

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
**IR/PO 367: INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS AND  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
SYLLABUS  
Fall 2012  
MWF **11am-12pm**  
Location: **COM 213**

Professor **Renata Keller**  
Office: **152 Bay State Road, Room 338**  
Office Hours: **M 1:30-3, W 2:30-4, Th 10:30-11:30, and by appointment**  
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### **Course Rationale, Goals, and Organization**

As its title suggests, 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 and anticipate the future. We will identify and attempt to explain common patterns and processes in regional politics and international relations. As this section of the course predominantly focuses on building your knowledge base, it will culminate in a mid-term exam.

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 (your choice from the list of five below) and will prepare a two-page paper reflecting on something you learned about Latin American politics from the reading (NOT a book report). 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 important 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 chose 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 short research paper** (10 pages maximum) in which you assess the likelihood of full democratic consolidation in that country and provide the empirical and historical bases for this assessment. The paper will be due on the last day your country is discussed in class. 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 in both positive and negative ways. You will once again form smaller groups to discuss an issue in U.S.-L.A. relations that you would like to explore more deeply (for example, intervention, immigration, pursuit of a market economy, 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.
5. Finally, we conclude by reflecting upon what we have learned in order to make predictions about Latin America's future.

### **Grading**

1. **Mid-Term Exam: (15%)** Short essays covering historical background and novels and testimonies **F 28 Sep**
2. **Short Reflection Paper: (10%)** (2 pages) on a testimony or novel **Due M 1 Oct**
3. **Short Research Paper (30%)** (9-10 pages, not counting separate cover and bibliography pages) Assess the degree to which the country you choose to study in greater depth is likely to achieve full democratic consolidation over the next two decades. **Mexico (due W 10 Oct), Peru (W 17 Oct), Guatemala (W 24 Oct), Argentina (W 31 Oct), Brazil (W 7 Nov), Cuba (W 14 Nov).**
  - a. You will have the option to revise this paper and turn it in one week after I return the graded paper **if** the first submission is complete and on time. Include the original with the revised version.
4. **Participation: (25%)** 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, and
  - c. your commentary on assigned readings when selected by your professor.
  - d. You are also encouraged to attend Latin American Studies Program events.
5. **Final Exam (20%)** Short essays on U.S.-L.A. relations and the countries of Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba. **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 12:30 pm**

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)). Turn in your assignments on time—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. Communication. 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. 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.
3. 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.

The college of Arts & Sciences (CAS) Deans' Office has requested that you be informed of the following:

1. The last day to drop the course without a W grade is **Tuesday, October 9.**
2. The last day to drop the course with a W grade is **Friday, November 9.**

### **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) David Scott Palmer, *U.S. Relations with Latin America during the Clinton Years: Opportunities Lost or Opportunities Squandered?* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006) [DSP in reading assignments] ISBN: 081303017X (or ISBN-13: 9781616101428 )

3) *Latin American Weekly Report* (LAWR). Covers current developments in Latin American countries and is available in an online 10-week subscription at a special student rate of \$25 (regular cost is \$100). Be sure to read and print all articles about Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba, as well as any articles pertaining to issues in U.S.-Latin American relations.

4) **One** of the following five novels or testimonies (**your choice**):

- Miguel Angel Asturias, *The President* (Long Grove IL: Waveland Press, 1963). ISBN 9780881339512  
A Guatemalan novelist and Nobel Laureate describes life and death under caudillo rule
- 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 and Nobel Laureate depicts the intertwining of myth and reality in a sierra mining town during Shining Path's "people's war"

5) **In addition**, there will be some articles and book chapters assigned for specific classes (noted with a \*). These may be found on the 367 Blackboard web site under Assignments. This site will also contain important information about assignments and exams under Announcements; other course-related material, such as the syllabus, is under Course Documents.

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

- Wed, Sept 5:**            Introduction  
Course overview, details, expectations
- Fri, Sept 7:**            Historical Overview: The Colonial Legacy  
Chasteen, 1-84
- Mon, Sept 10:**        Historical Overview: Independence  
Chasteen, 87-110
- Wed, Sept 12:**        Historical Overview: Postcolonial Blues and Progress  
Chasteen, 117-176
- Fri, Sept 14:**        Historical Overview: Neocolonialism  
Chasteen, 181-215
- Mon, Sept 17:**        Historical Overview: Nationalism  
Chasteen, 217-251
- Wed, Sept 19:**        Historical Overview: Revolution  
Chasteen, 253-283
- Fri, Sept 21:**        Historical Overview: Reaction  
Chasteen, 285-316
- Mon, Sept 24:**        Historical Overview: Neoliberalism and Illiberal Democracy  
Chasteen, 319-340  
\* 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
- Wed, Sept 26:**        Novels & Testimonies as Windows onto Political Realities  
Individual novel or testimony group meetings to discuss what you have read and to pick a member to present next week
- Fri, Sept 28:**        **MID-TERM EXAM**
- Mon, Oct 1:**            Novels & Testimonies, Continued  
The selected member of each group provides a brief presentation on something you learned about Latin American political realities from your paper and from the group discussion  
**SHORT REFLECTION PAPERS DUE**
- Wed, Oct 3:**            Country Cases: Introduction

