

Inter-American Politics

**Political Science 4280/8286
International Studies 4140
University of Nebraska Omaha
Spring 2016**

**Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm
Arts and Sciences Hall 313**

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Office Hours: T & Th 11:30 am - 12:30 pm;
T & Th 2:30-4:00 pm
(And by appointment)

Course Description

In the 1996 edition of *U.S.-Latin American Relations*, political scientist Michael J. Kryzanek wrote “this is clearly a time of cooperation and conciliation in the region as the North Americans and South Americans enter a period that is filled with promise.”¹ Kryzanek opened the 2008 edition of the same book with the rather tragic line: “although the United States and the countries of Latin America occupy the same hemisphere, they are worlds apart.”² As Kryzanek identified with these divergent introductions, the end of the Cold War brought hope for a new era in international politics in the region, but that optimism quickly faded as many states in Latin America rejected U.S.-led neoliberal economic programs and as the United States once again became pre-occupied with other parts of the world. As the global political environment trends toward multi-polarity and re-alignment of state relationships, what does this mean for the future of Latin America in the world? This course provides a theoretical basis for understanding inter-American politics and the role of Latin American states in the international political arena. The course is organized around four broad themes: (1) Latin American state development and international relations, (2) U.S.-Latin American relations, (3) Inter-American challenges, and (4) Latin America in contemporary global politics. The third and fourth sections of the course engage the contemporary consequences of long-standing political and economic patterns with an eye toward the potential for short-term and long-term change in Latin American international relations.

Prerequisites

This is an upper-level Political Science course. PSCI 2500 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) or junior standing or permission of instructor is required. Graduate: PSCI 2500 or equivalent is recommended.

¹ Kryzanek, Michael J. 1996. *U.S.-Latin American Relations*. Westport: Praeger, third edition, 1.

² Kryzanek, Michael J. 2008. *U.S.-Latin American Relations*. Westport: Praeger, fourth edition, 1.

Course Materials

Smith, Peter H. 2012. *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, The United States, and the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, fourth edition.

Dominguez, Jorge I. and Rafael Fernández de Castro, eds. 2010. *Contemporary U.S.-Latin American Relations: Cooperation or Conflict in the 21st Century?* New York: Routledge, first edition.

Individual class readings are available on the UNO online system, Blackboard.

Evaluation: Your course grade will be based on the following:

Attendance & Participation: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Four (4) reaction memos: 5% each (20% total)

Policy paper: 30%; identify issue and country/ies (February 4), research proposal (February 11), paper due (March 15)

Policy presentation: 20%; required consultation with UNO Speech Center (March 29-April 7), in-class presentation (April 12-26)

Attendance & Participation (15%)

The course will require active student participation. Students are expected to do the assigned readings and to come to class prepared to share your questions, comments, and ideas. Plan to ask and answer questions, clarify readings, to discuss course material, and to participate in activities. The classroom offers you a forum to engage with your peers and to learn from each other. I expect everyone to promote an active learning environment by supporting each other intellectually, asking questions, and by being an aggressive learner.

A few basic ground rules:

- **Always be present, physically and mentally**
- Treat everyone in the class with patience and respect
- Be curious and ask questions of your classmates, of our readings, and of me
- When you speak, remember that you are in dialogue with the entire class. Speak to and listen to all of your classmates
- You are responsible for your own learning and accountable for your own work—you are ultimately in charge of your own educational experience

Quizzes (15%)

There will be periodic short quizzes to test recollection and comprehension of key points from lectures and readings. Material and dates for quizzes will be announced as they approach.

