

# TEACHING LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES: A SURVEY

*Henry C. Kenski*  
*University of Arizona*

## GENERAL PURPOSE

In the spring of 1973, the author conducted a survey of political scientists teaching Latin American politics at American colleges and universities. The intention was to collect and disseminate information on (1) the techniques used in teaching Latin American politics, (2) the books assigned most frequently to students, (3) the identification of political systems most frequently emphasized in the classroom, and (4) the current level of student interest in the politics of Latin America. In addition to these data, information was gathered on those who teach in the area—i. e., how many have done field research, in which countries do they have the most expertise, and which approaches to political development do they find useful in teaching Latin American politics

The purposes of this survey were several. One was simply to collect the above information and to make it available to those who teach courses on Latin America. Hopefully, it will be useful for teachers in this area to know which teaching techniques, approaches, texts, etc., others have found successful in the classroom. A second purpose was to elicit response on the popularity of Latin American politics as an academic discipline. Before conducting the survey it was hypothesized that certain trends observed locally might be applicable nationally. In particular it was felt that in the post-Viet Nam period, student interest and enrollment in comparative politics courses, on Latin America as well as other regions, might be decreasing. Possible reasons for this are multiple, but one can speculate that a mood of isolationism following the Viet Nam fiasco might adversely affect enrollment in comparative politics courses. Further, the uncertain state of the economy and continued high unemployment may induce a shift away from liberal arts courses toward more specifically career-oriented disciplines. These speculations could be tested by surveying students themselves, but tentative support for such theses might also come from faculty who interact with their students in an advisory capacity.

A third purpose was to collect data on the status of Latin American politics as a research area. By asking Latin Americanists about books, assigned and considered important, and about approaches to political development found useful in the classroom, an effort was made to estimate whether or not there was any consensus which might indicate any specific direction or directions in which the field in general was heading.

#### METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted through a mail questionnaire sent to respondents in May 1973.<sup>1</sup> The population polled was determined in the following way. The catalogs of 575 American colleges and universities were examined and from them a list of course offerings by institution was constructed. Since the focus of this study was limited to domestic and comparative Latin American politics, courses on a single nation or inter-American affairs were excluded.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, to ensure that the widest possible population was polled, the American Political Science Association's *Biographical Directory 1973* was consulted. From the Directory's list of scholars working on Foreign and Cross-National Institutions and Behavior,<sup>3</sup> those interested in the politics of Latin America were identified. Finally, this list of Latin American scholars was matched against the roster of courses on Latin American politics by institutions. From this procedure a population of 366 emerged.

In May 1973, the questionnaire was mailed to the entire population of scholars and course instructors. Twelve respondents replied that their school no longer offered a course on Latin America, leaving a usable population of 354. Of this population, 184 respondents (52.0 percent) returned completed questionnaires, a very respectable response rate for the method employed.

#### RESULTS

One set of questions concerned which systems are most frequently emphasized in courses on Latin American politics, in which systems have the respondents done field research, and in which do they feel they have the most expertise. When the answers to these questions are placed together<sup>4</sup> as in Table 1, a definite pattern emerges.

Mexico is the system most frequently emphasized in courses (76.6 percent), the system in which respondents felt they had the most expertise (52.2 percent), as well as the country in which most respondents had conducted field research (34.2 percent). The importance of Mexico is further illustrated by the frequency with which it is cited by respondents,

T A B L E 1 Comparisons of Latin American Political Systems Mentioned by Respondents in Terms of Teaching Emphasis, Perceived Expertise, and Objects of Field Research (In Percentages)

