Course title
Entrepreneurship and Capitalism in Latin America

Instructor
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Typical # of Meetings: 2 per week – 10 meetings
Class Length: 3 Hrs.

Career Focus:
The course employs the lessons of history to understand the dynamics of international business situations. It looks to the future of entrepreneurship and capitalist development in Latin America through an historical mirror.

**Course Descriptions and Organization:**

This course offers students an opportunity to explore the historical development of capitalism in Latin America, its impacts and consequences. It also offers a wide-ranging framework for understanding the role of entrepreneurs in shaping capitalism in Latin America and how they created business organizations in different contexts and institutional settings.

This region offers rich, and often traumatic, historical data, especially concerning the impact of globalization and economic cycles. Latin America grew rich during the first wave of globalization, which began during the second half of the nineteenth century. However, it was very adversely affected by the economic crisis of the 1930s and the collapse of primary commodity prices. This in turn prompted the growth of nationalist policies and import substitution regimes which had a profound impact on business organization and has left a legacy that remains today. From the 1970s, as globalization began again to climb to high levels, firms and entrepreneurs in the region were impacted by internal political tensions and the shocks administered by global capital flows.

The course covers the founding of the new nations at the end of the nineteenth century, the integration to a global economy, the early entrepreneurial venturing, the changes in the structure of business over the last centuries, the winners and losers from capitalist expansion. Placing business in a broad political, economic, and cultural context, the course explores the challenging decisions and dilemmas entrepreneurs have faced in different historical eras. By reviewing the historical evidence on Latin American entrepreneurship, it provides a unique learning opportunity for those considering careers both in entrepreneurship and general management.

Through discussions, readings, videos, and slide presentations, students will encounter several different units of analysis: the individual business leader, the firm, the worker, the company, the sector, and the country. The course is organized following the theoretical framework designed by Prof. Geoffrey Jones (Harvard Business School). At HBS Prof. Jones has developed a successful course on the history of global capitalism called Entrepreneurship and Global Capitalism that he has taught since 2004.

The course is divided into the following four modules:

**Module I: Building Global Capitalism**

The first examines how entrepreneurs built a global economy in the nineteenth century by creating business organizations that pursued resources and markets across borders. It shows the different impacts of this complex process in Latin America and how some entrepreneurs (many of them immigrants) identified business opportunities, organize firms and managed risks in the face of challenging circumstances.
Module II: Globalization Reversed

The second module seeks to understand the spectacular reversal of globalization from the 1920s, as wars and the Great Depression prompted Latin American governments to respond. It explores the role entrepreneurs played in causing the widespread questioning of the legitimacy of capitalism during this period, and their responses to a new challenging environment and an increasing government intervention-regulation. It also analyze the impact of economic crises and new economic ideologies in country performances and the business opportunities posed by the resulting during the new political and regulatory environment (ISI policies).

Module III: Origins of Second Global Economy

The third module shows how entrepreneurs rebuilt global capitalism and global markets after World War 2, but with much of the world and most of the Latin America countries opting out with closed economies. It also studies the liberalization reforms and its impacts on business structures and the new role of foreign investment.

Module IV: Recreating Global Capitalism

The final module examines the creation of today's new global economy between 1979 and the present day. It discusses the new opportunities in the global capitalism and how some firms of Brazil, Chile, Mexico and/or Argentina (multilatinas): what facilitates catch-up? Could firms in emerging markets challenge global giants from rich countries and become emerging giants? Have latecomers’ advantages? Could such challengers make a difference to global wealth and poverty in consequence?

Reading Materials (preliminary list)

Case studies published by the Harvard Business School Press:
Additional reading materials and textbooks:


Additional reading materials will be distributed in class.