Reaction Memos (Four memos: 5% each = 20% total)

During the course of the semester, each student must write a total of four reaction memos. Each paper should be one page in length and single-spaced type (1" margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt font). The reaction papers should have three parts, including a summary of the readings for that session, a discussion of how the readings relate to each other and to previous material (readings and lectures as appropriate), and a critical evaluation of the arguments. There are

multiple readings for each class session—selected because they typically offer differing perspectives and/or introduce multiple considerations. The goal of the memos is to provide you with an opportunity to prepare for in-class discussion by writing your own thoughts in which you synthesize the readings, reflect on them, and assess them in the context of where they fit in the major themes of the course. Because you will write only four throughout the semester, you have flexibility on when you choose to do them, but **a reaction memo for a particular session's readings must be submitted at the time of that session.**

Policy Paper (Proposal Memo: 5%, Paper 25% = 30% total)

During the semester, you will identify a key problem in Latin American international relations and write a 9-10 page policy paper (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font) analyzing that issue and proposing a policy recommendation.

In addition to using the assigned materials for the class, a good place to begin is to read broadly about contemporary international relations in the region from policy organizations like the [Inter-American Dialogue](#), [Washington Office on Latin America](#), [Council on Hemispheric Affairs](#), and the Latin America sections of the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Brookings Institute](#), [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#), and the [Woodrow Wilson Center](#). In addition, I recommend reading news about the region (from U.S. dailies [The New York Times](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), and newspapers in the region—an exhaustive list available from the [University of Texas LANIC](#)—and digests such as *The Economist*, *Business Monitor International*, and the *Latin American Weekly Report*).

The paper-writing process will begin with **identifying the issue and country/ies** in which you are interested by Thursday, February 4. The next class meeting, Tuesday, February 9, will be a **class research session** at the Criss Library (Room 249) where we will talk more about sources, citations, and research. You will have time to search for and retrieve research materials. The next step is to prepare a **one-page research proposal**, due February 11, presenting the issue, discussing the importance of the issue in inter-American politics, and providing a preliminary reference list of at least three sources. *I will approve the proposal and/or ask you to revise before proceeding with the research project.*

The **policy paper**, due March 15, will describe the issue, explain its importance in terms of the domestic and international politics of the country/ies involved, outline the policy options available, and make a recommendation to relevant policymakers regarding how to address the problem. Further instructions will be distributed in class.

Policy Presentation (20%)

In Week 14-16, you will give an **in-class presentation** based on your policy paper. The elements of the presentation are those of the paper—you will describe the issue, explain its importance in inter-American politics, outline policy options, and make a policy recommendation. Think of this as a miniature lesson on the issue that you will provide for your peers. Each presentation will also involve a question and answer period, in which you will be expected to answer questions from the instructor and from your peers. To that end, each student will be assigned as a discussant for at least one classmate's presentation. Your performance as a discussant will be part of your own presentation grade. Marlina Davidson of the UNO Speech Center will give

guest talks in our class on Tuesday, February 2 and Tuesday, March 29 on how to prepare for the presentation. You are required to hold a **consultation with the UNO Speech Center in Week 12-13**, regarding the in-class presentation you will give in Week 14-16. More on the UNO Speech Center below. Further instructions will be distributed in class.

UNO Speech Center

The UNO Speech Center Consulting Room provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Consulting Room can help you with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speechmaking process, whether you are just starting to develop topic ideas or nearly finished with preparing a presentation.

Make an appointment by calling the Speech Consulting Room at 554-3201 or stopping by Arts & Sciences Hall 185. Appointments must be reserved at least 48 hours in advance of scheduled consultation date, allowing the Speech Center to ensure adequate facilitation and instruction.

UNO Writing Center

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit them at their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 150. I strongly encourage you to meet with the Writing Center both early in the semester as you formulate and organize your ideas for the paper and later in the semester once you have written a draft of the paper.

Academic Integrity

You must maintain academic integrity at all times. Plagiarism/cheating are serious academic crimes, and I will pursue any infringements seriously and actively. At a minimum, any infringement will result in a grade of “zero” on the assignment. For more information on University of Nebraska Omaha policies on academic integrity, please see: <http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/achievement/student-conduct-and-community-standards/policies/academic-integrity.php>

Special Accommodations

Accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Disability Services and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact Disability Services (MBSC 111, Phone: 402-554-2872, TTY: 402-554-3799) or go to the website: www.unomaha.edu/disability.