Country group meetings: Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba  
Discussion of expectations for research papers

**Fri, Oct 5:** Core Countries: Mexico – Politics in Historical Context  
\* Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York, Grove Press, 1985, originally publ 1961) 117-149, 175-194

**Mon, Oct 8: NO CLASS**

**TUESDAY, Oct 9:** Mexico – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics

**Wed, Oct 10:** Mexico – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Mexico group  
Class discussion of Mexican current events based on LAWR  
**MEXICO SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Fri, Oct 12:** Core Countries: Peru – Politics in Historical Context

**Mon, Oct 15:** Peru – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
\* Alma Guillermoprieto, “The Bitter Education of Vargas Llosa,” *Looking for History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001)155-177

**Wed, Oct 17:** Peru – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Peru group  
Class discussion of Peruvian current events based on LAWR  
**PERU SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Fri, Oct 19:** Peripheral Countries: Guatemala – Politics in Historical Context

**Mon, Oct 22:** Guatemala – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
\*Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, ed. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, trans. Ann Wright (New York: Verso, 1984), 1-6, 102-116, 172-182

**Wed, Oct 24:** Guatemala – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Guatemala group  
Class discussion of Guatemalan current events based on LAWR  
**GUATEMALA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Fri, Oct 26:** Peripheral Countries: Argentina – Politics in Historical Context

- Mon, Oct 29:** Argentina – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
 \* Alma Guillermoprieto, “Buenos Aires, 1991,” *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 119-150
- Wed, Oct 31:** Argentina – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
 Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Argentina group  
 Class discussion of Argentine current events based on LAWR  
**ARGENTINA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Fri, Nov 2:** A Unique Case: Brazil – Politics in Historical Context
- Mon, Nov 5:** Brazil – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Political Dynamics  
 \* Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Introduction,” *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1-30
- Wed, Nov 7:** Brazil – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
 Presentation on democratic consolidation issues by student selected from Brazil group  
 Class discussion of Brazilian current events based on LAWR  
**BRAZIL SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Fri, Nov 9:** A Revolutionary Case: Cuba – Politics in Historical Context
- Mon, Nov 12:** Cuba – The 1959 Revolution and Socialist Consolidation  
 \* Alma Guillermoprieto, “The Harsh Angel,” *Looking for History*, 73-86
- Wed, Nov 14:** Cuba – Contemporary Developments & Challenges  
 Presentation on alternative future political scenarios by student selected from Cuba group  
 Class discussion of Cuban current events based on LAWR  
**CUBA SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**
- Fri, Nov 16:** The Cases Reviewed and Compared: Most Likely Future Scenarios  
 \*Smith, *Democracy in Latin America*, 313-344  
 Full democratic consolidation?  
 Continued low-intensity or interrupted democracy?  
 A new wave of authoritarianism and/or instability?  
 Class discussion led by a representative selected from each country group, emphasizing comparisons of issues affecting assessments of democratic consolidation or, in the case of Cuba, the possibility of a turn to a democratic alternative

- Mon, Nov 19:** U.S. Relations with Latin America: Introduction & Framework  
Palmer (DSP) 1-8  
Students select issues in U.S. policy and meet in issue groups to begin discussions
- Wed, Nov 21: Thanksgiving Break**
- Fri, Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break**
- Mon, Nov 26:** Historical Overview of U.S.-L.A. 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
- Wed, Nov 28:** Historical Overview of U.S.-L.A. Relations: 1933-1989  
DSP, 9-15  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 285-295
- Fri, Nov 30:** U.S.-L.A. Relations during the G.H.W. Bush & Clinton Years  
DSP, 16-95  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 295-298
- Mon, Dec 3:** U.S.-L.A. Relations under G.W. Bush & Obama  
\*Arturo Valenzuela, "Beyond Benign Neglect: Washington and Latin America," *Current History* 104:679 (February 2005), 58-63  
\*Michael Shifter, "Obama and Latin America: New Beginnings, Old Frictions," *Current History* 109:724 (February 2010), 67-73  
\*Vanden & Prevost, 298-302
- Wed, Dec 5:** U.S. Relations with L.A.: Student Issue Group Discussions
- Fri, Dec 7:** 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 10:** Issues in U.S.-L.A. Relations, II: Student Presentations  
Issue group representative comments, continued
- Wed, Dec 12:** Conclusions: What Have We Learned about Latin American Politics and U.S.-Latin American Relations?
- FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 12:30 pm**