

U.S.-Latin American Relations POL 574-01
Spring 2021
University of San Diego
Ambassador (retired) Leslie Bassett
3 hours/14 nights 5:30 pm – 8:20 p.m. (Monday January 25 – May 10)

Office hours: MTW 1-3 pm (via zoom appointment) or by appointment
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Zoom link: <https://sandiego.zoom.us/j/91809493215>

Please note this is currently a zoom-only course in order to comply with [covid precautions](#). Should conditions related to covid change we can then explore options for in-person or hybrid learning. This is intended to be a synchronous class and you are asked to virtually attend in real-time with video on. If you are working in a different time zone, however, accommodations can certainly be made -- please contact the instructor early in the semester to make sure you can meet participation expectations. Similarly, if you are having connectivity or other issues, please contact the instructor and we can work out accommodations.

All class sessions will be recorded, and the recordings posted in blackboard.

All course directions, assignments, and updates will be posted on blackboard. Please check there regularly. If you have problems accessing blackboard please contact the instructor.

Grades will also be posted on blackboard, but keep in mind they are weighted. Mid-term grades will be sent to all students before being formally submitted on March 17, 2021.

We are all adjusting to this new kind of learning. Please be patient! Please also offer constructive comments and suggestions to make the experience better for you and your colleagues. I promise all suggestions will be carefully considered and adjustments made whenever possible. For that reason the syllabus will likely change as we go through the course together, please be alert to notices in blackboard.

Office hours are here for you! You are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss how the course fits in with your objectives, and any modifications that could make it more useful for you.

Course description: The United States shares substantial history and heritage with Latin America, yet consistently fails to give the region the priority it merits. This course explores the common denominators between the U.S. and Latin America; the long record of presumption in U.S. engagement with the region; the shared challenges of the current day; and the opportunities to identify new engagements and policy directions as the U.S. hosts the ninth Summit of the Americas in 2021. For lack of time we will not focus on the Caribbean nations with the exception of Cuba which has played a central role in U.S. relations with the region. This course

is taught from the optic of the United States and reflects a practitioner's perspective. Informed debate about the past, and creative thinking toward the future are both highly encouraged.

Learning objectives:

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will become familiar with foreign policy decision making paradigms, concepts and practice in assessing U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America.
- **Operational Assessment:** Students will be aware of and able to determine when the foreign policy tools of diplomacy, economic engagement, military/hard power and values-based soft power have been effective/ineffective in specific situations.
- **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate an awareness of societal and/or civic issues related to the U.S. role in Latin America including human rights, diversity, and the tensions between U.S. values and U.S. interests.
- **Personal Responsibility:** Students will form their own research agendas in foreign policy analysis, will participate in a constructive and respectful fashion in class, and will practice academic honesty in their writing assignments.
- **Communication:** Students will enhance their oral skills through presentations in different scenarios that will require effective communication tailored to audience and situation.

Course Texts: There are no required texts. All readings/materials will be available on-line or through the instructor.

Required readings/activities are listed for each class session and should be completed *prior* to the relevant session. Links are provided. Readings will generally not exceed 100 pages in total.

Optional multi-media suggestions are meant to provoke additional consideration of perspectives and issues for those students that have interest and time. However, they are not required and no extra credit is offered for their completion.

As a graduate-level course this class requires almost weekly independent research as well as a final policy paper. You are welcome to identify your own resources, but as an introduction these sites are generally useful, authoritative, balanced and policy-oriented (from a U.S. perspective):

[Congressional Research Service](#)

[Inter-American Dialogue](#)

[The Brookings Institute](#)

[Wilson Center](#)

[Americas Society-Council of the Americas](#)

[CSIS](#)

[Council on Foreign Relations](#)

[Summit of the Americas Secretariat](#)

[The Washington Office on Latin America \(WOLA\)](#)

Please do keep up with the news as well, as current events will be discussed at every session and an understanding of current dynamics will be essential to your success in the course.

