

## **INR 4244: International Politics of Latin America**

Department of Political Science

University of Florida

Fall 2025

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### **Course Information**

Lecture: Tuesday 11:45 AM - 1:40 PM (FLI 0115)

Thursday 12:50 PM - 1:40 PM (FLI 0115)

### **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of Latin American foreign relations. After beginning with a brief overview of international relations theories, we will move on to discussing historical and current Inter-American relationships. Why do Latin American countries do what they do? What are their interests and what can they do to realize them? What historical challenges have they faced, what are their present concerns, and what issues are likely to arise in years to come? We will discuss cooperation and conflict, economic growth and depression, and prospects for regional prosperity. The world is moving toward a new global order, the outlines of which are still murky. As a result, Inter-American relationships are increasingly complex and consequential.

### **Course Objectives**

In this course we will:

1. Apply international relations theories and concepts to the study of Latin American relations.
2. Analyze historical as well as contemporary political, economic, and security relationships in the Americas.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- 1) Identify key events, actors, and institutions shaping inter-American relations from the 19th century to the present.
- 2) Explain how domestic politics, economic structures, and international constraints influence international behavior in the region.

- 3) Evaluate a complex political situation, develop persuasive, evidence-based recommendations, and effectively communicate information to a decision-maker.
- 4) Engage in informed discussion and debate on issues affecting Latin American foreign relations.

### **Course Materials**

There is one required textbook in this course. Students can purchase them in the UF Bookstore or online. All the other articles and book chapters can be found on the UF E-Learning (Canvas) at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>.

-Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*, 4th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013),

### **Graded Work**

- Class Attendance and participation (10%)  
You are expected to attend all class meetings prepared for an in-depth discussion of the assigned course material. Students will be awarded one point for each class session attended and one point for their participation during a class session. These cannot be made up but may be waived with a documented excused absence. The lowest two scores are dropped.

Participation may include providing personal insight to the material, outside articles, current events, or responding to classmates. I understand some students may feel uncomfortable speaking in class, however, all students will benefit from hearing a wide range of perspectives. I encourage you to step outside your comfort zone to ask, answer, or comment on a question throughout the course. If you are someone who frequently contributes to class discussion, I urge you to be considerate of your fellow classmates and provide opportunities for others who wish to speak.

- Policy Memos (40%)  
Each student will write three policy memos of about 1,500 words. You will receive additional instructions on these memos in class. The deadlines for these three memos can be found in the class schedule below.
- Midterm exam (25%)  
There will be a closed-book in-class midterm exam on October 7, 2025, during our class time for 115 minutes. It is worth 25% of the final grade. Students should review all the class materials and apply them in answering the question(s).
- Final exam (25%)  
There will be a closed-book in-class final exam on December 12, 2025, during the scheduled final. It is worth 25% of the final grade. Students should review all the class materials and apply them in answering the question(s).

## **Grading Scale**

Percent	Grade
93.0-100	A
90.0-92.9	A-
87.0-89.9	B+
83.0-86.9	B
80.0-82.9	B-
77.0-79.9	C+
73.0-76.9	C
70.0-72.9	C-
67.0-69.9	D+
63.0-66.9	D
60.0-62.9	D-
0-59.9	E

## **Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Florida is an institution of learning, research, and scholarship that is strengthened by the existence of an environment of integrity. It is essential that all members of the University practice academic integrity and accept individual responsibility for their work and actions. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction and referral to the university's Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult me.

**Participation:** To successfully pass this course, your participation and engagement is necessary. Students must be prepared to discuss the readings and other materials listed for that day. However, if you are sick or have been in contact with someone who is sick please stay home and take care of yourself. If you miss class, you are encouraged to ask your classmates for their notes or come to office hours to talk about the material you missed.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

**Lecture Slides:** I will post lecture slides on the course website at the conclusion of each class meeting. The slides are meant as a guide and are in no way a substitute for attending lecture. My hope is that by making the slides available students will not feel that they must spend the entire class furiously taking notes and instead pay close attention to the lecture, ask questions, and participate deeply in class discussion.

