance your participation in class discussions;
- 4) Performance on the reading assignments: You should make sure that you read the assigned texts in advance. Pop quizzes will be given to students as short tests on the assigned reading for class.

Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm Exam 30%
 Final Paper 40%
 Participation 15%
 Pop Quizzes 15%

Academic dishonesty

Remember that plagiarism is a form of cheating. Do not present someone else's ideas as yours, without citing the source. Buying or finding papers on similar topics of the course in the Internet is a form of plagiarism. Also remember that turning in the same paper for credit in two courses is a violation of scholarly ethics.

Course Schedule:

Aug 25, Wed - Introduction to the procedures and contents of the course
 (No readings)

PART I MEDIA SYSTEMS IN LATIN AMERICA

Aug 27, Fri – The historical context

* James Schwoch, "Broadcast media and Latin American politics: the historical context", in T. Skidmore (Ed.), *Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*. Washington D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993, pp.

Aug 30, Mon – Mass media in Latin America

* Robert Buckman, "Current status of the mass media in Latin America", in R. Cole, (Ed.), *Communication in Latin America*. Wilmington: Scholarly Books, 1996, pp. 3-35.

Sep 1, Wed – The Mexican media system

* John Sinclair, "The Autumn of the patriarch: Mexico and Televisa". In *Latin American Television: A Global View*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 33-62.

Sep 3, Fri – The Brazilian media system

* Joseph Straubhaar, "The electronic media in Brazil", in R. Cole, (Ed.), *Communication in Latin America*. Wilmington: Scholarly Books, 1996, pp. 217-243.

Sep 6, Mon – No class. Labor Day holiday.

PART II
 MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY:
 THE MEXICAN CASE

Sep. 8, Wed - Political communication in Mexico's "perfect dictatorship"

* Lawson, chapters 2-3, pp. 13-47.

Sep 10, Fri - The opening of Mexican media: the press

* Lawson, chapter 5, pp. 61-92.

Sep 13, Mon -The opening of Mexican media: broadcasting

* Lawson, chapter 6, pp. 93-121.

Sep 15, Wed – Media and civil society in Mexico

* Lawson, chapter 7, pp. 125-136.

Sep 17, Fri - Media and elections in Mexico

* Lawson, chapter 9, pp. 157-170.

Sep 20, Mon - Media and democracy in Mexico

* Lawson, chapter 10, pp. 173-209.

PART III
 MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY:
 THE BRAZILIAN CASE

Sep. 22, Wed -The media in the Brazilian transition to democracy

* Cesar Guimaraes and Roberto Amaral, "Brazilian television: a rapid conversion to the new order", in E. Fox (Ed.), *Media and Politics in Latin America*. London: Sage, 1988, pp. 125-137.

Sep. 24, Fri - The 1989 presidential election

* Venicio A. de Lima, "Brazilian television in the 1989 presidential election: constructing a president". In T. Skidmore (Ed.), *Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*. Washington D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993, pp. 97-117.

Sep 27, Mon - The media and the impeachment of president Collor de Mello (screening or part of the documentary "Assignment – Brazil")

* Silvio Waisbord, "The narrative exposes in South American journalism: telling the story of Collorgate in Brazil", *Gazette*, 59/3, 1997, pp. 189-203.

Sep. 29, Wed – The role of the media in Brazilian democracy (1985-2000)

* Mauro Porto, "Mass media and politics in democratic Brazil". In M. D. Kinzo & J. Dunkerley (Eds.), *Brazil Since 1985: Economy, Polity and Society*. London: ILAS, 2003, pp. 288-313.

Oct 1, Fri – Recent changes in Brazilian TV: the 2002 presidential election

* Mauro Porto, *Framing Controversies: The Role of Television in the 2002 Brazilian Presidential Election*, Paper presented to the 25th Annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 25-30, 2004.

Oct 4, Mon and Oct 6, Wed – MIDTERM EXAM.

PART IV
MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY:
OTHER COUNTRY CASES

Oct 8, Fri - Venezuela

* Jose Antonio Mayobre, "Venezuela and the media: the new paradigm", in E. Fox and S. Waisbord (Eds.), *Latin Politics, Global Media*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, pp. 176-186.

Oct 11, Mon - Central America

* Rick Rockwell and Noreene Janus, "The triumph of the media elite in postwar Central America", in E. Fox and S. Waisbord (Eds.), *Latin Politics, Global Media*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, pp. 47-68.