Grading and Requirements:

Participation: Students are expected to have completed the readings and actively contribute to class discussions (or the Discussion Board in the event of missed classes). Participation will count for 10 percent of the final grade.

Assignment – Policy/Institution Brief: In Session Two students will brief the class on an assigned U.S. policy or regional institution. Each student will independently research and present in five minutes key elements of the policy or institution, the reasons behind its creation, one incident in which it was involved or invoked, its impacts over time on U.S. relations with the region, and its relevance today. The briefing student will be expected to respond to questions from the rest of the class. This briefing will constitute 10 percent of the final grade.

Assignment -- US-Cuban Relations Incident Brief: In Session Three student teams will brief on their assigned topic (listed in the session description below), describing:

1. U.S. interests and goals leading into the incidents
2. Options considered and actions taken
3. Desired outcomes versus actual outcomes
4. Consequences for the future of U.S. relations with Latin America

Each brief should be no more than 10 minutes long and all team members must contribute to the in-class presentation. The briefing team should be prepared to field questions from the class for another 10 minutes after the presentation. This briefing will constitute 10 percent of the final grade.

Assignment -- Summit of the Americas Mandate Brief: Students will select one mandate of the Summit of the Americas from a provided list, and report on developments as they pertain to the region under discussion in the current day. Summit briefs will be 3 minutes long and will be presented during classes 5, 7, 10, 12. Each presentation is 5 percent of the final grade, for a total of 20 percent.

Assignment -- Simulation regarding Venezuela: During Session Nine students will assume roles in a National Security Council discussion of the ongoing crisis in Venezuela and its regional implications. Students will be expected to prepare and **submit policy papers to the instructor by 12 pm the day of class** as directed in the simulation instructions (no other simulation assessments need be completed). This paper and student participation in the two-hour simulation will together be 15 percent of the final grade.

Assignment -- Country Brief: Each student will choose a country from the provided list and offer a ten-minute update on that country's current relations with the United States, to include development and security assistance, trade and tourism, environmental issues, security issues, military cooperation, law enforcement engagement, human rights issues and any U.S. congressional or legislative mandates. The student will also provide a forecast of the assigned

country's concerns and interests heading into the IX Summit of the Americas. This briefing will constitute 10 percent of the final grade.

Assignment – Final Paper: Each student will assume the role of a Special Advisor to the President responsible for U.S. participation in the IX Summit of the Americas. The student will prepare a policy paper for the President outlining major U.S. goals for the Summit, possible obstacles or constraints, key allies/opponents, and deliverables. The policy paper must provide specific recommendations on engaging with (separately or collectively) Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. Papers will be at least eight pages, and will follow a format provided by the instructor. **Papers are due to the instructor by 12 p.m. on May 10, 2021.** Students will present their papers during the final class, and engage in a discussion with fellow students about the Summit. The final paper will account for 20 percent of the final grade, and the in-class presentation and discussion will constitute the final 5 percent of the grade.

Late Assignment Policy: Out of respect to those who meet deadlines, extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. Late submissions will lose 1/2 a letter grade per day, unless accompanied by a dean's excuse for incapacitating illness, the death of a family member or a comparable emergency.

Cheating and Plagiarism Please familiarize yourself with the [University's policy on cheating, plagiarism and documentation](#). Any cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported directly to the appropriate dean.

Course Outline

1-25-2021 Session One: The Challenge of Proximity: *Well before the pilgrims landed much of what is now the United States was colonized by primarily Spanish explorers who saw it as an extension of their Latin American territorial claims. We will briefly review the changing maps and history the U.S. shares with Latin America, and some of the legacies that persist. We will define key reasons why Latin America matters to the U.S. We will also begin a discussion on U.S. values and interests related to Latin America, and how they drove U.S. engagement from the first days of U.S. independence through to the upcoming (summer 2021) Summit of the Americas.*

Lecture: U.S. and Latin America: Shared History, Shared Future

Readings:

“Colonial Origins and Colonial Transformations in Spanish America” by Kathleen Deagan <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25617091> (please access jstor through the [USD library](#) or create a free account directly with jstor [here](#).)