Country	Systems Emphasized in Course		Systems in which Respondents Feel They Have Most Expertise		Systems in which Field Research Has Been Conducted			
	% of Respondents Mentioning	n	Country	% of Respondents Mentioning	n	Country	% of Respondents Mentioning	n
Mexico	76.6	141	Mexico	52.2	96	Mexico	34.2	63
Chile	73.9	136	Chile	28.3	52	Brazil	19.6	36
Brazil	71.7	132	Brazil	26.6	49	Peru	17.4	32
Argentina	67.4	124	Peru	26.1	48	Colombia	16.8	31
Cuba	61.4	113	Argentina	21.7	40	Chile	13.0	24
Peru	54.3	100	Cuba	21.2	39	Argentina	12.5	23
Colombia	41.3	76	Colombia	15.8	29	Venezuela	12.5	23
Venezuela	39.1	72	Venezuela	10.9	20	Ecuador	7.1	13
Bolivia	28.8	53	Costa Rica	7.1	13	Uruguay	7.1	13
Dom. Rep.	25.0	46	Ecuador	6.5	12	Costa Rica	6.5	12
Guatemala	24.4	45	Uruguay	5.4	10	Dom. Rep.	4.3	8
Uruguay	24.4	45	Bolivia	3.8	7	Guatemala	4.3	8
Costa Rica	23.9	44	Dom. Rep.	3.8	7	Bolivia	3.8	7
Nicaragua	21.2	39	Guatemala	2.2	4	Haiti	3.8	7
Panama	19.6	36	Panama	2.2	4	Nicaragua	3.8	7
El Salvador	19.0	35	Haiti	1.1	2	Panama	3.8	7
Ecuador	17.4	32	Nicaragua	1.1	2	El Salvador	2.7	5
Honduras	17.4	32	El Salvador	.5	1	Paraguay	2.7	5
Paraguay	15.8	29	Paraguay	.5	1	Honduras	2.2	4
Haiti	14.7	27	Honduras	0	0	Cuba	1.6	3
			No Answer	1.1	2			

in comparison to other Latin American systems. The second highest number of citations for system expertise is Chile with 28.3 percent, while the second highest for field research is Brazil with 19.6 percent. In both cases the country with the second highest number of mentions is considerably behind Mexico.

Apart from Mexico's overall dominance of the results, the data also reveal the importance of seven other countries—Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela. Along with Mexico, they constitute the top eight systems emphasized in courses, as well as the top eight in which respondents felt they had the most expertise. On the question of field research Cuba drops to last (1.6 percent), as more scholars were able to conduct field work in such traditional dictatorships as Haiti and Paraguay than in this revolutionary island ninety miles south of Key West, Florida. Otherwise, the forementioned systems occupy the seven top ranks in field research.

On the question of systems emphasized in courses, only six countries were mentioned by at least half of all respondents. Mexico, as previously noted, was first with 76.6 percent, followed by Chile (73.9), Brazil (71.7), Argentina (67.4), Cuba (61.4), and Peru (54.3). When asked to identify the two or three systems in which they felt they had the most expertise, only six countries were identified by more than 20 percent of all respondents. Mexico was selected by 52.2 percent, Chile by 28.3, Brazil by 26.6, Peru by 26.1, Argentina by 21.7, and Cuba by 21.2. Finally, there were only seven systems in which field research was conducted by more than 10 percent of all respondents. Mexico led with 34.2 percent and right behind was Brazil (19.6), Peru (17.4), Colombia (16.8), Chile (13.0), Argentina (12.5), and Venezuela (12.5).

Furthermore, these data lead one to several conclusions about Latin American politics courses in American colleges and universities. First, the very title Latin American politics may be a misnomer although its use is probably inevitable. The heavy concentration on eight political systems indicates that it may be difficult for scholars to present a genuinely comprehensive view of the entire continent in a single undergraduate course. The complex and diverse politics of over 20 nations may not fit into a single mold or analytic framework that can be called "Latin American." Thus the study and teaching of "Latin American" politics may well parallel the situation so often found in courses on "European" politics where Great Britain, France, and Germany are frequently emphasized while the Scandinavian countries, Spain, Portugal, etc., are neglected.