Late Policy

On daily/weekly assignments, no late work will be accepted. For the policy paper assignment, late papers will be penalized by two-thirds of a letter grade per day late. For example, an “A+” paper one day late would receive a grade of “A-.”

Schedule of Class Meetings

I. Latin America and IR Concepts, Theory, Background

Week One

Tuesday, January 12: Introduction to the course

Thursday, January 14: Overview of Latin American political history, physical geography, and contemporary bi-lateral international issues

- Vanden & Prevost, Chapter 1: An Introduction to Twenty-First Century Latin America
- “Rethinking Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs* (2012)
- “Chile and Peru’s Pacific dispute,” *The Economist* (2014)

Week Two

Tuesday, January 19: International relations concepts and theories

- Smith, preface and Introduction
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 1: The Changes in the International System during the 2000s (2010)

Thursday, January 21: Colonial experience as precursor to modern Latin American IR

- Michael J. LaRosa and Frank O. Mora, “Contentious Neighbors in the Western Hemisphere” (pp. 1-4)
- Vanden & Prevost, Chapter 2: Early History
- Vanden & Prevost, Chapter 3: Democracy and Dictators: A Historical Overview from Independence to the Present Day (pp. 42-54)

Week Three

Tuesday, January 26: Interstate conflict and state development in Latin America

- Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*, Prologue and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-6)
- Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt*, Chapter 1
- David R. Mares, *Latin America and the Illusion of Peace*, Chapter 1

Thursday, January 28: Economic development in Latin America; Regionalism in Latin America

- Smith, Chapters 9-10
- Vanden & Prevost, Chapter 7: The Political Economy of Latin America
- United Nations Development Program, “About Latin America and the Caribbean” here: <http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/regioninfo/>
- Council on Hemispheric Affairs, “21st Century Regionalism: Where is Latin America Headed?” (2013)

II. U.S.-Latin American Relations

Week Four

Tuesday, February 2: **Guest talk from Marlina Davidson of the UNO Speech Center**

Thursday, February 4: U.S.-Latin American relations – “The European Game”

- **Identify a topic and country/ies by today**
- Smith, Chapters 1-2
- Dexter Perkins, “The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826” (pp. 65-75)
- LaRosa and Mora, eds. “The Platt Amendment of 1901” (pp. 77-78)

Week Five

Tuesday, February 9: **Library Research Session (Class will meet in Criss Library Room 249)**

Thursday, February 11: Latin American “response” in U.S.-Latin American relations

- **1-page policy paper proposal due**
- Smith, Chapters 3-4
- Jose Martí, “Our America” (pp. 33-40)
- Gaston Nerval, “Autopsy of the Monroe Doctrine” (pp. 87-91)

Week Six

Tuesday, February 16: The Cold War in Latin America

- **Visit from Dr. Travis Adams of the UNO Writing Center**
- Smith, Chapters 5-6
- Roger T. Trask, “The Impact of the Cold War on U.S.-Latin American Relations, 1945-1949” (pp. 129-144)
- Cole Blasier, “The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America” (pp. 157-170)

Thursday, February 18: The Cold War in Latin America, continued

- Smith, Chapters 7-8
- Alan Luxenberg, “Did Eisenhower Push Castro into the Arms of the Soviets?” (pp. 171-186)

Week Seven

Tuesday, February 23: U.S.-Latin American relations post-Cold War, post-9/11

- Smith, Chapters 11-12
- Frank O. Mora, “Post-Cold War U.S. Latin American Policy: The Clinton, Bush, and Obama Administrations” (pp. 243-263)

Thursday, February 25: **Guest talk from Dr. Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado** (Cuba, the 2014 U.S.-Cuba thaw, Cuba’s future)

- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 3: The United States and Cuba since 2000 (2010)
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 11: Relations between the United States and Venezuela (2010)

Week Eight

Tuesday, March 1: Assessing, reframing, reflecting on contemporary U.S.-Latin American relations