**Communication:** Students should use Canvas to contact me. Although you may email me at my UF email account, the university strongly encourages communication via Canvas to avoid the potential of violations of student confidentiality protected by [FERPA](#). I encourage students to make an appointment and visit me during office hours to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the course.

**Email/Messaging Hours:** You may email or message me via Canvas at any time that is convenient to you. I will respond within one business day between the hours of 9am and 5pm. If you do not receive a reply from me after 24 hours, please resend your message. Although I may sometimes reply outside of these designated hours, responses cannot be guaranteed after 5pm on weekdays, weekends, or holidays. Please plan accordingly to have your questions answered in advance of assignment and exam deadlines.

**Exams:** There are two exams. Exams will draw from all assigned readings up to that point. If you know you will miss the exam for a UF-sponsored commitment (e.g. traveling with the debate team, softball team, orchestra, ROTC, etc.) *or* for some foreseeable personal commitment *that is not discretionary* (e.g. a scheduled medical procedure, like surgery) *or* because of an existential-level family emergency (e.g. death, medical emergency you will be able to make up the exam. If the miss is because of a scheduled event, you must let me know at least two weeks in advance (email is perfectly acceptable and preferred). I will work with you to make accommodations, but it is your responsibility to arrange with me to take a makeup exam.

**Grades Adjustment:** I do not round or adjust grades under any circumstances. This policy is not an attempt to be harsh but to hold all students in equal standing. I do not offer extra credit on an individual basis. All opportunities for extra credit, if any, will be announced on Canvas.

**Late or Make-up Assignments:** Work that is late due to a university-approved absence will be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is submitted late for reasons unrelated to a university-approved absence, it will be penalized 1 full letter grade the first day it is late and 3 percent each day thereafter. No late work will be accepted more than seven calendar days past due.

Acceptable reasons for work to be late include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena).

## **University Policies and Resources**

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).” (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 Introduction**

- 8.21 Actors, Interests, and Outcomes  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Introduction

### **Week 2 International Opportunities**

- 8.26 International Relations Framework  
Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake, Kenneth Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions*, Fourth Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016) Introduction and Chapter 2

- 8.28 Great Power Politics, 1891-1945  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapters 1-2

James Monroe. “The Monroe Doctrine.”

Theodore Roosevelt. “The Roosevelt Corollary.”

### **Week 3 Diplomacy and Ideology**

- 9.2 Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapters 3

Putnam, Robert D. 1988. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42:427-460.

- 9.4 Economic and Ideological Dimensions of U.S. Latin Relations  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapter 4

### **Week 4 Cold War Friends and Foes**

- 9.9 Making Friends  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapters 5-6

- 9.1 Crushing Enemies  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapter 7

Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, in LaRosa and Mora 149-158

## Week 5 Cuban Missile Crisis

- 9.16** Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapter 8  
Michael C. Desch, 1993. *When the Third World Matters: Latin America and United States Grand Strategy*. Chapter 4

Allison 1999 (posted on the course site) pages 1-9, then look at the questions on page 257 to understand the questions each model focuses on. Finally, read pages 39-42, and 56-66. I recommend, but do not require looking at pages 42 to 56.

<https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/1750/Unit8/Simulation-Cold-War-Crisis>

- 9.18** Policy Memo Discussion  
Review Assignment 1

## Week 6 From War to Development

- 9.23** End Game and Aftermath  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapters 9

Jorge G. Castañeda, "Latin America and the End of the Cold War" *Transition*, No. 59 (1993), pp. 45-64

- 9.25** Economic Alternatives  
Thomas Skidmore, Peter Smith, and James Green. *Modern Latin America* 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. (2013) Chapter 12

## Week 7 Economic Development and Trade

- 9.30** Free Trade  
Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapter 10

Kurt Weyland, "Neoliberalism and Democracy in Latin America: A Mixed Record" *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 135-157

- 10.2** NAFTA 2.0  
Laura Carlsen. 2013. "Under NAFTA, Mexico Suffered, and the United States Felt Its Pain." *New York Times*.