[“How the United States Became a Part of Latin America,”](#) by Carrie Gibson, lithub, March 8, 2019

[“Latin America in US Foreign Policy: Changing Interests, Priorities and Policies,”](#) by Abraham F. Lowenthal, plataformademocratica.org

Optional resources: [The Mission](#) is a romanticized but visually stunning depiction of Jesuit engagement with the Guarani peoples in Paraguay/Argentina/Brazil in the late 1700s.

2-1-2021 Session Two: The Challenge of Engagement

Over time the U.S. analysis of the values, interests and goals it seeks to advance with its policies in Latin America have evolved significantly. We quickly review key milestones that remain pivotal touchstones in the formation of U.S. policy today, and the institutional tools that have been integral to the execution of U.S. policy.

Policy/Institution Briefs: Each student will independently research and present in five minutes key elements of the below listed policy or institution, the reasons behind its creation, one incident in which it was involved or invoked, its impacts over time on U.S. relations with the region, and its relevance today.

Monroe Doctrine (December 23, 1823)

Manifest Destiny (1845)

Spanish-American War 1898

Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and Gunboat Diplomacy (December, 1904)

School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (1946)

Organization of the American States (April 30, 1948)

Inter-American Development Bank (April 8, 1959)

Alliance for Progress (1961)

U.S. Southern Command (1963)

Cold War/Proxy Wars in Central America (1970s-1980s)

Lost Decade (1980s), Washington Consensus, Peso Crisis (1994),

Leahy Law and Vetting (1997)

International Law Enforcement Academy El Salvador (2005)

Lecture: The Arc of History: How the Past Shapes Today in US-Latin American Relations

Readings:

[“American Exceptionalism, American Freedom”](#) by Eric Foner, Montreal Review, January 2013.

[“The United States and the Other American Republics,”](#) a speech by Secretary of State Henry Stimson to the Council on Foreign Relations, April 1, 1931. (access through the USD library)

[“Latin America and the Caribbean: U.S. Policy Overview.”](#) Congressional Research Service, October 2020.

2-8-2021 Session Three: The Challenge of Cuba

With its victory in the 1898 Spanish-American War the U.S. became an imperial power, with control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. The U.S. occupied Cuba until 1902, and then again between 1903-1906. Cuba resumed self-governance after that, but under the constraints of the U.S.-passed Platt Amendment which remained in effect until 1934 and gave the U.S. the right to intervene in Cuba under certain conditions. Fidel Castro took power in a coup on 1959, triggering a significant migration of Cubans to the U.S. The U.S. broke relations with Cuba in 1961, beginning a long and complex series of confrontations between the two nations.

Incident Briefs:

Student teams will brief on each topic, describing:

1. US goals leading into the incidents
2. Options considered and actions taken
3. Desired outcomes versus actual outcomes
4. Consequences for the future of U.S. relations with Latin America

Each brief should be no more than 10 minutes long and all team members must contribute. The briefing team should be prepared to field questions for another 10 minutes after the presentation. While all students will read all assigned readings listed below, the briefing team will do independent research beyond the assigned readings on their respective topics.

The Changing Role of Guantanamo Bay (1903)

Reading: [Naval Station Guantanamo Bay: History and Legal Issues Regarding its Lease Agreements](#), Congressional Research Service, Nov. 17, 2016.

Cuban Embargo (1960-present in various forms)

Reading: [“U.S. Trade embargo has cost Cuba \\$130 billion, UN Says,”](#) Reuters, May 8, 2018.

Bay of Pigs (April, 1961)

Reading: [“The Bay of Pigs,”](#) JFK Library.

Cuban Missile Crisis (October, 1962)

Reading: [Nuclear Close Calls: The Cuban Missile Crisis](#), The Atomic Heritage Foundation, June 15, 2018 (watch the Kennedy video too!)

