INTL 4380: Latin American Politics
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Natán Skigin (nskigin@uga.edu)
Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:10 pm – 12:25 pm
Room: Caldwell Hall 102
Office hours: Thursdays 2:30 – 4:00 pm & by appt.
Office Hours Location: 304 Candler Hall

Course Description

Welcome to Latin American Politics (INTL 4380). I am glad you are here!

This course examines some of the most urgent political challenges faced by Latin America—one of the most violent and unequal regions in the world, but also a source of groundbreaking experiments, from democratic transitions to transitional justice and innovative social policies. The class focuses on the causes and consequences of democracy and autocracy, on the one hand, and peace and violence, on the other. Core motivating questions include: (1) Why do democracies break down, and how do countries democratize?; (2) How do countries reckon with their repressive histories after democratization?; (3) Why have many Latin American countries experienced armed insurgency and civil war under dictatorship, only to find themselves trapped in cycles of criminal wars and large-scale criminal violence under democracy?; (4) Why have some Latin American countries managed to escape "violence traps" and build relatively peaceful democratic societies, while others have failed?

We will tackle these and other questions in depth in this modern Latin American Politics course. The course is divided into two sections. The first part assesses the region's regime trajectories—including coups, varieties of autocracy, waves of democratization, and democratic erosion—and countries' varied approaches to reckoning with their repressive pasts. The second part examines why some democracies experience different outbreaks of large-scale violence, their consequences, and potential solutions, covering civil wars, criminal conflict, state repression, and migration.

This class has two main goals. First, it introduces key political challenges facing Latin America and explores how people in the region confront them daily. Second, it approaches these issues through a social science lens—engaging you with data, pushing you to think critically about measurement, and questioning how we know what we claim to know about the region. No prior knowledge of Latin America or research methods is required, but a keen interest in learning about the region is expected.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand key contemporary political challenges in Latin America and engage in theoretical debates on democracy, autocracy, transitional justice, state repression, and criminal violence.

2. Sharpen your critical thinking by developing your ability to assess arguments, methods, and conclusions through key questions: What is the author's main claim? What evidence supports it, and how persuasive is that evidence? Could the research question be answered more effectively using a different method? What broader implications does the argument have for understanding other time periods, world regions, or related phenomena?

3. Conduct basic empirical research on Latin American politics using data and statistical software.

Materials

No textbook is required for this class; we will read academic articles, books, and chapters. We will also watch videos that intuitively introduce key methodological topics. All readings are available through the UGA Library or are open access. To access readings that are not open access, search the title through the UGA library website. Readings must be completed before each class.

Statistical Software: We will use free software to analyze data. Do not worry if you have no prior experience; we will cover data analysis tools in class. No prior statistical knowledge is required.

Install or update **R** and **R Studio** (in that order) on your computer using this page (at no cost).

Laptop: Bring a laptop to methods classes only. You should be able to run R Studio in class.

Course Structure and Grading

This course is structured as a seminar with integrated methods training: my goal is to foster deep engagement with substantive debates in Latin American politics while equipping you with the tools to analyze political data and evaluate empirical evidence. Brief lectures will provide context, but student-led discussion will be central to our collective learning. The discussion format is designed to deepen your engagement with course materials, promote peer learning, sharpen your analytical skills, and develop your ability to articulate and defend arguments in a collaborative environment.

The final grade is based on the following components:

1. Class attendance and participation   10%
2. Discussion leadership   10%
3. Quizzes   20%
4. Data Report   10%
5. Final group research project
   a. Research memos (x3)   20%
   b. Paper presentation   10%
   c. Final paper   20%

1. Class attendance and participation

This course will follow a seminar format, though brief lectures may be used when appropriate. As such, I expect students to: (a) attend all class meetings, (b) contribute meaningfully to discussions—both in quality and quantity—and (c) engage actively in in-class activities. You should come to each session having completed the assigned readings, reflected on key questions or points of confusion,

and reviewed notes from previous meetings to contribute thoughtfully to our collective conversation. Attendance is a prerequisite for participation and unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade. Beyond attendance, I will assess your engagement based on several considerations:

- Preparedness: I will regularly pose questions, present problems, or assign brief in-class tasks. You are expected to come prepared to engage actively in each session.
- Active engagement in class discussions and data-analysis exercises conducted in class.
- Evidence of low-quality engagement, such as unjustified absences, multitasking in class, etc.