Another observation contained in Table 1 involves the relationship between systems emphasized in courses, systems in which respondents

feel they have the most expertise, and systems in which field research has been conducted. The relationship, for the most part, appears to be a high one. There is considerable deviation in a few cases. Cuba, for example, ranks fifth in systems emphasized, fifth in perceived expertise, but drops to twentieth in field research. Ecuador, on the other hand, ranks tenth in perceived expertise, ties for eighth in field research, but is tied for only seventeenth in systems emphasized. Overall, however, there seems to be a relationship despite a few exceptions.

To check this judgment reached by inspection, several statistical tests were employed. The data were construed to be ordinal, and the countries ranked from 1 to 20 on systems emphasized, perceived expertise, and field research. A conventional rank order technique, Spearman's Rho, was applied.<sup>5</sup> The results are printed in Table 2.

TABLE 2 *Spearman's Rank Order Coefficients for Systems Emphasized, Perceived Expertise, and Field Research*

	<i>Perceived Expertise</i>	<i>Field Research</i>
Systems Emphasized	.855**	.565**
Perceived Expertise		.669**

Correlations followed by \*\* are significant at the .01 level or better.

All three relationships are confirmed and are significant at the .01 level or better. If one were to grant the exclusion of Cuba from the rank orders involving field research on the grounds that it is truly a deviant case, the results are even more phenomenal. The relationship between systems emphasized and field research jumps from .565 to .803, and the relationship between perceived expertise and field research increases from .669 to .711. Even if one does not grant this assumption, the relationships are high and statistically significant.

The other test that was applied involved a technique known as Kendall's coefficient of concordance. It is a device to estimate the overall association among several ordinal ranks. In this case, it concerned the assessment of the amount of agreement among the rankings of systems emphasized, perceived expertise, and field research simultaneously. The test revealed a very high agreement among the three rankings, with a

correlation coefficient of .860 and statistical significance at the .01 level. Although the outcome is impressive and statistically significant, it would become even more so with Cuba left out of the rankings. If this were done, the coefficient would increase to .946. In short, the utilization of both Spearman's Rho and Kendall's coefficient of concordance confirms the strong relationship between the three rankings. Those systems emphasized in courses are likely to be those in which the instructor claims to have the most expertise and in which he or she has conducted field research. Again the major exception to this generalization appears to be Cuba, as 21.2 percent of all respondents identify it as a system in which they have the most expertise despite the fact that it ranks last in field research with only 1.6 percent of the respondents able to conduct field work.

A second set of questions covered in this survey dealt with the background of those who teach courses on Latin American politics. Here the concern is not with personal background but with the kind of experiential and intellectual preparation that might affect the structure of courses on Latin America. Thus respondents were asked if they had conducted field research in any Latin American nations, which books on Latin America they considered the most important, and which general approaches to political development they found most useful in teaching their courses.

To the question "Have you conducted field research in any particular Latin American country or countries?" a high 77.2 percent of respondents, over three out of four persons, answered they had, while 22.8 percent had not. No effort was made to elicit information about the kind of field research done (delving into a country's national archives, survey of elites, or conducting prolonged research at the village level, etc.), but apparently of those teaching Latin American politics in the United States, a vast majority have some kind of personal experience to bring to the classroom.

The next question on the intellectual preferences of Latin American scholars—"What do you consider to be the two or three most important books on Latin American politics?" elicited an amazing variety of responses. One hundred and six separate titles were recorded in response to this question. Table 3 lists the titles of those works deemed most important by at least 5.0 percent of the respondents. One work, Charles Anderson's *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America*, was singled out by a high 40.2 percent of respondents for its contribution to the Latin American area. After that, there appeared to be no consensus among Latin Americanists on a set of "great books." The next most frequently men-