Migration: Mariel Boatlift/Wet Foot-Dry Foot/Elian Gonzalez (1980-present)

Reading: [The Myth of Elian, the Boy Who Was Plucked from the Sea](#), by Vanessa Garcia, Miami New Times, April 21, 2020

Video: [The Mariel Boatlift](#), History of Miami Museum (YouTube)
Diplomatic Recognition (July 2015)

Reading: [The Cuba Play](#), The New Yorker, 10/3/2016
(accessed through Copley Library – you may have to log in to
validate the link)

Sonic(?) Attacks and Steps Back (2017-present)

Reading: [The Sound and the Fury: Inside the Mystery of the Havana Embassy](#), Tim Golden and Sebastian Rotella, Propublica,
February 14, 2018

[U.S. Response to Injuries of U.S. Embassy Personnel in Havana, Cuba](#), Congressional Research Service, October 6, 2017

Optional resources: “[Cubans in Florida](#),” Cuban Studies Institute, 2019.

“[Cuba and the Summits of the Americas](#),” by Richard Feinberg, America’s Quarterly, September 5, 2014.

2-15-2021 Session Four: The Challenge of “Intermestic” U.S. Policies and the Summit of the Americas 1994

“For the first time in history, the Americas are a community of democratic societies. Although faced with differing development challenges, the Americas are united in pursuing prosperity through open markets, hemispheric integration, and sustainable development. We are determined to consolidate and advance closer bonds of cooperation and to transform our aspirations into concrete realities.” Declaration of Principles, I Summit.

Guest Lecture (confirmed): [Dr. Richard Feinberg](#) on the first Summit of the Americas

Readings:

[Declaration of Principles of the First Summit of the Americas](#)

[NAFTA and the MCMA: Weighing the Benefits of North American Trade](#), Council on Foreign Relations, July 1, 2020.

[Fact Sheet on Trade with the Western Hemisphere](#), United States Trade Representative, 2019.

[U.S. -Latin America Trade and Investment in the 21st Century](#), Inter-American Dialogue, 2015.

Optional resources:

[Excerpt from President Clinton’s Remarks 12-11-1994](#), Summit of the Americas (C-SPAN)

2-22-2021 Session Five: Southern Cone: The Challenge and Legacy of Dictatorship

“The strengthening of democracy, political dialogue, economic stability, progress towards social justice, the extent to which our trade liberalization policies coincide, and the will to expedite a process of ongoing Hemispheric integration have made our relations more mature.” Santiago Declaration, April, 1998

Readings

II Summit of the Americas, [Santiago Declaration](#), April, 1998

“[Operation Condor: The Cold War Conspiracy that Terrorized South America](#)”, by Giles Tremlett, The Guardian, September 3, 2020.

“[Kissinger and Chile: The Declassified Archive](#),” Peter Kornbluh, National Security Archives, September 11, 2013 (review 10 declassified documents as well as the article itself)

“[Alfredo Stroessner 1912-2006: Dictator Controlled Paraguay for 34 Years](#)”, by Jack Epstein, SF Chronicle, August 17, 2006.

“[Argentina](#)”, Center for Justice and Accountability

Optional resources:

“[Argentine Filmmaker Remembers His Country’s Disappeared](#),” PBS Newshour, March 25, 2016.

*Summit briefs

3-1-2021 Session Six: Southern Cone: The Challenges of Democratization

“Consequently, any unconstitutional alteration or interruption of the democratic order in a state of the Hemisphere constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the participation of that state's government in the Summit of the Americas process. Having due regard for existing hemispheric, regional and sub-regional mechanisms, we agree to conduct consultations in the event of a disruption of the democratic system of a country that participates in the Summit process.” III Summit, Declaration of Quebec City, April 2001.

Country Briefs:

Argentina *Eric Miller*

Chile *David de Carle (Jassem provides written report)*

Paraguay *Vlad Ghahramanyan*

Uruguay *Yara Bataineh*

III Summit, [Declaration of Quebec City](#), April 2001 (please note the two paragraphs to which Venezuela takes exception).