Luis de la Calle. 2017. "The True Relevance of NAFTA." *Americas Quarterly* 11.2: 86-91.

James McBride and Mohammed Aly Sergie. 2018. "NAFTA's Economic Impact" *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/background/naftas-economic-impact>

## POLICY REPORT 1 DUE

### Week 8 Regionalism in the Americas

#### 10.7 Midterm Exam

#### 10.9 Regionalism

Andrés Malamud, and Gian Luca Gardini. "Has Regionalism Peaked? The Latin American Quagmire and Its Lessons." *The International Spectator* 47.1 (2012): 116-133.

Karl Kaltenthaler, and Frank O. Mora. 2002. "Explaining Latin American Economic Integration: The Case of Mercosur." *Review of International Political Economy* 9.1: 72-97.

Diana Tussie. "Latin America: Contrasting Motivations for Regional Projects." *Review of International Studies* 35.S1 (2009): 169-188.

### Week 9 Debt and the Environment

#### 10.14 Debt

Laurence Whitehead, "Latin American Debt: An International Bargaining Perspective" *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Jul., 1989), pp. 231-249

Helleiner, Eric. "The Strange Story of Bush and the Argentine Debt Crisis." *Third World Quarterly* 26.6 (2005): 951-969.

Julie Wernau and Ryan Dube. 2019. "How Argentina's Evolving Economic Crisis Unfolded" *The Wall Street Journal*. September 4. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-argentinas-evolving-economic-crisis-unfolded-1536062407>

JoAnn Kawell. "Privatization and its Discontents" *NACLA Report*. September 25, 2007.

#### 10.16 Environment

Jeff Tollefson, "A Light in the Forest: Brazil's Fight to Save the Amazon and Climate-Change Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 92:2 (Mar/April 2013), 141-151

Adam Chimienti and Sebastian Matthes, "Ecuador: Extractivism for the Twenty-First Century?" *NACLA Report on the Americas* 46:4 (Winter 2013), 59-61

Gerardo Renique, "Peru: Humala Submits to the United States and the Mining Industry," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 46:3 (Fall 2013), 12-17

Stephanie Nolen. February 26, 2018. "The Road," *Globe and Mail*. February 26, 2018. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/amazon-rainforest-deforestation-crisis/article37722932/>

## Week 10 Migration

### 10.21 Push Factors, Pull Factors, and Policy

Wayne Cornelius and Marc Rosenblum. 2005. "Immigration and Politics." Annual Review of Political Science 8(1): 99-119.

Emily Achtenberg and Rebel Currents. "Argentina's Immigration Crackdown Rattles Bolivia" *NACLA*. March 14, 2017. <https://nacla.org/blog/2017/03/14/argentina%27s-immigration-crackdown-rattles-bolivia>

Chris Kraul. February 18, 2019 "Global Development: As Venezuela Spirals Downward, South America Struggles to Absorb its Migrants and Refugees"  
<https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-venezuela-latin-america-exodus-20190218-story.html>

Adriana Beltran. "Children and Families Fleeing Violence in Central America" *WOLA* Report. February 21, 2017. <https://www.wola.org/analysis/people-leaving-central-americas-northern-triangle/>

### 10.23 Effects of Immigration

Anna Flagg. "Is There a Connection Between Undocumented Immigrants and Crime." *The New York Times*. May 13, 2019.

Daniela Guzman and John Quigley. "Add A Million Venezuelans and Your Economy Looks Very Different" *Bloomberg*. June 27, 2019.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-27/add-a-million-venezuelans-and-your-economy-looks-very-different>

Mark Severson. "Mexican President Gets Little Backlash for Migrant Crackdown" Associated Press News. July 7, 2019.  
<https://www.apnews.com/aa60885718a04002b61b09975622303c>

## POLICY REPORT 2 DUE

## Week 11 Governance Challenges

### 10.28 Drug Policy

Andreas, Peter, and Angelica Duran Martinez. 2012. "The Politics of Drugs and Illicit Trade in the Americas" in Peter Kingstone and Deborah Yashar Eds. *Handbook of Latin American Politics*, New York: Routledge.