TABLE 3 Books on Latin American Politics Deemed Most Important by Respondents

Author and Title of Book	% of respondents Mentioning	n
Charles Anderson, <i>Politics and Economic Change In Latin America</i>	40.2	74
Martin Needler, <i>Political Development in Latin America</i>	9.2	17
Helio Jaguaribe, <i>Political Development: A General Theory and a Latin American Case Study</i>	8.2	15
Ben Burnett and Kenneth Johnson (eds.), <i>Political Forces in Latin America</i>	6.0	11
Alfred Stepan, <i>The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil</i>	6.0	11
Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (eds.), <i>Elites in Latin America</i>	5.4	10
Claudio Veliz (ed.), <i>The Politics of Conformity in Latin America</i>	5.4	10
None	16.3	30

tioned was Martin Needler's *Political Development in Latin America* with 9.2 percent, followed by Helio Jaguaribe's *Political Development: A General Theory and a Latin American Case Study* with 8.2. Only four other books received mention by more than 5.0 percent of respondents. One was the text edited by Burnett and Johnson, and two were readers—Lipset and Solari (eds.) and Veliz (ed.). The only book on a single country to merit recognition was Stepan's *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*. Overall, the lack of consensus on important books is not only illustrated by the fact that just seven books were mentioned by more than 5.0 percent of academics surveyed, but also by the sizable 16.3 percent who refused to identify selections because they believed there were no important books on Latin American politics.

Similarly, there was a lack of consensus among respondents to the question "Which of the leading approaches to political development, if any, have you found useful in teaching your course(s)?" Of the 78 titles mentioned by respondents only five were listed by more than 5.0 percent. Table 4 lists the data in response to this question. Leading the list were the works of Huntington with 44.0 percent and Almond and Powell with 37.0 percent. These were followed by Anderson (16.8), Apter (6.5), and Jaguaribe (5.4). Some 6.5 percent stated that the best orientation was a synthesis of leading approaches to development, while 14.1 percent contended that at the present time no approach to development as yet was an adequate explanatory model for use in their courses.

TABLE 4 Approaches to Political Development Found Useful by Respondents

Author and Title	% of Respondents Mentioning n	
Samuel Huntington, <i>Political Order in Changing Societies</i>	44.0	81
Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, <i>Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach</i>	37.0	68
Charles Anderson, <i>Politics and Economic Change in Latin America</i>	16.8	31
David Apter, <i>The Politics of Modernization</i>	6.5	12
Helio Jaguaribe, <i>Political Development: A General Theory and a Latin American Case Study</i>	5.4	10
None	14.1	26
Synthesis	6.5	12

TABLE 5 Approaches to Political Development Found Useful: A Percentage of African, Latin American, and Development/Modernization Respondents (Listed by Five Percent or More of Respondents in at Least One of the Three Surveys)

Approach	Africanists	Latin Americanists	Developmentalists
Samuel Huntington	37.1	44.0	59.4
Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell	44.9	37.0	47.0
David Apter	30.9	6.5	25.3
Lucian Pye	*	*	13.5
Charles Anderson	*	16.8	*
C. E. Black	*	*	9.4
Christian Potholm	7.9	*	*
Aristide Zolberg	7.9	*	*
John Kautsky	*	*	7.0
Barrington Moore	*	*	6.5
Helio Jaguaribe	*	5.4	*
Fred Riggs	*	*	5.0

\*Less than 5.0 percent

To provide the reader with information on how the orientation of Latin Americanists on approaches to development compares with teaching in other areas, the data are contrasted with similar surveys of Africanists and those teaching general courses on development.<sup>6</sup> The data are presented in Table 5. It would appear from the data comparison that Huntington and Almond and Powell are viewed as the two leading works by all three. Huntington is ranked first by developmentalists with 59.4 percent and Latin Americanists 44.0, and is second among Africanists 37.1. Almond and Powell is rated first by Africanists with 44.9, and second by developmentalists 47.0 and Latin Americanists 37.0. The next highest contributor is Apter, rated third by Africanists 30.9 and developmentalists 25.3 and fourth by Latin Americanists 6.5. After this there is no consensus among fields. Latin Americanists select works from their own ranks, Anderson and Jaguaribe, while Africanists do the same, Zolberg and Potholm. Developmentalists chose the contributions of Pye, Black, Kautsky, Moore, and Riggs.