2. Discussion Leadership

Starting in Week 2, groups of two students will serve as discussion leaders. Each group should prepare a 10–15-minute presentation that briefly summarizes the main argument, raises discussion questions, and offers a critical reflection on the class readings. You should connect your analysis to readings from previous weeks and use this opportunity to shape the class discussion. Each student will sign up to serve as discussion leaders at least once during the semester.

3. Quizzes

This course has no exams, but completing the readings and watching required videos before class is crucial. I will assess your understanding of the materials with brief quizzes. Quizzes will be deployed in eLC, and I will ask you to complete them in class. Besides multiple-choice questions about the content of the readings, you should be ready to answer questions such as…

- In one sentence, summarize the main argument of the article.
- How does the argument in this reading relate to last week's readings?

We will have five quizzes, and the lowest score will be dropped. Quizzes cannot be rescheduled or made up unless they coincide with a religious holy day, a documented medical emergency, or a university-sanctioned obligation. If any of these apply to you, please notify me in advance (or as soon as possible) so we can arrange an alternative time.

4. Data Report

Once during the semester, you will address a specific research question that requires analyzing data and interpreting quantitative results. The goal is to give you hands-on experience and help you prepare for the final research project. You must upload your R code along with your report to eLC; I must be able to run your script successfully for the assignment to be considered valid.

5. Final Research Project

You will work in teams to complete a final research project, which includes three memos, a paper presentation, and a final paper.

a. Research memos

Throughout the semester, you will develop three memos that will help you progressively build the final paper.

Memo 1: Selection of Topic and Literature Search (5%). Identify your research topic and related five papers or books. Provide the citation for each work, and list: (1) its research question; (2) the dependent variable; (3) the data employed (complete this assignment in less than two pages). Include one or two sentences for each source on why it is relevant and how it might be used.

Memo 2: Outline (5%). In one page, specify: (1) your research question; (2) your main hypothesis; (3) the scope of your case selection—whether you are focusing on one case, comparing two cases, or analyzing the entire region; and (4) the data you plan to use.

Memo 3: Research design and empirical findings (10%). In three pages, present: (1) the data; (2) the units of analysis; (3) the dependent variable; (4), the independent variables; (5) a table/s or figure/s summarizing the empirical findings; (6) a paragraph interpreting the main findings.

b. Paper presentation

Teams will make brief presentations related to the final paper. The presentation must include (a) an introduction to the case(s) you are analyzing, (b) your research question and the theories you are using to answer that question, (c) the data sources and the methods you used to collect and analyze data, and (d) your preliminary findings. This is not the final research paper yet, but rather an opportunity to receive feedback from your peers while developing your professional skills. You are also expected to reflect upon your peers' presentations, asking questions that help them develop their projects further.

- Each team should upload a presentation file (e.g., Powerpoint) in eLC before November 17
- Presentations should have no more than 6 slides
- Delivery of the presentation must be completed in 11 minutes
- Use minimal text – slides are not your notes
- Use figures and tables to convey your findings

c. Final paper

Drawing on your memos, paper presentation, and the feedback received from both the instructor and your peers, you will complete a final research paper that builds on your semester-long work. The paper must include: **(a)** an abstract providing a concise summary of the research topic, the specific question addressed, the methods used, key findings, and their implications (~150 words); **(b)** an introduction presenting the puzzle and/or research question and topic importance (~300 words); **(c)** a literature review outlining what is known, what remains unresolved, and your hypothesis (~400 words); **(d)** a description of your data and methods (~300 words); **(e)** an analysis addressing your question (~600 words); and **(f)** a conclusion summarizing your findings, discussing implications for broader debates in Latin American politics, and acknowledging any limitations of your analysis (~250 words). The paper should be 2,000 words maximum, excluding references and any tables or figures. Include the total word count on the first page of your paper.

