

Regional Economies - Prospects and Tensions in Latin America's Southern Cone - 2019

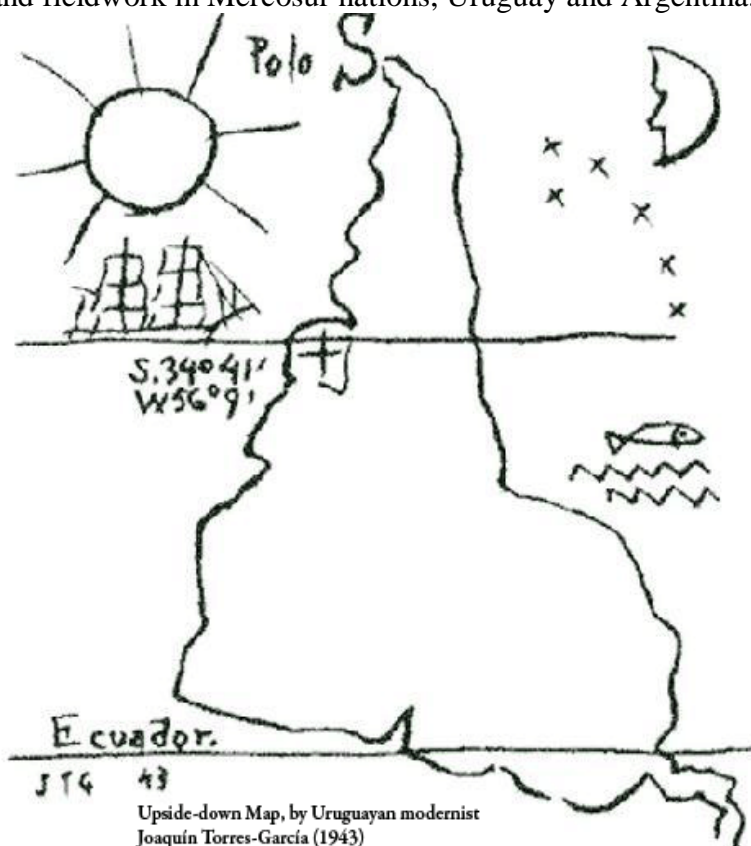
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Description:

This course provides an introduction to the Latin American business environment, with particular focus and fieldwork in Mercosur nations, Uruguay and Argentina.



Two pre-departure sessions in February and early March provide an introductory overview of Latin American political economy along with a closer look at background information on Uruguay and Argentina. These sessions will be followed by fieldwork consisting of ten days of travel to Montevideo, Uruguay and Buenos Aires, Argentina, preceded by a short visit to the Panama Canal and Gatun Game Preserve. We will explore the emerging power and challenges confronting the Southern Cone economies. The format will consist of extensive country site visits and classroom sessions at host institutions, Universidad ORT (Uruguay) and Universidad San Andres (Argentina).

In Uruguay, we examine the country's relative economic stability, its recent emergence as target for large scale foreign direct investment in extractive industry, and the cultivation of a solar/wind sustainable energy infrastructure. We evaluate how mega extractive investments in mining and in pulp and paper production are reconciled with tourism, the country's natural beauty, and emerging sustainability projects, where quality of life hangs in the balance. Latin America's "reprimarization" in response to Asian industrial hunger for raw materials and the associated commodity booms, may need rethinking with the advent of Chinese 'cooling.' Other potential themes include the explosive growth of FinTech, environmental and water rights debates, business process outsourcing, innovative social media platforms, as well as social policy legalizing marijuana and gay marriage.

In Argentina, we examine the dramatic turn from the country's heterodox policy agenda towards a refashioned Neoliberal policy program that repositions "entrepreneurship" at the center of its development model. What happens when entrepreneurs become ministers in the state sector? How will the new policies perform in the midst of volatile swings in agricultural commodity booms, the

intensification of fossil fuel based development, international debt, and the politics of domestic financial turbulence. We will also explore “Memory” of the human rights abuse that was part of military Neoliberal policy making during the 1970s, that has now permeated two generations of mothers searching for their disappeared children. Additional themes include e-business, social entrepreneurship, the “Tango” as a cultural reflection of early economic development, concluding with an appraisal of the region’s prospects in a globally competitive business environment.

Educational Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the distinctive nature, challenge, and hope of the Latin American business environment, viewed from the vantagepoint of developing economies.
- To develop a “hands on” understanding of contrasts and similarities in the economies and political structures of neighboring Argentina and Uruguay.
- To broaden the scope of debate regarding policy formulation and the role of the state as it relates to the management of volatility in the business environment.
- To develop an understanding of the impact of the business environment on firm survival and performance and the implications for the formulation of managerial strategy.
- To examine the social responsibility of managerial decision-making in developing country contexts, evaluating the repercussions of private managerial decisions on national and social development.
- To heighten student awareness of the importance of economic and historical analysis for systematically examining the region’s diverse business environments.
- To entertain discussion of new emergent forms of enterprise and social experimentation that are being constructed in Latin America with the realignment of power through constitutional struggles, to challenge neoliberal economic policy design and demonstrate that “another world is possible.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Students are expected to have a functional introductory background in macroeconomics.
- Classes will consist of lecture and discussion, with the expectation of significant student participation. We will visit a number of companies in both countries. Students will be asked to apply principles introduced in the classroom at Babson, as well as at the host universities, to these visitations.
- A research project is required on a topic to be discussed and approved with the professor. A list of desirable project topics is forthcoming, though you are strongly encouraged to pursue your own interests within the bounds of Latin American business, politics, and economy.
- Students will be asked to debrief on current economic and political events in assigned countries with the object of developing a "country expertise" in contributions to class discussion.
- Active and professional participation is essential and *strongly* factored into the course grade.

GRADING: Grades will be weighted as follows:

• Pre-departure attendance & participation	15%
• On-site: Class participation/professionalism	30%
• Final Paper	45%
• <u>Country journals/ Debrief Session</u>	10%
• TOTAL	100%

TEXT:

- Franko, Patrice (2019), *The Puzzle of Latin American Economic Development*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing.

Students can also expect supplemental reading materials distributed in the form of class handouts or posted on the class website.

Program Coordination and Administrative Assistance:

Alexandra Nesbeda – Program Manager - Glavin Office
Hollister x5244
TBD – Course Administrative Assistant

Proposed Meeting Dates:

February 5, 2019	Tuesday, evening predeparture session
March 5, 2019	Tuesday, evening predeparture session
March 15-24, 2019	Panama, Uruguay, Argentina Country Travel
April 23, 2019	Tuesday, evening Project Presentation/Closing session

Internet Based Resources: A web site to facilitate learning outside of class sessions is being developed for this course and will be accessible via Blackboard. The class outline of weekly seminar discussion topics, assignments, and supplemental course materials will be posted there.

Accommodation for a Documented Disability: Any student who is entitled to an academic accommodation due to a documented disability should contact me privately during office hours to discuss his or her specific needs. Students who need an accommodation should also visit the Office of Disability Services, located in the Office of Academic Services (Horn 220). Please address this early in the semester so that advanced planning for exams can be resolved.

Professionalism: Includes professional behaviour, attendance, participation, and preparation in class. Unprofessional behaviour, especially excessive drinking and disruptive extra-curricular activity will not be tolerated under any circumstances, resulting in formal incident reports and potential expulsion from the trip / class.