- Brookings Institution, “Better than You Think: Reframing Inter-American Relations” (2015)
- Council on Foreign Relations, “US-Latin America Relations: A New Direction for a New Reality” (pp. 3-75) (2008)
- Review from Week 1: “Rethinking Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs*

Thursday, March 3: Contemporary U.S.-Brazil, U.S.-Argentina

- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 6: Argentina and the United States (2010)
- “¡No! Why Argentina Refuses to Pay Its Debts,” *Bloomberg Business*
- “Argentina’s Case Has No Victors, Many Losers,” *New York Times*
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 7: Brazil-U.S. Relations (2010)

III. Inter-American Challenges

Week Nine

Tuesday, March 8 and Thursday, March 10: Film – *Harvest of Empire*

- Smith, Chapter 13
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 2: US-Mexican Relations in the Twenty-First Century
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 4: The United States and Central America since 2000
- “How an Undocumented Immigrant from Mexico Became a Star at Goldman Sachs,” *Bloomberg Business*
- Evan Ellis, “The Gang Challenge in El Salvador”

Week Ten

Tuesday, March 15: U.S.-Latin America Migration

- **Policy paper due in class**
- Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) - University of Nebraska Omaha, “Latinos throughout the City: A Snapshot of Socio-Demographic Differences in Omaha, Nebraska”
- Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) - University of Nebraska Omaha, “Economic Impact of Latin American & Other Immigrants: Iowa, Nebraska & the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area”

Thursday, March 17: U.S.-Latin America Drug Wars

- Smith, Chapter 14
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 9: Colombia and the United States
- Bruce Bagley, “Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the 21st Century” (pp. 215-238)
- “Government neglect drives Mexico’s poppy farmers into drug trade,” <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/12/government-neglect-pushes-mexicos-poppy-farmers-into-drug-trade.html>

Week Eleven: Spring break (NO CLASSES HELD)

IV. Latin America in Contemporary International Relations

**** WEEK 12/13: REQUIRED CONSULTATION WITH UNO SPEECH CENTER****

Week Twelve

Tuesday, March 29: China-Latin American relations

- **Visit from Marlina Davidson of UNO Speech Center**
- Evan Ellis, *China in Latin America: The Whats and Wherefores*, Chapters 1-2
- “As China Expands in Latin America, Tensions Fester at Its Mining Venture in Peru,” *The New York Times*
- Natural Resource Governance Institute, “China Invests in Ecuador, but at What Cost?”
- Quartz daily brief, “China has a nasty surprise in store for Latin America’s economies”

Thursday, March 31: Russia, India, Iran, the EU-Latin American relations

- Woodrow Wilson Center, “Iran in Latin America: Threat or ‘Axis of Annoyance’?”
- Evan Ellis, “The New Russian Engagement with Latin America”
- Evan Ellis, “The New Strategic Environment of the Trans-Pacific – A US Perspective”

Week Thirteen:

Tuesday, April 5: Contemporary geoeconomics and Latin America

- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 8: Chile and the United States 2000-2009
- Dominguez & Castro, Chapter 10: The United States and Peru in the 2000s
- J. F. Hornbeck, “U.S.-Latin America Trade: Recent Trends and Policy Issues” (pp. 205-214)
- “China Creates a World Bank of its Own, and the U.S. Balks,” *The New York Times*
- Review from Week 3: Smith, Chapters 9-10

Thursday, April 7: NO CLASS HELD; Instructor attending MPSA conference

- **Hold required consultation with UNO Speech Center**

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, April 12 & Thursday, April 14: **Student Presentations**

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, April 19 & Thursday, April 21: **Student Presentations**

Week Sixteen

Tuesday, April 26: **Student Presentations**

Alternate Tuesday, April 26: Inter-American Institutions

- Readings TBA

Thursday, April 28: Summary and conclusions

- Smith, Chapters 15-16
- Michael J. LaRosa and Frank O. Mora, “By Way of Conclusion” (pp. 343-346)