The next area of investigation in this survey deals with the techniques utilized in teaching Latin American politics and with assigned readings and audio-visual materials. Table 6 gives the answers to a question which asked if the respondents had the opportunity to utilize a

TABLE 6 *Teaching Techniques Utilized by Respondents and Evaluation of Their Effectiveness*

Technique	Opportunity to Utilize				Effectiveness of Technique					
	Yes		No		Extremely		Moderately		Not Very	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Student										
Discussion										
Panels	56.5	104	43.5	80	15.4	16	71.2	74	13.4	14
Formalized										
Class Debate	11.4	21	88.6	163	38.1	8	61.9	13		
Simulations	13.0	24	87.0	160	33.3	8	62.5	15	4.2	1
Audio-Visual										
Materials	60.9	112	39.1	72	42.9	48	50.0	56	7.1	8
Works of Fiction	40.8	75	59.2	109	20.0	15	80.0	60		
Socratic Lectures	69.6	128	30.4	56	39.1	50	59.4	76	1.5	2
Other										
Traditional										
Lecture	15.2	28			64.3	18	35.7	10		
Student Reports	14.7	27			22.2	6	74.1	20	3.7	1

number of teaching techniques and, if so, to assess the effectiveness of each technique used. Of the various techniques identified, only three—socratic lectures, audio-visual materials, and student discussion panels—were used by more than half of the respondents. These were used by 69.6, 60.9, and 56.5 percent of the respondents respectively, followed by works of fiction 40.8, simulations 13.0, and formalized class debate 11.4. A part of this question allowed for an open-ended response, but only two additional techniques were listed by 5.0 percent or more of scholars surveyed. They were traditional lectures cited by 15.2 percent and student presentation of research reports listed by 14.7 percent. Of the eight techniques thus far mentioned only one was perceived as extremely effective by as many as half of the respondents utilizing it and surprisingly this was the traditional lecture (64.3 percent). If mention by 10 percent or more of respondents is reasonable for singling out the techniques that have not proven very effective, at least for a significant minority of teachers, then student discussion panels is the only teaching technique over which Latin Americanists have serious reservations. Some 13.4 percent stated that it had not proven very effective.

Table 7 places teaching techniques utilized by Latin Americanists in a cross-disciplinary perspective by comparing it to similar data on Africanists and developmentalists. As can be seen, socratic lectures and student discussion panels are also listed by more than half of the African-

*TABLE 7 Teaching Techniques Utilized By African, Latin American, and Development/Modernization Respondents*

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Percent Who Had Opportunity to Utilize</i>					
	<i>Africanists</i>		<i>Latin Americanists</i>		<i>Developmentalists</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Works of Fiction	75.6	130	40.8	75	38.6	64
Socratic Lectures	75.0	129	69.6	128	66.3	110
Audio-Visual Materials	65.7	113	60.9	112	35.5	59
Student						
Discussion Panels	53.5	92	56.5	104	63.8	106
Simulations	20.3	35	13.0	24	21.1	35
Formalized						
Class Debate	16.3	28	11.4	21	16.9	28
<i>Other</i>						
Student Reports	23.0	41	14.7	27	21.1	35
Traditional Lectures	12.0	23	15.2	28	12.0	20

ists and developmentalists. In addition, more than half the Africanists have also utilized audio-visual materials. The striking difference between the three disciplines appears to be use of works of fiction. It is at the top of the list of teaching techniques for Africanists (75.6 percent), while it is used by less than half of Latin American (40.8 percent) and developmental (38.6 percent) respondents.

