

Course Information

Course Number: INTA 689
Course Title: SPT: Latin American Politics & Regional Affairs
Section: 65X
Time: Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:10 pm
Location: 1620 L St, NW, Suite 700 Washington DC in-person and electronic-to-group in College Station
Credit Hours: 3.0

Instructor Details

Instructor: Michael J. Kelly
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course is a graduate level introduction to US policy toward Latin America—past, present, and future. The analytical framework and factual content that this course provides will serve as a basis for students’ specific individual research projects dealing with political, economic and social issues in the region and will provide a forum to think, learn, and talk about Latin America in relation to US policy. We will explore the foundations of US policy in the region as a basis for our investigation of current issues.

In addition to learning the substantive content, this course will seek to provide useful approaches to writing and talking about Latin American issues, skills that should be transferable to other academic topics and to both government and private-sector work. We will wrestle with the arguments that we forge in a way that grows each student in a tangible way and that offers skills they can apply as practitioners, professionals, and students.

This course will be applicable, challenging, engaging, fulfilling, and useful. We will focus our discussions on how and why current and past events happened, including what the real actions of stakeholders were and what that does or might look like to practitioners dealing with these events. In each class, student- and professor-led discussions will examine the actors, motives, and background conditions of the events covered in the readings, what is happening in the readings, why and how it happened or is happening, the impact of these events, and the implications of these events moving forward. Some classes will feature guest discussants with direct experience related to the course.

This course is offered as both a face-to-face course to students in College Station and through electronic to group delivery to students at the Bush School’s Washington, D.C. teaching site synchronously via Zoom. Students participating online may utilize the chat box only with the express approval of the professor, and verbal participation during class sessions is required. The course requirements for students in both locations are the same.

Course Prerequisites

Graduate classification

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Carefully think, learn, and argue about Latin America-related topics
- 2) Identify what dynamics drive US policy decisions about Latin America, to include what topics US policymakers decide are relevant, which countries “matter,” which stakeholders are affected, and the impact of US policy decisions.
- 3) Prepare written and oral arguments that clearly articulate what has happened or is happening, why or how it is happening, the impact of the event, and the future implications for key stakeholders.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

In addition to the below books, each class meeting will additional required readings/podcast episodes/videos that will be available to the students in the form of handouts, e-mails, on "Electronic Reserves" on Blackboard.

Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World, Fifth Edition, Peter H. Smith/Ana Covarrubias, Oxford University Press. 2021

Neighborly Adversaries Readings in U.S.–Latin American Relations, Third Edition. Michael J. LaRosa and Frank O. Mora, editors, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015

Measuring Democracy: A Bridge Between Scholarship and Politics, Gerardo Munck, Johns Hopkins, 2009.

Modern Political Economy and Latin America: Theory and Policy. Edited by Jeffrey Frieden, Manuel Pastor and Michael Tomz, Westview Press.

Other readings will be assigned throughout the course and will be available to the students in the form of handouts or e-mails.

Grading Policy

The following scale will be used for calculating final grades for this course:

90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; and 0-59 F

<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule10>

Class participation	10%
Paper presentation 1	15%
Paper 1	20%
Paper presentation 2	15%
Paper 2	40%

Students will develop an approved individual research project of two parts that will combine to account for 60% of your individual course grade.

The first part, due on (week 6 meeting date), will cover the history of US relations with a key country or subregion **from the perspective of that country or countries**. This will be worth 20% of your final grade; aim for 10-12 pages. Please plan to have the country or subregion approved by the end of week 3.

- You will present the draft version of paper 1 in a 5-7 minute presentation on (week 6 meeting date), and incorporate feedback into the version you turn in on (week 7). This will account for 15% of your final grade and will be graded on effort over content as the goal will be to learn presentation skills and gather feedback to incorporate into your paper.

The second part, due (week 15 meeting date/final date), will be an assessment of the key contemporary policy challenges facing the US in relation to that country or subregion, **from the perspective of the US**. This assessment will be grounded in the historical factors you cover in your first paper, then take into account the US policy dynamics covered in the second half—to include what, if any, tradeoffs between key issues US policymakers face in crafting policy toward your country or subregion. This will be 40% of your final grade and will be no longer than 20 pages.

- A draft of your paper's outline is due on (week 13 meeting date). I will give you feedback, ask questions, and return it before our week 14 class meeting. I will offer these as the beginning of dialogue, not as changes you must accept. Nevertheless, I expect you to incorporate both my feedback and our subsequent discussions in your final paper.
- You will present the draft version of your paper in a 10 minute presentation on (week 15 meeting date), and incorporate feedback into the version you turn in on (week 16). This will account for 15% of your final grade and will be graded on effort over content as the goal will be to learn presentation skills and gather feedback to incorporate into your paper.

Class participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and I will take attendance at each class. I expect all students to participate actively in class discussions, both in terms of briefing the assigned discussion questions as well as the broader classroom discussions. This will account for 10% of your grade

Late Work Policy

Written assignments are due at 11:59pm Eastern time on the day indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments will be docked one-half of a letter grade (an A becomes an A-, a C+ becomes a C) for each day (again, ending at 11:59 Eastern time the next day, and so on) it is late.

Course Schedule

WEEK		TOPIC
PART 1: HOW DID WE GET HERE?		
Meeting 1	Course overview; how to think, learn, and argue about Latin America	
Meeting 2	Colonial roots, independence, and the Monroe Doctrine	
Meeting 3	US Hegemony/The Good Neighbor Policy	
Meeting 4	The Cold War	
Meeting 5	Post Cold War	
Meeting 6	Country-specific presentations/Introduction to Comparative Politics	
Meeting 7	From Authoritarianism to Democracy to? PAPER 1 DUE	
SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS		
PART 2: CURRENT US PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES		
Meeting 8	Economic Development and Underdevelopment	
Meeting 9	The Making of US Foreign Policy (Latin America-specific)	
Meeting 10	Economic Development in the Hemisphere (Argentina focus)	
Meeting 11	Democracy (Brazil focus)	
Meeting 12	Narcotrafficking (Colombia focus)- OUTLINE OF PAPER 2 DUE	
Meeting 13	Migration (Mexico focus)	
Meeting 14	Paper presentations / Course wrap-up	
Finals week - PAPER 2 DUE		

Key Dates:

(week 3): Country/subregion must be approved by instructor

(week 6): Country/subregion presentations

(week 7): Paper 1 due

(week 12): Draft outline of paper 2 due

(week 14): Paper 2 presentations

(finals week): Paper 2 due

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

College and Department Policies

The Bush School of Government and Public Service supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and/or work experiences (see <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>). Accordingly, all of us in this class are expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by others, and to engage in reasoned discussions that refrain from derogatory comments or dehumanizing language about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

Intellectual argument and disagreement are a fundamental element of both the academic world and the policy process. Disagreement does not, in and of itself, mean disrespect. However, the way that disagreement is expressed can be disrespectful. Unprofessional, insensitive, or disrespectful behaviors (such as using dehumanizing, derogatory, or coarse language; dismissing ideas based on the characteristics of the speaker/writer; or expressing threat or intent to harm, even if framed "as a joke") are inconsistent with the Bush School's commitment to diversity, and will not be tolerated by faculty or students participating in this class. This applies both inside and outside of the classroom and includes electronic venues such as GroupMe.