

## LSE – Universidad Panamericana International Programme

End of programme evaluation.

Essay guidelines:

You will find below 3 thematic options to elaborate an essay that answers one or more than one of the questions suggested for each topic. Choose one and follow the guidelines below to elaborate your writing. We expect your essay to be original and address the questions with solid arguments.

**Language:** Your essay should be written in English, using proper grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Avoid slang or overly complex language that may obscure your ideas.

**Structure and Coherence:** Organise your essay in a well-structured manner, with clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Each paragraph should focus on a specific idea or argument and transition smoothly to the next.

**Length:** Maintain the length of your essay between 800 and 1200 words. This range allows for a comprehensive exploration of your topic while ensuring conciseness.

**Argument and Evidence:** Develop a clear and well-evidenced argument throughout your essay. Support your claims with relevant sources. Instead of footnotes, consider incorporating hyperlinks within the text to provide direct access to the sources.

**Citations:** If you include footnotes, make sure to follow a recognised citation style such as APA or MLA. Properly cite your sources to give credit to the original authors and avoid plagiarism. Alternatively, you can incorporate in-text citations or hyperlinks within the text, as mentioned earlier.

Once complete email your answer as a Word document with your full name as the file name to [lacc@lse.ac.uk](mailto:lacc@lse.ac.uk)

## Topic 1

### **Exploring the Dynamics of China-Latin America Relations: Prospects for Development or Dependency.**

The growing relations between China and Latin American countries have garnered significant attention in recent years. In your essay, examine these relations and analyse the potential for development or dependency as consequence of this growing relations. Elaborate on the opportunities and challenges that arise from this partnership, considering economic, political, and social factors. Provide a comprehensive assessment of the potential consequences and support your arguments with relevant examples from both historical and contemporary contexts.

#### Essay Ideas:

1. Analyse the economic dimension of China-Latin America relations and assess the potential for development or dependency. Examine the trade patterns, investment flows, and infrastructure projects between the two regions, considering both positive and negative implications.
2. Investigate the impact of China's demand for natural resources on Latin American countries. Discuss the opportunities and challenges arising from this relationship, including issues related to resource extraction, environmental sustainability, and economic diversification.
3. Assess the role of Chinese investments in Latin America's infrastructure development. Explore the benefits and risks associated with Chinese-funded infrastructure projects, such as transportation networks, energy facilities, and telecommunication systems.
4. Evaluate the geopolitical consequences of China's growing presence in Latin America. Discuss the implications for regional power dynamics, including the influence on traditional powers in the Americas and the potential for increased regional integration or fragmentation.
5. Discuss regionalism and the role that organisations such as OAS or CELAC have played in the type of relationships that Latin America is building with China.

## Topic 2

### East Asia versus Latin America - Analysing Low Productivity in Latin America

The economic growth of East Asia and Latin America has shown a substantial contrast over the past decades. In your essay, explore this disparity and the reasons behind the low productivity levels observed in Latin America. Examine economic, social, and political factors that have contributed to this situation, and assess the individual and collective factors affecting productivity. Provide evidence supporting any relevant examples.

#### Essay Ideas:

1. Provide an overview of the economic growth experiences in East Asia and Latin America. Analyse the factors contributing to the stark contrast in economic performance between the two regions. Examine the role of historical, political, and socio-economic factors in shaping their respective paths.
2. Define productivity and its significance in driving economic growth. Explore the main determinants of productivity, such as human capital, technological innovation, and institutional quality. Discuss how variations in productivity levels have influenced the economic outcomes of East Asia and Latin America. Assess the role of education and human capital in Latin America's productivity gap.
3. Investigate the state of education systems in Latin America and their impact on productivity. Analyse the challenges and shortcomings in human capital development in the region. Discuss potential strategies to address educational deficiencies and enhance human capital in Latin America.
4. Examine the quality of institutions and governance structures in Latin America. Analyse how institutional deficiencies contribute to low productivity and hinder economic growth. Discuss potential reforms and strategies to strengthen institutions and improve governance in Latin America.

### Topic 3

#### The Tyranny of Merit: Polarisation and Healing in Contemporary Society

In his book "The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?" political philosopher Michael J. Sandel explores the concept of meritocracy and its impact on our society. Drawing from the paragraph provided below, analyse the causes of our polarised public life, and propose strategies to heal it.

*"We failed to acknowledge our role in provoking the resentment that gave rise to the populist backlash. At the heart of this flaw is the way in which the traditional parties conceived and implemented the globalisation project over the past four decades, technocracy and meritocracy. Technocracy understood political division as open and closed economies, prioritising technical expertise beyond the reach of the common citizen, disempowering them. This incited resentment against elites and led to frustration as a result of a lack of recognition and social esteem. And meritocracy exacerbated this situation with the illusion of "you can if you try, if you feel like it" and if you can't, it's because you don't have talent, or you didn't try hard enough. This became the "politics of humiliation" which added fuel to the anger and resentment that strengthen and sustain populism."*

**Michael J. Sandel "The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?" (2020).**

Essay ideas:

1. How does the notion of "meritocratic pride" contribute to the polarisation of our society? Discuss the attitude of winners and losers in the meritocracy and its implications for social cohesion.
2. What are the limitations of the meritocratic ideal in achieving equality of opportunity? Explain the factors that hinder equal chances for success and the perpetuation of social inequality.
3. Assess the role of universities in the current meritocratic system. Discuss the impact of making a college degree a prerequisite for dignified work and propose alternative approaches to fostering social mobility and recognising diverse contributions.
4. Reflect on the dignity of work and its significance in promoting a sense of belonging and community. Explain why the measure of an individual's contribution to the common good should extend beyond financial success.
5. Explore the role of luck in shaping individual success and societal outcomes. Discuss the importance of humility in acknowledging the role of luck and fostering empathy and understanding among individuals from different backgrounds.