

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
**IR367/PO360: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
SYLLABUS  
Fall 2014  
MWF **11am-12pm**  
Location: **CAS 324**

Professor **Renata Keller**  
Office: **152 Bay State Road, Room 337**  
Office Hours: **Tuesday 10-12, Wednesday 2-3, and by appointment**  
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### **Course Rationale, Goals, and Organization**

This course offers an introduction to Latin American politics and international relations. We will proceed from an overview of the region as a whole to detailed studies of specific countries and issues in U.S.-Latin American relations. In the spirit of interdisciplinary scholarship, we will draw on a variety of methods and sources to seek answers to a number of overarching questions:

How has Latin America's past shaped its present and future? What common political patterns can we identify across the region? Why do specific countries follow or deviate from those patterns? In what ways has the United States interacted with Latin America over the decades, both to the benefit and detriment of its neighbors?

Our goal in this course is twofold:

- 1) You will gain knowledge about the historical dynamics and contemporary characteristics of Latin American politics and international relations
- 2) You will develop reading, writing, and communication skills that will serve you in your college career and beyond

The organization of the course, which does not assume any prior knowledge of Latin America or of U.S. policy, is as follows:

1. We begin with a chronological overview of Latin American history, with an eye toward gaining the knowledge of the past necessary to understand the present. We will identify and attempt to explain common patterns and processes in regional politics and international relations.
2. Then, in order to present a contrast to our previous analysis from an academic, outside perspective, you will read either a personal testimony or a novel (choose ONE from the list of six below) and will prepare a three-page paper reflecting on something you learned about Latin

American politics from the reading. I will ask a few of you to comment on your reflections with the rest of the class.

3. Next, we will spend several weeks focusing on six countries in the region: Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba. We will compare their histories to the general patterns that we observed earlier in the semester, delving into greater detail about their politics, economics, and relations with the United States. In this segment of the course, each of you will choose one of the six countries to research and meet with several other members of the class in groups based on the country. **Each of you will prepare a research paper** (10 pages) in which you discuss the single greatest challenge that country faces, provide evidence for this assessment, and offer recommendations for meeting that challenge. The paper will be due on the last day your country is discussed in class (with the exception of the Mexico papers, since that is the first country we will discuss). Each country group will select one of your members to give a brief summary to the rest of the class that day of some of the papers' most important points and conclusions.
4. We then turn to an overview of U.S.-Latin American relations, analyzing the main patterns of these relations over time and the degree to which the United States has influenced its neighbors and vice-versa. You will once again form smaller groups to discuss an issue in U.S.-Latin American relations that you would like to explore more deeply (for example, intervention, immigration, trade, national security, drugs and drug trafficking). Each group will select one of its members to comment to the rest of the class on what the group has found to be the most important elements of the issue.

### **Grading**

1. **Mid-Term Exam: (20%)** Short essay questions covering historical background **F 26 Sep**
2. **Reflection Paper: (10%)** (3 pages) on a testimony or novel **Due F 3 Oct**
3. **Research Paper (30%)** (10 pages, not counting separate cover page and bibliography) Choose one country to study. What is the single greatest challenge that country currently faces? Why? How did that challenge develop? What should that country do to meet or resolve the challenge?  
**Mexico (due F 10 Oct), Peru (F 17 Oct), Guatemala (F 24 Oct), Argentina (F 31 Oct), Brazil (F 7 Nov), Cuba (F 14 Nov)**
4. **Final Exam: (20%)** Short essay questions covering countries and U.S.-Latin American relations **M 15 Dec**
5. **Participation: (20%)** The quality of your involvement in:
  - a. student groups (novel or testimony, country, and U.S. policy issues)
  - b. class presentation when selected by your group
  - c. class discussions
  - d. You are also encouraged to attend Latin American Studies Program events

All assignments should be double-spaced in Times New Roman size 12 font with a one-inch margin on all sides. Use Chicago Style footnote citations for primary and secondary sources (for guidelines on proper citation format, see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)). There will be a penalty of 10% for each day that an assignment is late. You will only be allowed to turn in an assignment late without penalty if you have a documented emergency.

