

LAS 6220 Issues and Perspectives in Latin American Studies Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Ariadna Tenorio

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Class sessions: Thursdays 10.40- 01.40

Office hours: You can email me to arrange a more convenient time to meet, either via zoom or in person.

Course description

This graduate seminar examines Latin America through an interdisciplinary lens, combining historical, political, and socio-cultural perspectives. We begin by tracing the intellectual and political construction of “Latin America” as a concept, exploring the struggles over its meaning and identity. The course then moves to the foundations and transformations of citizenship, the formation and capacity of the state, and competing models of political economy, from import-substitution industrialization to neoliberalism and the commodity boom.

Building on these foundations, we analyze democratization and the region’s political “waves,” as well as the role of social movements in reshaping citizenship, identity, and political change. In the latter part of the semester, we focus on borders—as territories and as sites of migration governance—before turning to the challenges of criminal violence, state capacity, and security strategies in both Latin America and the Caribbean.

Readings combine classic theoretical texts, empirical case studies, and recent scholarship, enabling students to engage critically with long-standing debates while connecting them to current events and policy challenges.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Conceptual Foundations** – Explain the historical, cultural, and political processes that shaped the concept of “Latin America” and its role in global and regional contexts.
2. **Citizenship and the State** – Analyze the historical transformation from colonial notions of *vecindad* to modern citizenship, and evaluate the capacity, challenges, and political economy of Latin American states.
3. **Political Change** – Compare and contrast democratization processes, political “waves,” and the role of social movements in shaping policy, identity, and governance.
4. **Borders and Migration** – Interpret theoretical and empirical approaches to borders as territorial, political, and social constructs, and assess migration governance in Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. **Security and Violence** – Critically assess the dynamics of criminal violence, the relationship between organized crime and the state, and the design and effectiveness of security strategies in the region.

6. **Research and Communication** – Conduct independent research drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship, and effectively present findings through oral presentations and written work

Course format: This will be a discussion-based seminar. Each regular session will have a student—or a pair of students, depending on the class size—performing as class facilitator. During the first third of our sessions, the class facilitator will expose the main ideas of the assigned paper or papers. During the remaining two thirds we will scrutinize the assigned materials from other vantage points and reflect on their problematic aspects.

Final Project

The final project is comprised of the following steps:

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| 1) Abstract (1 double-spaced page) and short presentation | Week 8 |
| 2) Presentation (7-10 min) | Week 13 and 14 |
| 3) Written Component (5-8 pages) | November 27 |

The project includes both an oral and written component. You must submit a *cogent and clear proposal* for approval and should be prepared to revise and resubmit your draft, if necessary. The oral component can take the form of a brief scholarly presentation, an original performance, a poetry reading, a multimedia presentation or an art installation.

COURSE MATERIALS: There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings will be provided on the course Canvas page.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation: 30%

Class Facilitations: 30%

Midterm short presentation: 10%

Final presentation: 20%

Written component: 10%

Evaluation: Final grades will be assigned on the following scale (based on percentage points out of the total): A: >93% A-: 92-90% B+: 89-87% B: 86-83% B-: 82-80% C+: 79-77% C: 76-73% C-: 72-70% D+: 69-67% D: 66-63% D-: 62-60% E: 59% and below.

Attendance and Make-Up Work: Because this is a discussion-based seminar, students' attendance and active participation is required for the course's functioning and the mutual enrichment of all its participants. Requirements for class attendance and coursework are consistent with university policies found at: <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/#text>. Assignments will be subject to the following reduction of points if turned in late: within 24 hours of the posted date and time, the assignment will be docked 25% of the total possible

points; 24-48 hours late will result in 50% loss of total possible points. Assignments will not be accepted beyond 48 hours past the due date. Let me know as soon as possible if you need to miss an assignment due date for any reason (e.g., conference, illness, family emergency).

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES

· **Academic Honesty:** As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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”. It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

· **Services for Students Requiring Accommodations:** The Disability Resource Center (0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. I want you to do well in this class and will gladly work with you to implement any necessary accommodations.

· **Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via www.ufl.bluer.com/ufl/ .

· **Student Privacy:** There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

· **Campus Helping Resources:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

· **Food insecurity.** The Pantry is a resource on the University of Florida campus committed to eradicate food insecurity (<https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>). Food insecurity is not having a reliable access to nutritious foods for yourself on a regular basis. If you, or anyone you know is experiencing food insecurity, the Pantry is a resource to visit.

· **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

· **Sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in this course:** UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

HEALTH & WELLNESS · U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

· **University Counseling & Wellness Center:** 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575, www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/ (Counseling Services, Self-Help Library, Groups and Workshops, Training Programs, Outreach and Consultation, Community Provider Database).

· **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1161.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

· **E-learning technical support:** (352) 392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

· **Career Resource Center:** Reitz Union, (352) 392-1601. www.crc.ufl.edu/. Career assistance and counseling. · **Library Support:** <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. · **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> General study skills and tutoring. · **Writing Studio:** 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Subject to change based on the research interests of students enrolled in the course.

