

**Latin America-US Relations**  
POLS 3810

Spring 2018  
Mon/Wed, 2:10 pm - 3:25 pm  
McGannon Hall #121

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Office hours- Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-4:30, or by appointment.

\*I am in my office almost every day, but it is generally easier to catch me in the morning.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

Porfirio Díaz, who governed Mexico for most of the period from 1876 until 1911, is credited with speaking the famous line, "¡Pobre México! ¡Tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos!" (*Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States!*) Whether due to the economic power of the United States, military intervention by the US, or the cultural influences of their northern neighbor, international affairs have long played a defining role in shaping the societies and politics of Latin America. Often US influence in Latin America is seen as meddling (at best) and imperialistic (at worst), but the US has also attempted, with mixed results, to promote political stability, economic development, and political democracy in the region. When we consider that the United States is only one of the important international actors at work in the region, the picture becomes incredibly complicated. Of course, US-Latin America relations are not a one-way street and we will devote significant attention throughout the course to the ways that various Latin American countries and their citizens impact US policy and life in the United States.

One of the challenges of studying US relations with our hemispheric neighbors is the question of power asymmetry. One of the defining characteristics of US-Latin American relations over the better part of the last two centuries is the preponderance of power (particularly economic and military power) concentrated in the hands of a single actor- the United States. This creates certain analytical problems that we will discuss throughout the course. More importantly, it creates both challenges and opportunities for working across geographic, class, racial, ethnic, sexual, and religious boundaries. I cannot offer THE path to navigating these complicated and power-laden relationships, but I intend to push you to begin (or continue) engaging with the messy ethical and practical issues these inequalities give rise to. My goal for the course is that you leave it prepared to engage actively with an imperfect hemisphere in ways that begin to mitigate the causes and consequences of the injustices and inequalities that have so often defined the region and the relationships between its diverse people.

Students will have the opportunity throughout the semester to write a research paper and a policy paper where you may explore issues of particular interest that are not covered in-depth in the course. This presents students with the challenge of moving from reading, understanding, and debating others' interpretations of US-Latin America relations towards formulating their own ideas about hemispheric relations and presenting them in an organized fashion. I will offer plenty of assistance throughout the semester as you engage in the research and writing process.

## Required texts:

All required texts are available for purchase at the Saint Louis University Bookstore in the Busch Student Center. I have also placed the required books on 3-hour reserve at Pius XII Memorial Library if the library owns them.

The required books for the course are:

Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold. 2015. *Dragon in the Tropics: Venezuela and the Legacy of Hugo Chávez*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press..

Michael LaRosa and Frank Mora, eds. 2015. *Neighborly Adversaries: Readings in US-Latin American Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

## Course requirements and grading:

\*NOTE: Students taking this course for honor's credit should meet individually with the professor during the first 2 weeks of the semester to discuss various options for receiving honor's credit.

Students will be evaluated based on their work on the following tasks

### *Map quiz: 10% of final grade*

Without a basic understanding of Latin American geography you will be literally lost in this course. With that in mind, a short quiz will be given at the beginning of class on **January 31<sup>st</sup>**. You will be asked to identify various Latin American countries and their capitals on a map. I have attached a copy of the map to the end of the syllabus.

### *Mid-term exam: 25% of final grade*

This exam will be given in class on **March 5<sup>th</sup>** and will consist of short answer and essay questions.

### *Policy paper: 20% of final grade*

These short papers should be 3-4 pages in length and should analyze a particular policy issue in US-Latin American relations. These papers should be targeted to the relevant policymaking audience. Students are free to choose the policy issues on which they write. I will give more details about this assignment in class. The paper will be due on **April 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

### *Research paper: 25% of final grade*

All students will complete a formal research paper on a topic of their own choosing. Students should consult with the professor early in the semester (and no later than April 3<sup>rd</sup>) to ensure that they have selected an acceptable topic. Completed papers should be approximately 12-15 pages in length. Papers are due at the scheduled time of the Final Exam (**Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> by 4:00pm**).

### *Final exam: 10% of final grade*

A short final exam will be given in class on **May 7<sup>th</sup>**.

### *Participation: 10% of final grade*

Your attendance and active participation are vital to the success of this course. Different students participate in different ways. At a minimum, students should come to class on time having read and thought about the assigned readings for that class. I expect that all students will make a contribution

to class discussions through comments, questions, criticisms, and analysis of the assigned readings. In assigning grades, quality of participation will take precedence over quantity of participation (hence, the student who participates frequently but without giving much thought to his/her comments/questions is not at an advantage compared to the student who offers occasional but insightful analysis and questions).