Additional data on the three areas are also revealing.<sup>7</sup> The traditional lecture method was perceived as extremely effective by more than half of the respondents utilizing it in all three fields (Latin Americanists 64.3 percent, developmentalists 60.0 percent, and Africanists 53.8 percent). Works of literature was viewed as extremely effective by 70.8 percent of Africanists and 65.6 percent of developmentalists using such material. By contrast, it was regarded as extremely effective by only 20.0 percent of Latin Americanists who used it. Lastly, 58.3 percent of Africanists encouraging student presentations of research projects labeled them extremely effective.

If, as suggested earlier, mention by 10 percent or more of respondents is reasonable for identifying techniques that have not proven very effective, at least for a significant minority of teachers, then we find the following comparative results. Some 13.4 percent of Latin Americanists and 15.1 percent of developmentalists who utilized student discussion panels concluded that they were not very effective. Formalized class debate was viewed as not very effective by 21.4 percent of developmentalists and 14.3 percent of Africanists who had adopted it as a pedagogical technique. Developmentalists adopting student reports and audio-visual materials are disenchanted with 22.9 percent and 10.2 percent respectively recording negative evaluations.

Overall the comparative data indicate that the various disciplines have barely reached "take-off" with respect to experimentation with teaching techniques. Africanists, as a group, are somewhat more willing to innovate than are Latin Americanists and developmentalists. The one technique particularly worthy of further exploration by teachers of Latin American politics is the use of works of fiction, found highly successful by both Africanists and developmentalists.

Another question in the Latin American survey asked the respondent to list the required readings for courses offered in the area. Eight respondents replied that they had no required readings and eight others did not answer the question, leaving a population of 168. From this population emerged 159 titles, with 22 of them mentioned by more than 5.0 percent of all those surveyed.<sup>8</sup> These works are listed in Table 8. It is apparent that there is no consensus on what should be assigned, and the book most

TABLE 8 *Required Readings Listed by Five Percent or More of Respondents*

<i>Author and Title</i>	<i>% of Respondents Mentioning</i>	<i>n</i>
Robert Tomasek (ed.), <i>Latin American Politics: Studies of the Contemporary Scene</i>	16.8	31
Jacques Lambert, <i>Latin America: Social Structure and Political Institutions</i>	12.0	22
John Martz (ed.), <i>The Dynamics of Change in Latin American Politics</i>	11.4	21
James Petras and Maurice Zeitlin (eds.), <i>Latin America: Reform or Revolution?</i>	11.4	21
Charles Anderson, <i>Politics and Economic Change in Latin America</i>	10.9	20
Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (eds.), <i>Elites in Latin America</i>	10.9	20
Irving Louis Horowitz, Josué de Castro and John Gerassi (eds.), <i>Latin American Radicalism</i>	10.3	19
Kenneth Johnson, <i>Mexican Democracy: A Critical View</i>	9.8	18
Peter Snow, <i>Political Forces in Argentina</i>	9.2	17
Charles Denton and Preston Lee Lawrence, <i>Latin American Politics: A Functional Approach</i>	8.7	16
Richard Fagen and Wayne Cornelius (eds.), <i>Political Power in Latin America: Seven Confrontations</i>	8.7	16
Ben Burnett and Kenneth F. Johnson (eds.), <i>Political Forces in Latin America</i>	8.2	15
Eric Wolf and Edward Hansen, <i>The Human Condition In Latin America</i>	7.1	13
Regis Debray, <i>The Chilean Revolution: Conversations With Allende</i>	6.5	12
Alexander Edelmann, <i>Latin American Government and Politics</i>	6.5	12
Martin Needler, <i>Political Development in Latin America</i>	6.5	12
Martin Needler (ed.), <i>Political Systems of Latin America</i>	6.5	12
Peter Ranis, <i>Five Latin American Nations: A Comparative Study</i>	6.5	12
Riordan Roett, <i>Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society</i>	6.0	11
Arpad Von Lazar, <i>Latin American Politics: A Primer</i>	6.0	11
Richard Fagen, <i>The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba</i>	5.4	10
Francisco José Moreno and Barbara Mitrani (eds.), <i>Conflict and Violence In Latin American Politics</i>	5.4	10

frequently cited, the Tomasek reader, was mentioned by only 16.8 percent. Of these 22 titles, seven are anthologies or readers (Tomasek, Martz,