Oct 13, Wed - Chile

* Eugenio Tironi and Guillermo Sunkel, "The modernization of communications: the media in the transition to democracy in Chile". In R. Gunther & A. Mughan (Eds.), *Democracy and the Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 165-194.

PART V
CORRUPTION, MEDIA SCANDALS,
AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

Oct 15, Fri - Media and political clientelism

* Daniel Hallin and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, "Political clientelism and the media: Southern Europe and Latin America in comparative perspective". *Media, Culture & Society*, 24/2, 2002, pp. 175-195.

Oct 18, Mon - Media, corruption and democracy in Central America

* Rick Rockwell, "Democratization and the media: reflections on the Central American experience". In M. Semati (Ed.), *New Frontiers in International Communication Theory*. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 179-199.

Oct 20, Wed - Scandals and regime legitimacy in Mexico

* Lawson, chapter 8, pp. 138-156.

Oct 22, Fri – Obstacles to investigative journalism in South America

* Waisbord, chapter 1, pp. 3-32.

Oct 25, Mon - Media scandals in South America

* Waisbord, chapter 2, pp. 33-57.

Oct 27, Wed - Roots of watchdog journalism in South America: state and market forces

* Waisbord, chapter 3, pp. 58-89.

Oct 29, Fri - Roots of watchdog journalism in South America: professional routines

* Waisbord, chapter 4, pp. 93-118.

Nov 1, Mon - Journalistic norms: objectivity and investigations in South America

* Waisbord, chapter 5, pp. 119-150.

Nov 3, Wed - Professionalism and journalism in South America

* Waisbord, chapter 6, pp. 151-183.

Nov 5, Fri - Investigative journalism and democracy

* Waisbord, chapter 8, pp. 209-242.

PART VI

MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT AND DEMOCRACY:
POPULAR JOURNALISM AND TELENOVELAS

Nov 8, Mon - Popular journalism in Mexico

* Daniel Hallin, “La Nota Roja: popular journalism and the transition to democracy in Mexico”. In C. Sparks and J. Tulloch (Eds.), *Tabloid Tales*. Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, pp. 267-284.

Nov 10, Wed - Telenovelas and politics in Brazil

* Mauro Porto, *Telenovelas, politics and national identity in Brazil*. Paper presented to the 1998 Conference of the Society for Cinema Studies (SCS), San Diego, United States.

Nov 12, Fri – Screening of part of the documentary “Telenovelas: Love, TV and Power”

Nov 15, Mon – Telenovelas and politics: Brazil and Venezuela

- * Alma Guillermoprieto, “Rio 1993”. In *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 287-316;
- * Nelson Ortega, “Big snakes on the streets and never ending stories: The case of Venezuelan telenovelas”, in E. Bueno and T. Caesar (Eds.), *Imagination Beyond Nation*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998, pp. 64-80.

PART VII
CONCLUSIONS: THE MEDIA AND THE PROSPECTS
FOR DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

Nov 17, Wed – The media and support for democracy among citizens

- * Marta Lagos, “How people view democracy: Between stability and crisis in Latin America”, *Journal of Democracy*, 12/1, 2001, pp. 137-145.
- * Marta Lagos, *The Latinobarometro: media and political attitudes in South America*. Paper presented at the 1996 Meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA), August 29-September 1, San Francisco, United States.

Nov 19, Fri – Obstacles: The absence of a democratic tradition

- * Elizabeth Fox, “Conclusions”, in E. Fox (Ed.), *Media and Politics in Latin America*. London: Sage, 1988, pp.171-188.

Nov 22, Mon – The antidemocratic character of media structures

- * Silvio Waisbord, “Media in South America: between the rock of the state and the hard place of the market”. In J. Curran and M. Park (Eds.), *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 50-62

Nov 24 and 26 – No class. Thanksgiving recess.

Nov 29, Mon – Barriers to media opening

- * Sallie Hughes and Chappell Lawson, “The barriers to media opening in Latin America”, *Journal of Communication*, forthcoming.

Dec 1, Wed – New perspectives: the role of civil society

- * Daniel Hallin, “Broadcasting in the Third World: from national development to civil society”, in T. Liebes and J. Curran (Eds.), *Media, Ritual and Identity*. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 153-167.

Dec 3, Fri – Conclusions. Course evaluation.

FINAL PAPER DUE DEC 14, TUESDAY, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Papers should be delivered at the instructor’s office: Newcomb Hall, room 219K1. Late papers, without prior notice and instructor’s authorization, will not be received.