Letter grades correspond to the following 0-100 scale:

Grade	Percentage Range
A	≥ 93.00
A−	90.00 – 92.99
B+	87.00 – 89.99
B	83.00 – 86.99
B−	80.00 – 82.99
C+	77.00 – 79.99
C	73.00 – 76.99
C−	70.00 – 72.99
D	60.00 – 69.99
F	≤ 59.99

Course Policies

Attendance. Class attendance is required for this course.

Respectful Learning Environment. To foster a respectful and inclusive classroom, we must enter each session with an open mind, ready to listen to and thoughtfully engage with one another's perspectives. The purpose of debate is to learn from each other, so all students are encouraged to share relevant thoughts and experiences. Disagreement is expected—and even welcomed—in academic discussions, but it must always be expressed respectfully. This includes using language that does not insult others or their viewpoints. Mistakes are part of the learning process, and we will approach them with patience and mutual respect.

Academic Honesty. As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to follow the University's academic honesty policy ("A Culture of Honesty") and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty," including policies that cover plagiarism and unauthorized assistance. Students are responsible for informing themselves about these standards before performing and submitting any academic work. They may direct specific questions they have regarding the policy—or its application to course assignments—to the instructor. Please note that all suspected violations of this policy will be handled according to the guidelines set forth within the policy.

Technology and AI Use Policy. *Laptops are generally <u>not</u> allowed in class*, except for **(1)** methods classes where we will learn about data wrangling and analysis or **(2)** on quiz days—**you must bring a laptop to class on those days.** You may also use a laptop if you are serving as a discussion leader. Otherwise, keep it off your desk. Please bring a notebook and pen to all other sessions unless you have a documented accommodation. If you require a laptop due to a disability, please provide documentation from UGA's Disability Resource Center. *<u>Cell phones and other noise-making devices must be silenced upon entering</u>.*

Use of AI tools is permitted under the following conditions (adapted from Dr. Maryann Gallagher, Dr. Guy Grossman, and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán):

1. **Original Work**: Your ideas and analysis must be your own. AI may assist with editing, but if you use it as your starting point—if it is generating the ideas and analysis—then you are not

developing the skills at the heart of this course. Do not undermine yourself and weaken your skills development for the sake of a grade. It's not worth it.

2. **Transparency**: If you use AI, document it. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly marked as such, including the specific tool(s) used. For example, if you use ChatGPT-3, you must cite "ChatGPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). "Text of your query." Generated using OpenAI. https://chat.openai.com." You must be transparent in how you used the AI-based tool, including what work is your original contribution. Turnitin's AI Writing Detector may be used to detect AI-driven work.

3. **Referencing and validating.** You take full responsibility for any AI-generated information included in your work. This means all ideas must be attributed to an actual source (not AI) with a citation that you have checked, and facts must be true and cited. AI can present some issues that you should be aware of before using it: (1) All AI relies on existing language/materials, which can be out of date, so be sure you know the most up to-date information on a situation. Outdated information will lead to poor analysis; (2) AI can "hallucinate" by misattributing a reference (so be sure to go to the original source) or may not cite sources (but you must); (3) AI can produce biased outputs as it relies on data that is not fully representative, especially of marginalized communities. You will be held accountable for the information you provide and thus must validate all information included in your work.

In short, never delegate your thinking to a machine. You must be in control of the analysis and the final product. At the end of the day, you are responsible for your work – and all related steps and decisions. Acknowledge the use of AI and bring your experiences to class. We want to learn how to make our work more efficient.

Recording Policy. Students may not audio or video record class sessions unless they have received written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center. If students have such an authorization, they:

- Understand that they may use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.

- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures, and they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.

- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.

- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.

- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.

- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

Assignment Due Dates and Late Penalties. Assignments are due on the dates given at the beginning of the regular class period for which they are assigned. Late assignments receive a penalty of one full letter grade (10 percentage points) for the first day—as well as an additional half-letter grade (5 percentage points) for each additional day—that they are late. After 10 days, students may

submit a late assignment for half-credit until the final class meeting. Note that it is inappropriate to arrive late to class on assignment due dates.

Grade Appeal Policy. If you have any questions or concerns about a grade received on an assignment, you must contact the instructor within one week of receiving the grade. A written appeal is required, clearly explaining the reasons why you believe the grade should be reconsidered. Please note that a grade review may result *in a higher grade, a lower grade, or no change*.

Accommodation for students with disabilities. If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, by calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources. UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu

- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu

- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273

- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu

- Accessibility & Testing: https://accessibility.uga.edu/ Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting https://well-being.uga.edu.

Summary – Schedule and Assignments

Date	Class	Topics	Assignments due
Aug. 14	1	Introduction	
Aug. 19	2	Conceptualizing "Democracy"	
Aug. 21	3	The Road to Democracy in Latin America	
Aug. 26	4	Authoritarianism	
Aug. 28	5	State Terrorism in Autocracy	
Sept. 2	6	Theories of Democratization	Quiz #1
Sept. 4	7	Democratization: Argentina and Mexico	
Sept. 9	8	*Reading Datasets and Data Wrangling*	
Sept. 11	9	*Causal Effects*	Memo #1
Sept. 16	10	Transitional Justice I: What It Is and Why It Matters	
Sept. 18	11	Transitional Justice II: Memory, Mobilization, and the Politics of Justice	Quiz #2
Sept. 23	12	Democratic Erosion	
Sept. 25	13	Democratic Resilience	
Sept. 30	14	*Linear Regression*	
Oct. 2	15	*Reporting Regression Results and Research Seminar*	Quiz #3
Oct. 7	16	Civil Wars	
Oct. 9	17	Rebel Governance	Memo #2
Oct. 14	18	*Binary and Categorical Outcomes*	
Oct. 16	19	Criminal Wars	
Oct. 21	20	Criminal Governance	Quiz #4
Oct. 23	21	Authoritarian Policing I: Concepts and Problems for Democracy	Memo #3
Oct. 28	22	Authoritarian Policing II: Human Rights Violations in Democracy	
Oct. 30	23	Breaking the Violence Trap I: Transitional Justice	Data Report
Nov. 4	24	Breaking the Violence Trap II: Institutional Reforms	
Nov. 6	25	Migration I: Why Do People Migrate?	
Nov. 11	26	Migration II: Native-Immigrant Relations	Quiz #5
Nov. 13	27	**(No class)**	
Nov. 18	28	Class presentations	Class presentations
Nov. 20	29	Class presentations	Class presentations
Nov. 25	30	Class presentations	Class presentations

Course Schedule

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

PART I. DEMOCRACY AND AUTOCRACY

Class 1: August 14 – Course Overview and Introduction to Latin America

Learning objectives:

- Gain a preliminary understanding of Latin America as a region.
- Review course goals, structure, and expectations.

Class 2: August 19 – Conceptualizing "Democracy"

Learning objectives:

- Conceptualize democracy, identify its main dimensions, and understand how it can be measured.
- How can we rigorously know when a country is democratic, and when it is not?

Readings:

- Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Yale University Press. Chapter 1.
- Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is... and Is Not." *Journal of Democracy* 2(3): 75-88.

Class 3: August 21 – The Road to Democracy in Latin America

Learning objectives:

- A brief overview of Latin American political development since post-WWII.
- How has democracy emerged in Latin America? Has democracy been the norm or the exception?

Readings:

- Mainwaring, Scott, and Frances Hagopian, eds. 2005. *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Class 4: August 26 – Authoritarianism

Learning objectives:

- What is an authoritarian regime?