Clare Ribando Seelke, Liana Sun Wyler, June Beittel, Mark Sullivan. "Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs" CRS Report for Congress May 12, 2011



Shannon, O'Neil. "The Real War in Mexico-How Democracy Can Defeat the Drug Cartels." *Foreign Affairs*. 88 (2009): 63.

### 10.30 Democratic Governance

Kevin Casas-Zamora, "The Honduran Crisis and the Obama Administration" in Abraham F. Lowenthal, Theodore J. Piccone, and Laurence Whitehead. Eds., *Shifting the Balance: Obama and the Americas* Brookings Institution Press. (2011) pp. 114-131

Thomas Legler, "Learning the Hard Way: Defending Democracy in Honduras" *International Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 3, Democracy Assistance (Summer 2010), pp. 601-618

Maxwell A. Cameron, "Democracy and the Separation of Powers: Threats, Dilemmas, and Opportunities in Latin America" *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes*, Vol. 27, No. 53, Special Issue on Democracy in Latin America (2002), pp. 133-159

## Week 12 Democracy Promotion

### 11.4 Democratic Responsibilities

Stefano Palestini. "Defending Democracy in Latin America...but Which Democracy?" February 16, 2017 <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/02/latin-america-democracy-venezuela-brazil-argentina/>

Luiz Almagro. "Defending Democracy and Human Rights in the Western Hemisphere" *PRISM* (Vol 8:1) <https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/1760934/defending-democracy-and-human-rights-in-the-western-hemisphere/>

Anita Isaacs. 2000. "International Assistance for Democracy: A Cautionary Tale" in Jorge I. Domínguez Ed. *The Future of Inter-American Relations*, New York: Routledge, pp. 259-286

David Pion-Berlin and Harold Trinkunas, "Civilian Praetorianism and Military Shirking During Constitutional Crises in Latin America" *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (July 2010), pp. 395-411

## POLICY REPORT 3 DUE

### 11.6 Cuba

María Cristina García, "Hardliners v. "Dialogueros": Cuban Exile Political Groups and United States-Cuba Policy" *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Summer, 1998), pp. 3-28

Ted Piccone, "U.S.-Cuba Normalization: U.S. Constituencies for Change" *IdeAs*, 2018. <https://journals.openedition.org/ideas/2107>

## **Week 13 China in Latin America**

**11.11** Holiday – No class

**11.13** *Sino-Latin American Relations*

Kevin Gallagher and Roberto Porzecanski. 2008. “China Matters: China's Economic Impact in Latin America.” *Latin American Research Review*, 43(1), 185-200.

Rhys Jenkins. “China's Belt and Road Initiative in Latin America: What has Changed?” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 51.1 (2022): 13-39.

## **Week 14 Latin America’s Future**

**11.18** *Quest for Alternatives*

Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Chapter 12

Berg, Ryan. “This Trump Administration Is Shaping Up to Be Latin America-First” *Foreign Policy*, January 8, 2025 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/08/trump-latin-america-administration/>

Reid, Michael. “Trump and Latin America’s Costly Disunity” *Americas Quarterly*, January 7, 2025. <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/trump-and-latin-americas-costly-disunity/>

Brian Winter, “Latin America Is About to Become a Priority for U.S. Foreign Policy” *Foreign Affairs* December 10, 2024 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/latin-america-about-become-priority-us-foreign-policy>

**11.20** *Confrontation and Cooperation*

Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Conclusion

## **Week 15 Course Wrap-Up**

**12.2** *Final Review*

### **POLICY REPORT 4 DUE**

**12.12 Final Exam 7:30 AM -9:30 AM**