August 21

Week 1. What's in a name?

Introduction to class, syllabus review.

By the end of the week, every student must have signed the class facilitation schedule.

1. Gobat, Michel. "The invention of Latin America: A transnational history of anti-imperialism, democracy, and race." *The American Historical Review* 118.5 (2013): 1345-1375.

August 28

Week 2. The cultural, political, and epistemological struggle for the meaning and the "Idea of Latin America."

1. Falcoff, Mark. "Carlos Fuentes Discovers America." *A Culture of Its Own. Taking Latin America Seriously*. Routledge, 2014. 125-130.
2. Deutscher, Eckhard. "La búsqueda de la identidad en Latinoamérica como problema pedagógico". *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 1989. 251-262.

September 4

Week 3. The concept of citizenship in Latin America

1. Pérez Garzón, J. S. (2006). "Dialécticas de transición: de las desigualdades del imperio colonial a la ciudadanía de la nación liberal". *Alcores: Revista de historia contemporánea*, (1), 47–68.
2. O'Donnell, G. (2004). "Polyarchies and the (Un)Rule of Law in Latin America". In J. Méndez, G. O'Donnell, & P. S. Pinheiro (Eds.), *The (Un)Rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America* (pp. 303–337). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
3. Dagnino, E. (2006). "Meanings of Citizenship in Latin America". *IDS Working Paper No. 258*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

September 11

Week 4. The Latin American State: Formation, Capacity, and Challenges

Library visit

1. Mazzuca, Sebastián. 2021. *Latecomer State Formation: Political Geography and Capacity Failure in Latin America*. 25-47
2. Domínguez, Jorge I. 2001. "Samuel Huntington and the Latin American State." In Centeno & López-Alves (Eds.), *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory Through the Lens of Latin America*, pp. 219–239.
3. Eaton, Kent. 2012. "The State of the State in Latin America: Challenges, Challengers, Responses, and Deficits." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 32:3, pp. 643–657.

September 18

Week 5. Economy Political Economy of Development in Latin America: From Import-Substituting Industrialization to Neoliberalism to the Commodity Boom

1. Hirschman, Albert O. 1968. "The Political Economy of Import-Substituting Industrialization in Latin America." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 82:1, pp. 1–32.
2. Weyland, K. 2004. "Neoliberalism and democracy in Latin America: A mixed record." *Latin American Politics and Society*, 46, 135-157.

3. Sánchez-Ancochea, Diego. 2021. "The surprising reduction of inequality during a commodity boom: what do we learn from Latin America?" *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 24:2, pp.95-118.

September 25

Week 6. Democratization and Political Waves in Latin America: From the Third Wave to the Pink Tide and the Conservative Turn

1. Huntington, S. P. (1991). *Democracy's Third Wave*.
2. Feierherd, G. (2023). The Pink Tide and Income Inequality in Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 65(3), 1–26.
3. Kestler (2022) – *Radical, Nativist, Authoritarian—Or All of These? A Typology of Right-Wing Populism in Latin America*

October 2

Week 7. IRB Workshop and Midterm short presentations

October 9

Week 8. Midterm short presentations

October 16

Week 9. The border as territory

1. Brambilla, C. (2015). "Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept". *Geopolitics*, 20(1), 14–34.
2. Amilhat Szary, A.-L., & Giraut, F. (2015). *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Palgrave Macmillan. (Introduction)
3. Moïse, Myriam, and Fred Réno, eds. *Border Transgression and Reconfiguration of Caribbean Spaces*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. (Introduction)

October 23

Week 10. Border and migration

1. Brumat, Luciana. "Understanding Migration Policy Change in South America" (*International Migration Review*, 2024)
2. Ferguson, J. (2003). *Migration in the Caribbean: Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Beyond*. 6-13
3. Freier, L. F., & Parent, N. (2019). "The Regional Response to the Venezuelan Exodus", en *Current History*, Vol. 118, No. 805, pp. 67–73.

October 30

Week 11. Criminal Violence, the State, and Security Strategies in Latin America

1. García-Ponce, O. (2023). Criminal Violence, the State, and Society in Latin America. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26, 473–492.
2. Gutiérrez-Romero, R., & Iturbe, N. (2024). Causes and Electoral Consequences of Political Assassinations: The Role of Organized Crime in Mexico. *Working Paper*.
3. International Crisis Group. (2025). *Curbing Violence in Latin America's Drug Trafficking Corridors*.

November 6

Week 12. Criminal Violence, the State, and Security Strategies in the Caribbean

1. Hill, S. M., & Morris, P. K. (2018). Drug trafficking and gang violence in the Caribbean. In M. R. Izarali (Ed.), *Crime, violence and security in the Caribbean* (pp. 25–43). New York, NY: Routledge.
2. Sookoo, N. (2018). Exploring the link between corruption and the rule of law in five Caribbean countries. In *Crime, Violence and Security in the Caribbean* (pp. 76–95). M. R. Izarali (Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

November 13

Final presentations

November 20

Final presentations