- Understand how and why democracies break down, and how autocrats rule.

- Conceptualize different types of autocratic regimes during the twentieth century.

Readings:

- Schamis, Hector. 1991. "Reconceptualizing Latin American Authoritarianism in the 1970s: From Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism to Neoconservatism." *Comparative Politics*, 23(2): 201–220.

- Pion-Berlin, David. 1988. "The National Security Doctrine, Military Threat Perception, and the 'Dirty War' in Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 21 (3): 382–407.

Class 5: August 28 – State Terrorism in Autocracy

Learning objectives:

- Learn about human rights abuses committed by state security forces under autocratic rule— and how autocrats they legitimized repression.

- Think about how autocrats may be ousted.

Readings:

- Pereira, Anthony. 2012. "Human Rights and Military Abuses." In *Routledge Handbook of Latin American Politics*, eds. Peter Kingstone and Deborah J. Yashar. London, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group.

Watch Movie: "NO" - available through Alexander Street (through UGA)

Class 6: September 2 – Theories of Democratization

Learning objectives:

- Discuss why countries democratize, and how theories of democratization apply or not to Latin America.

- Discuss the role of domestic and international factors in prompting regime change.

Readings:

- Mainwaring, Scott, and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán. 2014. *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

- Karl, Terry. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." *Comparative Politics*, 3(1): 1-21.

Class 7: September 4 – Democratization: Argentina and Mexico

Learning objectives:

- Apply theories of democratization to specific cases.
- Why are some dictatorships more enduring than others?

Readings:

- Mainwaring, Scott, and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán. 2014. "From Multiple Breakdowns to Stabilization of Democracy: Argentina." In *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2005. "The Demise of Mexico's One-Party Dominant Regime: Elite Choices and the Masses in the Establishment of Democracy." In *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, ed. Hagopian, Frances, and Scott P. Mainwaring. New York: Cambridge University Press, 121–48.

Class 8: September 9 – Reading Datasets and Data Wrangling

Note: make sure you have R Studio installed and running before coming to class.

Learning objectives:

- Read, manipulate, and descriptively analyze data sets.

Readings:

- Lupu, Noam, Mariana Rodríguez, Carole J. Wilson, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (Eds.) 2023. Pulse of Democracy. Nashville, TN: LAPOP. https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/ab2023/AB2023-Pulse-of-Democracy-final-20231127.pdf.

Download the data set called "LAPOP_Merged_2004-2023.dta". Take a look at the core questionnaire to familiarize yourself with the dataset.

In-class activity: What do citizens think about their democracies?

Class 9: September 11 – Causal Effects

Learning objectives:

- Define "causal effects" – when does correlation imply causation?
- How may the idea of "causal effects" help you with your final project?

Readings:

- Nelson, Michael. 2017. "Causality." *A Political Science Guide.* https://politicalscienceguide.com/research/causality/

Watch:

- Leslie Myint, "Defining Causal Effects": https://youtu.be/poSGgCFsHgU

Class 10: September 16 – Transitional Justice I: What It Is and Why It Matters

Learning objectives:

- What is transitional justice?
- Conceptualize the ecosystem of transitional justice mechanisms

Readings:

- International Center of Transitional Justice (ICTJ), "About Transitional Justice" https://www.ictj.org/what-transitional-justice. See, also, on the ICTJ webpage "Criminal Prosecutions," "Reparations," "Institutional Reform," "Truth Commissions."

Class 11: September 18 – Transitional Justice II: Memory, Mobilization, and the Politics of Justice

Learning objectives:

- How did civil society and the families of victims of human rights abuses mobilize to confront repression?
- Discuss one of the most emblematic cases of civil society mobilization for truth and justice: Argentina's Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

Readings:

- Bouvard, Marguerite G. (1994). *Revolutionizing motherhood: The mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.* Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 7.

Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMTzJXrmwmA&ab_channel=TheNewYorkTimes

Note: We will revisit transitional justice later in the semester to assess its broader effects on criminal violence and institutional reform in new democracies.