Petras and Zeitlin, Lipset and Solari, Horowitz, de Castro and Gerassi, Fagen and Cornelius, and Moreno and Mitrani), while five are single or multi-authored texts (Denton and Lawrence, Burnett and Johnson, Edelmann, Needler, and Von Lazar). Five are works of a general and comparative nature (Lambert, Anderson, Wolf and Hansen, Needler, Ranis), and five are on a single country (Johnson on Mexico, Snow on Argentina, Debray on Chile, Roett on Brazil and Fagen on Cuba). It would appear that, although there is no consensus on assigned reading, the vast majority of instructors utilize readers, texts, and material of a general and comparative nature in an effort to capture the complexity and diversity of the political systems of Latin America.

Analysis of the data collected in this survey also shows that although some 60.9 percent of Latin Americanists have used audio-visual material, there is little consensus about content. Only three films were mentioned by at least 5 percent of those with experience with this technique. They are listed in Table 9. A larger percentage than that given to any film was the 26.8 percent who said they used slides, often their own taken during field research.

TABLE 9 *Films Used By Respondents*

Title	% of A-V Users		% of Total Respondents	
	Mentioning	<i>n</i>	Mentioning	<i>n</i>
"Fidel"	10.7	12	6.5	12
"The Frozen Revolution"	10.7	12	6.5	12
"A Problem of Power"	7.1	8	4.3	8
Slides	26.8	30	16.3	30

The final area of information concerns the status of Latin American politics on the American campus. Is student interest increasing or decreasing? Are enrollments up or down? The Latin Americanists who responded to such questions reported an enrollment range of 4 to 77, a mean class size of 25.7 and a median class size of 21.0. Compared to previous years, as shown in Table 10, enrollments in Latin American courses have increased more frequently than they have decreased.<sup>9</sup> A total of 31.5 percent of respondents reported a substantial or slight increase, while only 23.9 recorded a slight or substantial decrease. Overall, enrollments seemed to have improved, however slightly. The speculation advanced earlier in this article about the impact of post-Viet Nam dis-

illusionment and mediocre performance of the economy on enrollments in comparative courses does not appear very applicable to the Latin American curriculum.

TABLE 10 Respondents' Comparison of Current Enrollments to Previous Years' Class Size

	% of Respondents	n
Substantial Increase	18.5	34
Slight Increase	13.0	24
Same	37.0	68
Slight Decrease	12.5	23
Substantial Decrease	11.4	21
No Answer	7.6	14

TABLE 11 Respondents' Perception of Student Interest Compared to Previous Years

Interest Level	% of Respondents	n
Substantially Higher	4.9	9
Moderately Higher	15.2	28
Same	53.2	98
Moderately Lower	16.9	31
Substantially Lower	2.2	4
No Answer	7.6	14

If enrollments have slightly increased, the same cannot be said of student interest. As demonstrated in Table 11, the impression of 98 respondents as to student interest is that it is about the same in comparison to student interest in previous years. Those who reported a substantial or moderately higher increase in student interest constituted 20.1 percent of all respondents, while those who claimed a moderately lower or substantially lower decrease totaled 19.1 percent. The others observed it was the same. It would appear, therefore, that the field is at anchor with respect to stimulating undergraduates.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above responses to the survey questionnaire, several generalizations about Latin American politics as a teaching and research area may be tentatively drawn. As an academic discipline, it seems to be highly dynamic and diverse. The very lack of consensus on books in the field (except for Anderson on Latin America, and Huntington and Almond and Powell on development) seems to be a healthy sign. Latin American politics assuredly is an area where intellectual breakthroughs may yet be forthcoming.