### **Expectations:**

1. Participation. I expect you to do the readings, bring the readings to class, and participate in discussions.
2. Attention. I expect you to close your laptops and put them away during lectures and presentations. Take notes by hand.
3. Communication.
  - a. If you have a question, don't hesitate to raise your hand and ask or contact me privately. If you have a problem or an emergency arises, let me know and I will be very willing to work with you.
  - b. If you need an accommodation for any type of physical or learning disability, medical needs, or any other reason, you should meet with the student disability services office and then meet with me privately to discuss the modifications necessary to ensure your full participation in the course.
  - c. When emailing me, address your emails to "Professor Keller" or "Dr. Keller."
4. Proper Academic Conduct. It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the College of Arts and Science's Academic Conduct Code, available at: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>. I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean's Office.

### **Required Readings**

1) John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) [Chasteen in reading assignments] ISBN: 0393911543

2) *Latin American News Digest*: ([latinamericannewsdigest.com](http://latinamericannewsdigest.com)) Covers current developments in Latin American countries and is available in an online 6-month subscription for \$18. We will discuss current events at the beginning of class every Monday.

3) **One** of the following six novels or testimonies (**your choice**):

- Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Verso, 2010) ISBN: 9781844674183  
An indigenous woman recounts her family's experiences in twentieth-century Guatemala
- Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs* (Long Grove IL: Waveland Press, 2002). ISBN 9781577662419 (or 2008 Penguin edition ISBN-13: 9780143105275)  
A Mexican novelist's view of his country's 1910 Revolution
- Carolina María De Jesús, *Child of the Dark*, Signet Classic (New York: Penguin Group, 2003). ISBN 0451529103 (or ISBN-13: 9780451529107)  
Life in a Brazilian shanty town (*favela*) in the 1950s through the eyes of a resident
- Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001). ISBN 0299182444 (or ISBN-13: 9780299182441)  
An Argentine journalist narrates his ordeal during his country's repressive military dictatorship (1976-83)
- Mario Vargas Llosa, *Death in the Andes* (New York: St. Martin's 2007). ISBN 9780312427252  
A Peruvian novelist depicts the intertwining of myth and reality in a sierra mining town during the Shining Path's "people's war"
- Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007) ISBN 9781594489587  
A Dominican-American novelist tells the story of a young misfit Dominican growing up in New Jersey in the 1980s

5) **In addition**, there will be some documents, articles, and book chapters assigned for specific classes (noted with a \*). These may be found on the Blackboard web site under Content. Our Blackboard site will also contain important information about assignments and exams under Announcements; other course-related material, such as the syllabus, is under Information.

### **Classes, Topics, and Reading Assignments (subject to change with advance notice)**

**Wed, Sept 3:**            Introduction  
Course overview, details, expectations

- Fri, Sept 5:** Historical Overview: The Colonial Legacy  
Chasteen, 1-84
- Mon, Sept 8:** Historical Overview: Independence  
Chasteen, 87-110
- Wed, Sept 10:** Historical Overview: Postcolonial Blues and Progress  
Chasteen, 117-176
- Fri, Sept 12:** Historical Overview: Neocolonialism  
Chasteen, 181-215
- Mon, Sept 15:** Historical Overview: Nationalism  
Chasteen, 217-251
- Wed, Sept 17:** Historical Overview: Revolution  
Chasteen, 253-283
- Fri, Sept 19:** Historical Overview: Reaction  
Chasteen, 285-316
- Mon, Sept 22:** Historical Overview: Neoliberalism  
Chasteen, 319-340
- Wed, Sept 24:** Illiberal Democracy  
\* Peter H. Smith, *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 263-288
- Fri, Sept 26:** Review for Mid-Term Exam
- Mon, Sept 29:** **MID-TERM EXAM**
- Wed, Oct 1:** Country Cases: Introduction  
Country group meetings: Deadline to pick a country to research  
Discussion of expectations for research and reflection papers
- Fri, Oct 3:** Mexico – Politics in Historical Context
- Mon, Oct 6:** Novels & Testimonies, Continued  
Individual novel or testimony group meetings to discuss what you have read  
**REFLECTION PAPERS DUE**
- Wed, Oct 8:** Mexico – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics

\*Daniel Cosío Villegas, “Mexico’s Crisis” in Stanley R. Ross, ed., *Is the Mexican Revolution Dead?* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 73-86. Originally published in *Cuadernos Americanos*, XXXII (March-April 1947), 29-51.