Class 12: September 23 – Democratic Erosion

Learning objectives:

- What is the evidence that we in an era of democratic backsliding?
- How widespread the problem is (if at all)?
- What are some prominent cases of democratic erosion?

Readings:

- Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. (2018). *How Democracies Die.* Introduction, Chapters 1, 4, and 5.

- Meléndez-Sánchez, Manuel. 2021. "Latin America Erupts: Millennial Authoritarianism in El Salvador." *Journal of Democracy* 32(3): 19–32.

Class 13: September 25 – Democratic Resilience

Learning objectives:

- How can democratic actors resist democratic backsliding?
- What types of actors are best positioned to resist?

Readings:

- Gamboa, Laura (2017) "Opposition at the Margins: Strategies against the Erosion of Democracy in Colombia and Venezuela," *Comparative Politics*, 49(4): 457-477.
- Gamboa, Laura, Benjamín García-Holgado, and Ezequiel González-Ocantos. "Courts against backsliding: Lessons from Latin America." *Law & Policy* 46, no. 4 (2024): 358-379.

Class 14: September 30 – Linear Regression

Learning objectives:

- Understand the basics of linear regression, a commonly used tool for statistically analyzing relationships between variables.

Watch:

- An Introduction to Linear Regression Analysis (5 min.): https://youtu.be/zPG4NjIkCjc
- Multiple Linear Regression Using R (6 min.): https://youtu.be/WRp_MpYQFbg

Class 15: October 2 – Reporting Regression Results and Research Seminar

Learning objectives:

- Learn how to report results from regression analysis.
- Develop skills to structure and write a political science research paper.

Watch:

- Tables of regressions for Word (20 min.): https://youtu.be/VrpcB1UeJJc

Reading:

- Nelson, Michael. 2017. "Research Papers." *A Political Science Guide.* https://politicalscienceguide.com/home/research-papers/

Class 16: October 7 – Civil Wars

Learning objectives:

- Define civil war and its causes.
- What motivates rebel groups to fight?

Readings:

- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (6): 814–58.
- Daly, Sarah Zukerman. 2012. "Organizational Legacies of Violence: Conditions Favoring Insurgency Onset in Colombia, 1964–1984." *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (3): 473–91.

Class 17: October 9 – Rebel Governance

Learning objectives:

- How do rebels govern, and what explains variation in rebel governance?

Readings:

- Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Class 18: October 14 – Binary and Categorical Outcomes

Learning objectives:

- Learn how to analyze data and use regressions when dependent variables are binary and categorical.

Watch:

- How to Create a Categorical Regression Model in R (12 min.): https://youtu.be/qst0QGBntxc
- Logistic Regression in R Studio (10 min.): https://youtu.be/iyU2CkHrfQk

Class 19: October 16 – Criminal Wars

Learning objectives:

- How do criminal groups differ from rebel groups?
- Understand recent outbreaks of criminal violence in some Latin American countries.
- Trace how earlier political violence shapes today's criminal violence.
- Analyze civil society responses to criminal violence.

Readings:

- Trejo, Guillermo, and Sandra Ley. 2018. "Why Did Drug Cartels Go to War in Mexico? Subnational Party Alternation, the Breakdown of Criminal Protection, and the Onset of Large-Scale Violence." *Comparative Political Studies* 51(7): 900–937.

- Santos Cid, Alejandro. 2019. "Mexico's 'searching mothers,' alone against the drug cartels and the authorities: 'We live with more fear than ever'." *El País USA Edition.* https://english.elpais.com/international/2025-03-29/mexicos-searching-mothers-alone-against-the-drug-cartels-and-the-authorities-we-live-with-more-fear-than-ever.html

Class 20: October 21 – Criminal Governance

Learning objectives:

- Examine, through concrete examples, how criminal organization rule in parts of contemporary Latin America.

Readings:

- Lessing, Ben. 2021. "Conceptualizing Criminal Governance." *Perspectives on Politics*, 19(3), 854-873.