“[Argentina: Background and U.S. Relations](#),” Congressional Research Service, June, 2017.

“[Chile: An Overview](#),” Congressional Research Service, June 3, 2020.

“[Paraguay: In Brief](#),” Congressional Research Service, August 31, 2017.

“[Uruguay: An Overview](#),” Congressional Research Service, October 24, 2019.

3-8-2021 Session Seven: Brazil: The Challenges of Governance and Environmental Consequences

“ . . . we, the Heads of State and Government of the democratic countries of the Americas, gathered in the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, on the occasion of our Fourth Summit, reaffirm our commitment to fight poverty, inequality, hunger, and social exclusion in order to raise the standard of living of our peoples and strengthen democratic governance in the Americas. We assign the right to work, as articulated in human rights instruments, a central place on the hemispheric agenda, recognizing the essential role of the creation of decent work to achieve these objectives.” IV Summit, Declaration of Principles, November 5, 2005

Country Brief:

Guest speaker: [Amb. Liliana Ayalde \(retired\)](#) (confirmed)

Brazil *Randall Ramos*

***Summit Briefs**

Readings:

IV Summit, [Declaration of Principles](#), November 5, 2005

[“Brazil: Background and U.S. Relations,”](#) Congressional Research Service, July 6, 2020

[“The World’s Largest Wetlands are on Fire,”](#) Ivana Kottasová, Henrik Pettersson and Krystina Shveda, CNN, November 13, 2020.

[“Brazil: Setbacks in the Legal and Institutional Anti-Corruption Frameworks”](#), Transparency International, 2019.

[“Rainforest Destruction in Brazil is a Public Security Emergency”](#), by Maria Laura Canineu, Human Rights Watch, February 4, 2020.

Optional resource: Documentary, “The Edge of Democracy”, Netflix

[“The Destruction of the Amazon, Explained,”](#) Vox Atlas, November 21, 2019.

3-15-2021 Session Eight: Andes: The Challenges of Armed Conflict and Reconciliation

“We affirm that the solutions to the challenges facing our peoples are closely inter-dependent with our efforts to promote sustainable development and social inclusion; build stronger democratic institutions; strengthen governance in our democracies; preserve the rule of law and ensure access to justice for all citizens; protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms; prevent and combat violence, crime, terrorism and corruption; fight the global drug problem and related crimes; and achieve broader civic participation of all citizens of the inter-American community.” V Summit, Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, April 19, 2009.

Country Briefs:

Colombia *Mursel Sabir*
Venezuela *Stacy Urreola*
Ecuador *Dalal Al Fares*
Peru *Dominique Batiste*
Bolivia *Evan Edwards*

Readings:

V Summit, [Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain](#), April 19, 2009.

“[Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations](#),” Congressional Research Service, October 26, 2020.

“[Venezuela: Background and U.S. Relations](#),” Congressional Research Service, August 26, 2020.

“[Ecuador: An Overview](#),” Congressional Research Service, January 5, 2021.

“[Peru: Politics, Economy and Elections](#),” Congressional Research Service, June 14, 2016.

“[Bolivia: An Overview](#),” Congressional Research Service, November 24, 2020.

Optional Resource: [Missionaries](#), by Philip Klay (fiction).

3-22-2021 Session Nine “[Collapse in Venezuela](#)” Simulation

Guest lecture: [Ambassador \(retired\) Lee McClenny](#) (confirmed)

Details at the [Council on Foreign Relations Model Diplomacy site](#); roles will be assigned after consultation with students and e-mail invitations sent to each participant.

Group One: Venezuela Simulation 2021

Simulation code: 54a32b0a5304ebf62e101dc63843d829.