Not so encouraging is the relative concentration on eight Latin American systems as objects of field research and classroom emphasis.

The somewhat imbalanced reliance on Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Cuba, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela may well distort one's perceptions of the continent as a whole. Surely our understanding of the region would be enhanced by research on Panama and Uruguay as well as Peru and Mexico.

A third generalization that may be drawn from the above data deals with teaching techniques. Although several teaching techniques are utilized by those teaching Latin American politics courses, only one—the traditional lecture—won overwhelming support in terms of effectiveness.

Furthermore, comparative data reveal that Latin Americanists are somewhat less innovative in the classroom than are their Africanist colleagues. Presumably there needs to be much work done improving pedagogical methodology.

Finally, it would appear that Latin American politics courses are not undergoing any significant decline in enrollments. If anything, enrollments have slightly increased and the area has not been adversely affected by post-Viet Nam disillusionment and a slumping economy. Student interest in Latin America, however, has remained at a standstill. Traditional modes of teaching are not necessarily bad in themselves, nor could one assume that all innovation is necessarily good. It does seem reasonable to postulate, however, that experimentation with diversified modes of presenting material might help to arouse more student interest in Latin America.

## NOTES

1. On the methodology of the mail questionnaire see Delbert C. Miller, *Handbook of Research and Social Measurement* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 76-77; Julian L. Simon, *Basic Research Methods in Social Science: The Art of Empirical Investigation* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 249; and Claire Selltitz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, Stuart W. Cook, *Research Methods in Social Relations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), pp. 241-42.
2. For a broad survey of Latin American Studies Programs (degrees offered and program content—Spanish language and literature, history, economics, and geography as well as political science—based on catalog analysis) see Martin C. Needler and Thomas W. Walker, "The Current Status of Latin American Studies Programs," *LARR*, 6: 1: 119-39 (Spring 1971).
3. *Biographical Directory 1973* (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1973), pp. 551-54.
4. Thirteen percent of all respondents wrote that their courses were so oriented to conceptual approaches rather than country analysis that it was impossible to identify countries that were particularly emphasized. Hence they were not included in the "systems emphasized in course" part of this table. Also, Guyana, Trinidad, and Surinam each received one mention. Since this percentage was less than 1 percent, they were not included in the table.

5. See Herbert M. Blalock, Jr., *Social Statistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 317-19. Dennis J. Palumbo points out that the more laborious Kendall tau procedure is often preferred to Spearman, as a high number of ties in rankings inflates the correlation coefficient produced by the latter. See Dennis J. Palumbo, *Statistics in Political Behavioral Science* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969, p. 168. In order to guard against such an artificial inflation of the correlation coefficient due to a high number of ties in the ordinal scales, the correction formula recommended by Yeomans for Spearman's Rho has been adopted. See K. A. Yeomans, *Applied Statistics: Statistics for the Social Scientist* (2 vols.: Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1968), 1, pp. 304-305.
6. The surveys referred to are both by Henry C. Kenski and Margaret Gorgan Kenski, *Teaching African Politics at American Universities: A Survey* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona, Institute of Government Research, 1974) and *Teaching Political Development and Modernization at American Universities: A Survey* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Institute of Government Research, 1974). Further data comparisons by field that will appear in the text rely on these surveys, also conducted in May 1973. The political development/modernization population consisted of courses on development that were primarily conceptual or cross-national in focus.
7. *Ibid.*
8. A list of assigned readings was also compiled by Henry A. Dietz and Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Some Notes on the Teaching of Latin American Politics in the United States," *Teaching Political Science*, 1: 1: 85 (October 1973). There is overlap between the list presented here and that of Dietz and Lowenthal, but there are also differences. The Kenski list is more comprehensive and systematic due to the survey of a much larger population teaching in the area. On the Dietz-Lowenthal survey procedure see pp. 83-84 of their article.
9. Slight was defined as less than 10.0 percent; substantial was defined as 10.0 percent or more.