**Fri, Oct 10:** Mexico – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Mexico group  
Class discussion of Mexico’s challenges

**Mon, Oct 13:** **NO CLASS—MEET ON TUESDAY INSTEAD**

**TUESDAY, Oct 14:** Peru – Politics in Historical Context  
**MEXICO RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Wed, Oct 15:** Peru – 20th Century Political Dynamics  
\* José María Arguedas, “Runa Yupay” in John Charles Chasteen, ed., *Born in Blood and Fire: Latin American Voices* (New York: Norton, 2011), 181-187. Originally published in *Agua y otros cuentos indígenas* (Lima: Editorial Milla Batres, 1974), 115-116, 119-126, 134-135, 137.  
\* Mario Vargas Llosa, “Politics and Literature: The Odd Couple” in William H. Gass and Lorin Cuoco, eds., *The Writer in Politics* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 60-70

**Fri, Oct 17:** Peru – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Peru group  
Class discussion of Peru’s challenges  
**PERU RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Mon, Oct 20:** Guatemala – Politics in Historical Context

**Wed, Oct 22:** Guatemala – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
\*Miguel Angel Asturias, “Weekend in Guatemala” in John Charles Chasteen, ed., *Born in Blood and Fire: Latin American Voices* (New York: Norton, 2011), 195-209. Originally published in *Week-end en Guatemala* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Goyanarte, 1956), 95-107.

**Fri, Oct 24:** Guatemala – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Guatemala group  
Class discussion of Guatemala’s challenges  
**GUATEMALA RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Mon, Oct 27:** Argentina – Politics in Historical Context

**Wed, Oct 29:** Argentina – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics

\*Louisa Valenzuela, “Trying to Breathe” in *The Writer in Politics*, 85-97

- Fri, Oct 31:** Argentina – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Argentina group  
Class discussion of Argentina’s challenges  
**ARGENTINA RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Mon, Nov 3:** Brazil – Politics in Historical Context
- Wed, Nov 5:** Brazil – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
\* “Ordinary People: Five Lives Affected by Vargas-Era Reforms,” in Robert M. Levine and John J. Crocitti, eds., *Brazil Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 206-221
- Fri, Nov 7:** Brazil – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Brazil group  
Class discussion of Brazil’s challenges  
**BRAZIL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Mon, Nov 10:** Cuba – Politics in Historical Context
- Wed, Nov 12:** Cuba – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
\* Fidel Castro, “History Will Absolve Me” in Philip Brenner et. al, ed. *The Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society* (New York: Grove Press, 1989) 31-35  
\* Rafael Hernández, “Cuba: The Frontier of Latin America” in Brenner et al., *The Cuba Reader*, 395-398
- Fri, Nov 14:** Cuba – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation by student selected from Cuba group  
Class discussion of Cuba’s challenges  
**CUBA RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Mon, Nov 17:** U.S. Relations with Latin America: Introduction & Issues  
Students select issues in U.S. policy and meet in issue groups to begin discussions
- Wed, Nov 19:** U.S.-Latin American Relations: 1823-1933  
\*Harry E. Vanden & Gary Prevost, “U.S.-Latin American Relations,” *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford, 2012), 277-285  
\* “The Monroe Doctrine” in Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov, eds., *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13-16

\* “The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine” in Holden and Zolov, 96-98

**Fri, Nov 21:**            U.S.-Latin American Relations: 1933-1979  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 285-295  
\* “The Good Neighbor Policy” in Holden and Zolov, 133-134  
\* “The Alliance for Progress” in Holden and Zolov, 221-223

**Mon, Nov 24:**            U.S.-Latin American Relations: 1980-2000  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 295-298  
\* “The Summit of the Americas” in Holden and Zolov, 351-354  
\* “The Drug War: ‘Plan Colombia’” in Holden and Zolov, 378-382

**Wed, Nov 26: Thanksgiving Break**

**Fri, Nov 28: Thanksgiving Break**

**Mon, Dec 1:**            U.S.-Latin American Relations: 2000-Present  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 298-302  
\* “Unauthorized Immigration to the United States” in Holden and Zolov, 390-392

**Wed, Dec 3:**            U.S. Relations with L.A.: Student Issue Group Discussions

**Fri, Dec 5:**            Issues in U.S.-L.A. Relations, I: Student Presentations  
A representative selected by each issue group comments on the key points of the group’s discussions

**Mon, Dec 8:**            Issues in U.S.-L.A. Relations, II: Student Presentations  
Issue group representative comments, continued

**Wed, Dec 10:**            Conclusions: What Have We Learned about Latin American Politics and International Relations?

**Mon, Dec 15:**            **FINAL EXAM 12-2PM**