Final letter grades will be assigned that correspond to the following numeric scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

**Attendance and participation:**

I do not consider class time to be a time simply to review the assigned readings. We will cover materials during class that are not in the readings (and we will not cover every single point from the readings in class). Class attendance is, therefore, imperative. If you must miss class for an approved reason (e.g.; illness, death or medical emergency in the immediate family, University-sponsored activities), please let me know via email as soon as possible. You are responsible for all materials covered in class, whether you are physically present or not. Make-up exams will be given only under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day.

**Classroom courtesy:**

Out of respect for all of those in class, all cell phones, pagers, and any other noisemaking devices must be turned OFF during the entire class period and during exams. Laptop computers may be used in class provided they do not make noise that disturbs those around you. I reserve the right to ask you to turn off and put away your computer if it is creating a disruption.

**Students with disabilities:**

Students with disabilities that may impact their classroom performance should contact the Disabilities Coordinator, 977-8885, DuBourg, Room 36. I am happy to make accommodations for students with disabilities, consistent with all laws and University policies.

**Academic integrity:**

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations will be reported and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts & Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or

expulsion from the University. I encourage you to view official University policy on matters of academic integrity at: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

### **Course schedule:**

January 17- Introduction and syllabus.

January 22- Getting up to speed: Major issues in contemporary US-Latin America relations.

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 1

\*“Populism Looms of Latin America’s Election Year,” *Bloomberg* (12/18/2017)

January 24- The politics of perceptions.

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 2-5

January 29- The roots of US policy in Latin America.

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 6-9

January 31- Becoming a “good neighbor”

**\*MAP QUIZ AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 10-13

February 5- The Cold War warms up.

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 14-17

February 7- Confronting Castro in Cuba

\*Allison, Graham. 1969. “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, pp. 689-718.

February 12- The Alliance for Progress: Economic development and anti-Communism

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 18.

February 14- Nicaragua: Revolution redux?

\*Reading TBA

February 19- Beans and bullets: Fighting the Cold War

\*Jeane Kirkpatrick. “Dictatorships and Double Standards,” *Commentary* 68:5 (November 1979), pp. 34-45.

\*J. Patrice McSherry. "Operation Condor as a Hemispheric 'Counterterror' Organization," in *When States Kill: Latin America, the US, and Technologies of Terror* (2005), pp. 28-58.

February 21- Promoting security or training assassins (or both)?

\*Film: *Hidden in Plain Sight*

February 26- Emerging Issues in Post-Cold War Latin America-US Relations

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 19-20.

February 28- Review for Midterm

March 5- **MIDTERM EXAM**

\*\*\*\*\***SPRING BREAK**\*\*\*\*\*

March 19- Re-thinking US-Latin America Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

\**Neighborly Adversaries*, Ch. 21

March 21- Economic crisis and reform.

\*John Williamson. 1990. "What Washington Means by Policy Reform," in Williamson, ed. *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.

March 26- Trade, globalization, and regional integration.

\*Reading TBA

March 28- Trade, globalization, and regional integration in the era of Trump

\*Reading TBA

April 4- Venezuela and the Rise of Hugo Chávez

\**Dragon in the Tropics*, Ch. 1

April 9- Populism and Democracy

\* *Dragon in the Tropics*, Ch. 2-3

April 11- Venezuela and the Politics of Petroleum

\**Dragon in the Tropics*, Ch. 4

April 16- Hugo Chávez and the Challenge to US Hegemony  
\**Dragon in the Tropics*, Ch. 5-6

April 18- After Hugo: Regional Politics in a Post-Chávez Era  
\**Dragon in the Tropics*, Ch. 7-9

April 23- Current Issues in US-Latin America Relations  
\*Reading TBA  
**\*POLICY PAPER DUE**

April 25- Current Issues in US-Latin America Relations  
\*Reading TBA

April 30- Current Issues in US-Latin America Relations  
\*Reading TBA

May 2- Current Issues in US-Latin America Relations  
\*Reading TBA

May 7- Final exam

**RESEARCH PAPERS DUE ON MAY 9<sup>th</sup> BY 4:00pm.**