

INTL 4380: Latin American Politics

Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Natán Skigin (nskigin@uga.edu)

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:55 pm – 4:15 pm

Room: Sanford Hall 314

Office hours: Thursdays 10:00 – 11:30 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 pressing political challenges faced by Latin America—one of the most violent and unequal regions in the world, yet also a source of groundbreaking experiments, ranging 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) What pushes people to migrate, and how do natives receive them?

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, criminal violence, and the politics of migration.

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.

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.

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. AmericasBarometer (LAPOP) Essay	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, students will serve as discussion leaders. Each student should prepare a 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 be required to sign up to serve as a discussion leader at least once during the semester. Please send me your slides the day before class.

3. Quizzes

This course has no exams, but completing the readings before class is crucial. I will assess your understanding of the materials with brief quizzes that combine multiple-choice and short open-ended questions. Quizzes will be deployed in eLC, and I will ask you to complete them in class.

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. AmericasBarometer (LAPOP) Essay

Working in small groups with the AmericasBarometer (LAPOP) [online data analysis tool](#), you will write a 4-page essay (1.5 spacing, normal margins and font, excluding references) that examines public opinion in one or more Latin American countries. We will use the class on March 5 to work on this assignment. You are free to use this assignment to generate ideas for your final research paper, although this is by no means mandatory. The essay should include a topic or research question, the data (i.e., specific variables/wording, country, survey wave(s)) used to answer that question, results, and a brief interpretation. More information will be provided separately. The essay presents a valuable opportunity to gain insight into public opinion in Latin American countries regarding politics, economic trends, and social issues.

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 five related 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 April 16
- 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. **The final paper is due on May 1.**

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 in a respectful manner. 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 not allowed in class*, except 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. *Cell phones and other noise-making devices must be silenced upon entering.*

Use of AI tools is permitted under the following conditions (adapted from Dr. Maryann Gallagher, Dr. Guy Grossman, and Dr. 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-5, you must cite "ChatGPT-5. (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. Ultimately, you are responsible for your work – including all related steps and decisions. Acknowledge the use of AI and bring your experiences to class. We aim to improve the efficiency of our work.

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>.

Supplementary Information

Follow current events in Latin America. Some resources:

- Latin America Daily Briefing: <https://latinamericadailybriefing.substack.com/>
- Latin America Weekly Report: https://www.latinnews.com/component/k2/itemlist/category/33.html?archive=true&archive_id=33

Summary – Schedule and Assignments

Date	Class	Topics	Assignments due
Jan. 13	1	Course Overview	
Jan. 15		NO CLASS: PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE	
Jan. 20	2	Introduction to Latin America I: A Brief History of the Region	
Jan. 22	3	Introduction to Latin America II: Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy	
Jan. 27	4	Conceptualizing “Democracy”	
Jan. 29	5	The Road to Democracy in Latin America	
Feb. 3	6	Authoritarianism	
Feb. 5	7	State Terrorism in Autocracy	Quiz #1
Feb. 10	8	Theories of Democratization	
Feb. 12	9	Democratic Transitions in Comparative Perspective	Memo #1
Feb. 17	10	Women’s Movements and the Struggle for Justice and Human Rights I: Watch Documentary “Norita”	
Feb. 19	11	Women’s Movements and the Struggle for Justice and Human Rights II: Discussion with “Norita” producer	
Feb. 24	12	Democratic Erosion I	Quiz #2
Feb. 26	13	Democratic Erosion II	
Mar. 3	14	Democratic Resilience	
Mar. 5	15	AmericasBarometer (LAPOP) Data Playground	
Mar. 10		NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
Mar. 12		NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
Mar. 17	16	Civil Wars	Quiz #3
Mar. 19	17	Rebel Governance	LAPOP Essay
Mar. 24	18	Criminal Wars	
Mar. 26	19	Criminal Governance	Memo #2
Mar. 31	20	Militarized Policing I: Concepts and Problems for Democracy	Quiz #4
Apr. 2	21	Militarized Policing II: Human Rights Violations in Democracy	
Apr. 7	22	Breaking the Violence Trap	
Apr. 9	23	Migration I: Why Do People Migrate?	Memo #3
Apr. 14	24	Migration II: Native-Immigrant Relations	Quiz #5
Apr. 16	25	Class presentations	Class presentations
Apr. 21	26	Class presentations	Class presentations
Apr. 23		NO CLASS: WORK ON YOUR FINAL PAPERS	

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: January 13 – Course Overview

Learning objectives:

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

January 13: NO CLASS: PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE

Class 2: January 20 – Introduction to Latin America I: A Brief History of the Region

Learning objectives:

- Provide a brief history of Latin American politics and grasp variation across countries. This should be useful to better digest the content from the rest of the semester.