- Briso, Caio Barretto, and Tom Phillips. 2020. "Brazil Gangs Impose Strict Curfews to Slow Coronavirus Spread." *The Guardian*, March 25. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/25/brazil-rio-gangs-coronavirus

Class 21: October 23 – Authoritarian Policing I: Concepts and Problems for Democracy

Learning objectives:

- Define "militarized policing" – what it is, why it emerges, and where it is more prevalent.

- Analyze why some reforms enhance civilian control of police forces whereas others prompt authoritarian policing in democracy.

Readings:

- Flores-Macías, Gustavo A., and Jessica Zarkin. 2021. "The Militarization of Law Enforcement: Evidence from Latin America." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(2): 519–38.

- González, Yanilda. *Authoritarian Police in Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapter 1.

Class 22: October 28 – Authoritarian Policing II: Human Rights Violations in Democracy

Learning objectives:

- Examine the consequences of militarized policing: does it protect or undermine human rights in democratic regimes?

Readings:

- Trejo, Guillermo, and Natán Skigin. 2024. "Silencing the Press in Criminal Wars: Why the War on Drugs Turned Mexico into the World's Most Dangerous Country for Journalists." *Perspectives on Politics*, pp.1-22.

Class 23: October 30 – Breaking the Violence Trap I: Transitional Justice

Learning objectives:

- Are there alternatives to militarized policing to reduce crime and violence? What do they look like, and what effects might they have?

Readings:

- Trejo, Guillermo, Juan Albarracín, and Lucía Tiscornia. 2018. "Breaking state impunity in post-authoritarian regimes: Why transitional justice processes deter criminal violence in new democracies." *Journal of Peace Research* 55(6): 787-809.
- Chavez-Segura, Alejandro. "Can Truth Reconcile a Nation? Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in Argentina and Chile: Lessons for Mexico," in *Latin American Policy*.

Class 24: November 4 – Breaking the Violence Trap II: Institutional Reforms

- Trejo, Guillermo, and Camilo Nieto-Matiz. 2022. "Containing Large-Scale Criminal Violence Through Internationalized Prosecution: How the Collaboration Between the CICIG and Guatemala's Law Enforcement Contributed to a Sustained Reduction in the Murder Rate." *Comparative Political Studies* 56(9): 1328-1364.
- José Miguel Cruz. 2011. "Criminal violence and democratization in Central America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 53(4).

Class 25: November 6 – Migration I: Why Do People Migrate?

Learning objectives:

- Migration definitions and historical and recent trends.
- Understand what drives migration in Latin America today.

Readings:

- UNHCR global trends 2024 *(skim statistics; no need to read the full report)*
- McMackin, Charli. 2025. "Push Factors: The Causes of Migration in Latin America." *The Oxford Student*, February 12. https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2025/02/12/migration-from-latin-america/
- Hiskey, J.T., Córdova, A., Malone, M.F. and Orcés, D.M., 2018. "Leaving the devil you know: Crime victimization, US deterrence policy, and the emigration decision in Central America." *Latin American Research Review*, 53(3), pp.429-447.

Class 26: November 11 – Migration II: Native-Immigrant Relations

Learning objectives:

- Examine natives' perceptions and misperceptions about immigration.

Readings:

- Holland, Alisha, Margaret E. Peters, and Yang-Yang Zhou. 2024. "Left Out: How Political Ideology Affects Support for Migrants in Colombia." *The Journal of Politics* 86 (4): 1291–1303. https://doi.org/10.1086/729943.
- Ajzenman, Nicolás, Patricio Dominguez, and Raimundo Undurraga. 2023. "Immigration, crime, and crime (mis)perceptions." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 15(4): 142-176.

Class 27: November 13 – No class (Prof. Skigin at academic conference)

Class 28: November 18 – Presentation of Final Projects

Class 29: November 20 – Presentation of Final Projects

Class 30: November 25 – Presentation of Final Projects