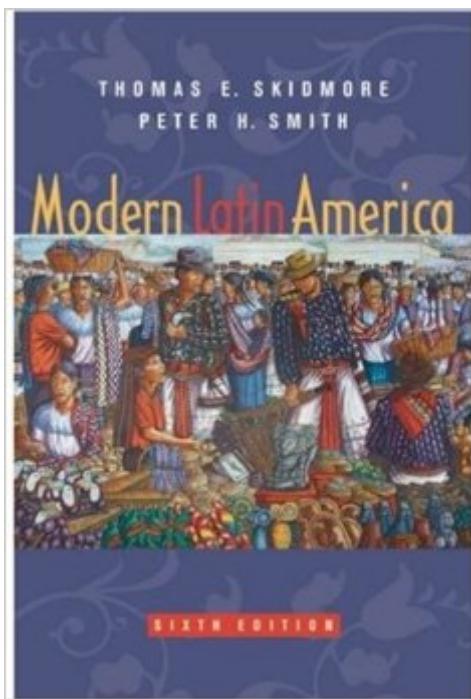


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# Modern Latin America



## **Synopsis**

Now in its sixth edition, *Modern Latin America* is a lively interpretive history and the leading text in the field. Thoroughly updated and revised, the book includes a new chapter on the history of Colombia from the wars of independence to the violent conflicts of the present day. It also examines such topics as: \* the impact of 9/11 on U.S.-Latin American relations \* globalization \* drug trafficking \* women's roles in society and politics \* the fragility and uncertainty of democracy in Latin America The book features sociocultural sections and boxes in nearly every chapter, covering such diverse areas as the psychology of exile, *SanterÃ-a* in Cuba, baseball in the Dominican Republic, and the popularity of Latin music in the U.S. All political and economic information has been updated. As in earlier editions, the authors use an in-depth case study approach that guides readers through the major countries of Latin America, highlighting central themes including European-New World interaction, racial mixtures, military takeovers, and United States intervention in the area. With an insightful look into the future, *Modern Latin America*, Sixth Edition, will continue to be an exceptional text for undergraduate courses on contemporary Latin American history, society, and politics.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

*Modern Latin America*, Sixth Edition was the primary text used in my 3000-level Latin American history course. Its chapters include: The Colonial Foundations (1492-1880s) The Transformation of

Modern Latin America (1880s-2000s) Argentina Chile Brazil Peru Colombia Mexico Cuba The Caribbean (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico) Central America: Colonialism, Dictatorship, and Revolution Latin America, United States, and the World What Future for Latin America? There's also a nice appendix of leaders and recommended additional reading. Overall, all prospective readers must know that Skidmore is a subscriber to dependency theory. In essence, dependency theory classifies countries as either in the economic "core" or "periphery" in the world. Countries like Japan, China, U.S.A., and Germany would be considered in the core. Everyone else, especially most of Latin America, would be in the periphery. Thus, according to dependency theory, one of the primary sources of Latin America's economic woe is its inability to control its own economic destiny due to being in the periphery. Many problems have surfaced in regard to this stance, but you should know that this ideology is what Skidmore bases himself in. As such, I find much of the analysis to be painfully lacking. This is an overview book with heavy reliance on facts alone and chronological progression. Causal analysis and historiographical considerations are quite sparse. Additionally, Skidmore does not use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical referencing to back-up any of his writing with evidence.

How many North Americans really know what Latin America is like? How many can name more than six countries in the region? The history and politics of the region are rich and complex. Skidmore and Smith make this rich region understandable for a layperson who is not a specialist in the Latin American region. The first two chapters of the book are a general historical overview, beginning with pre-Columbian times right up until the present. After that, it looks at a variety of case studies within the region, including Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Cuba, the Caribbean, and Central America. The authors are successful at presenting not only the common threads that bind the region (for example dependencia theory) but also the distinctions between the countries (for example the lack of a local working class in Argentina compared to the oversupply of indigenous labor in Mexico) and explains how that affects each individual country in the region. For most of the second half of the 19th century as well as the 20th century, the United States is the primary foreign actor in the region. How they resolve their relations with the U.S. and with one another is a driving force in the political development of the region. From the 1950s (and especially from the 1960s), the Soviets enter the fray. While the Soviets are now gone, as can be seen from the news today, the legacy of leftism (which predated the Soviet influence in the region) is still an active part of Latin American politics. While many in North America may think that the leftist movements in Latin America (i.e. Venezuela and Bolivia) are a knee-jerk anti-American reaction, the roots are far deeper than that.

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