Readings:

- Ch. 1 and 2 Harvey F. Kline, Christine J. Wade, and Howard J. Wiarda. *Latin American Politics and Development* (Routledge, 2018).
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/6r5d0zwwkrs4gogophy42/ALTuGAHT1tC8XhFKnKl0GU4?dl=0&e=1&preview=wiarda-2018.pdf&rlkey=ytem19dntexp8l33sido0xrs>

Class 3: January 22 – Introduction to Latin America II: Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy

Learning objectives:

- Examine two perennial regional problems: high levels of inequality and institutional weakness.
- Analyze the factors that explain stark levels of inequality, its consequences, and potential solutions.

Readings:

- Hoffman, K. and Miguel Angel Centeno. 2003. "The Lopsided Continent: Inequality in Latin America." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (1), 363–390.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2008. "Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy: The Latin American Experience." *Journal of Democracy* 19(4), 69-79.

Class 4: January 27 – 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.

Class 5: January 29 – 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. Chapter 1.

Class 6: February 3 – 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, Héctor. 1991. “Reconceptualizing Latin American Authoritarianism in the 1970s: From Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism to Neoconservatism.” *Comparative Politics*, 23(2): 201–220.

Class 7: February 5 – 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 8: February 10 – Theories of Democratization

Learning objectives:

- Discuss why countries democratize, and how theories of democratization apply or do not apply 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.

Class 9: February 12 – Democratic Transitions in Comparative Perspective

Learning objectives:

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

Readings:

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

Class 10: February 17 – Women's Movements and the Struggle for Justice and Human Rights I: Watch Documentary "Norita"

In-class activity: Watch "Norita." The film follows Nora Cortiñas, a mother who searches for her disappeared son during Argentina's 1970s military dictatorship. The film traces her transformation from a private citizen into a leading human rights activist and shows how her struggle for truth and justice helped inspire broader movements for accountability and women's rights in Argentina and beyond.

Class 11: February 19 – Women’s Movements and the Struggle for Justice and Human Rights II: Discussion with “Norita” producer

Conversation with Sarah Schoellkopf, producer of “Norita.”

Class 12: February 24 – Democratic Erosion I

Learning objectives:

- What is democratic erosion, and how do we know when it occurs?
- What is the evidence that we are in an era of democratic backsliding?
- How widespread is the problem (if at all)?

Readings:

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

Class 13: February 26 – Democratic Erosion II

Learning objectives:

- What are some prominent cases of democratic erosion? What does erosion look like in specific countries?

Readings:

- Meléndez-Sánchez, Manuel. 2021. “Latin America Erupts: Millennial Authoritarianism in El Salvador.” *Journal of Democracy* 32(3): 19–32.
- Before class, listen to *The Grim Side of El Salvador’s “Security Model”* Podcast, available at: <https://www.wola.org/multimedia/the-grim-side-of-el-salvadors-security-model/>

Class 14: March 3 – 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.

We will spend the last 20 minutes of class familiarizing ourselves with the AmericasBarometer’s online data playground to prepare for next week.

Class 15: March 5 – Research Design Seminar + AmericasBarometer (LAPOP)

- Before coming to class, select one or more countries and survey round(s) (year(s)) that interest you, and review the questionnaire. Make a note of any survey questions that interest you. You can find the questionnaires here: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.php>
- In-class activity: analyzing AmericasBarometer data
 - Go to the AmericasBarometer Data Playground:
<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/data-playground-eng.php>
 - Use class time to explore the data. Keep notes of what you find interesting and what you are learning from the online analyses.
- Reading: LAPOP Data Playground How-To Guide:
<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/Data-Playground-How-To-Guide-English-250529.pdf>

March 10 and 12: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)

PART II. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY: POLITICAL VIOLENCE, CRIME, AND MIGRATION

Class 16: March 17 – Civil Wars

Learning objectives:

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

Readings:

- 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: March 19 – 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: March 24 – 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.

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.

Class 19: March 26 – Criminal Governance

Learning objectives:

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

Readings:

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

Class 20: March 31 – Militarized 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.

Class 21: April 2 – Militarized Policing II: Human Rights Violations in Democracy

Learning objectives:

- Examine the consequences of militarized policing through the lens of violence against journalism: does militarization 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 22: April 7 – Breaking the Violence Trap

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.

Class 23: April 9 – Migration I: Why Do People Migrate?

Learning objectives:

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

Readings:

- 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 24: April 14 – Migration II: Native-Immigrant Relations

Learning objectives:

- Understand the main theories that explain public attitudes toward immigration.
- 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>.

Class 25: April 16 – Presentation of Final Projects

Class 26 April 21 – Presentation of Final Projects

April 23 – NO CLASS: WORK ON YOUR FINAL PAPERS