Group Two: Venezuela Simulation under President Ramos

Simulation code: 1a558abb5f907ddd8721fedf3380242d

****3-29-2021 SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

****4-5-2021 SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

4-12-2021 Session Ten Central America: The Challenges of Migration

“To implement public policies in the realm of citizen security that make the human being their primary focus, within a framework of democratic order, the rule of law, and observance of human rights.” Mandates Arising from the Sixth Summit of the Americas, April 15, 2012

Class exercise: Dissecting WH statements on migration policy

Country Briefs (rescheduled)

Peru *Dominique Batiste*

Bolivia *Evan Edwards*

Readings:

“[The New Battle for Central America](#),” by Ana Arana, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2001 (access through USD Copley Library)

“[The Rise and Decline of the Summit of the Americas](#),” by Thomas Legler, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 7 January 2013.

“[Mandates Arising from the Sixth Summit of the Americas](#)”, April 15, 2012

*Summit Briefs

4-19-2021 Session 11: Central America: The Challenges of Inequity

“To work on obtaining better data and strengthening evaluations and diagnostic assessments with a view to formulating effective public policies for the prevention of violence and crime that better address this phenomenon in the region in a comprehensive manner. In this regard, to foster the observatories on crime and violence, in accordance with the respective national legislations.” VII Summit, Mandates for Action, April 11, 2015.

Country Briefs:

Nicaragua *Patrick Toomey*

Guatemala *Erin Steele*

Belize *Elizabeth Kurkin*

Costa Rica *Emma Mattingly*

Honduras *Abbey Humphreys*

Panama *Victoria Henson*

Readings:

VII Summit, "[Prosperity with Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas](#)," Mandates for Action, April 11, 2015.

"[U.S. Programs and Engagement Promote a Prosperous, Secure and Well-Governed Central America](#)," U.S. Department of State, June 2018.

"[Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle – Background](#)," and "[Strategic Pillars and Lines of Action](#)," Inter-American Development Bank.

"[U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America: An Overview](#)," Congressional Research Service, June 20, 2020.

4-26-2021 Session 12: Mexico: The Challenges of Law Enforcement Cooperation

"Underscoring that the prevention of and fight against corruption are fundamental to strengthening democracy and the rule of law in our States, and that corruption weakens democratic governance and citizens' trust in institutions, in addition to having a negative impact on the effective enjoyment of human rights and the sustainable development of the peoples of our Hemisphere as well as other regions of the world . . . "VIII Summit, Lima Commitment, 14 April 2018

Guest lecture: [Ambassador \(retired\) Antonio Garza](#)

Country Brief: Mexico *Randy Reyes*

Readings:

VIII Summit, "[Lima Commitment: Democratic Governance Against Corruption](#)," 14 April 2018

"[2018 Summit of the Americas](#)," Congressional Research Service, April 18, 2018.

"[Mexico: Evolution of the Merida Initiative 2007-2020](#)," Congressional Research Service, July 20, 2020.

"[Mexico: Background and U.S. Relations](#)," Congressional Research Service, January 7, 2021

"[U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation 2018-2024](#)" by U.S. Mexico Security Cooperation Task Force (includes USD's "Justice in Mexico"), 2018.

5-3-2021 Session 13: US-Mexico Border: The Challenge of Co-Existence and Cooperation

*****Update: Guest Speaker [U.S. Consul General \(Tijuana\) Sue Saarnio](#)**

***Summit Mandate Briefings**

Readings:

“[The Escalation of US–Mexico Border Enforcement](#)” by *Dr. David A. Shirk*, 2021

“[Art at the Crossroads: Artists Addressing the U.S.-Mexico Border](#)” by Ellen Caldwell, Riot Material, April 15, 2019.

“[Border 2020: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program](#),” EPA and SEMARNAT, 8 August 2012.

[Introductory video](#), Smart Border Coalition

5-10-2021 Session 14 Final Class

****** update: Guest Speaker: [Keith Mines](#), Director, Latin American Program, U.S. Institutes of Peace**

Final Paper presentations

Class Discussion: The Future of U.S. Relations with Latin America