

Latin American Politics

Last Updated: Wed, 07/23/2025

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 3241

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
93696

Instructor First Name: Alberto

Instructor Last Name: Fuentes

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This undergraduate course provides a chronological overview of Latin American politics from independence in the early 19th century to the present. It is divided into three parts. The first part covers politics across the region during the 19th century, addressing themes such as state formation and the emergence and dominance of oligarchic regimes. The second part turns to the 20th century, exploring the proliferation of political regimes, including those taking a populist, revolutionary and bureaucratic authoritarian bent. It concludes with a discussion of the Third Wave of Democracy in the region. The last section examines the 21st century, addressing the rise of the Pink Tide, a conservative response and contemporary debates. This historical exploration will prepare students to better understand and evaluate Latin America's politics.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior, particularly in Latin America
2. Use this knowledge in a practical problem-solving way to analyze and address issues of immediate international concern (Problem-solving in International Affairs)
 1. Understand relevant political, economic and social concepts and debates
 2. Assess different approaches and frameworks to interpret and evaluate key questions and problems in contemporary Latin American politics
3. Enhance their awareness of the diversity of ethical systems in the world (Cultural and Ethical Awareness)

4. Express their arguments clearly and effectively both in written reports and class discussions (Professional Development)

Required course materials:

All required articles will be available on the class website on Canvas. In addition, for each of the four parts of the course, the following books will be required:

1. Part I. The 19th Century

Knight, Alan. *The Mexican Revolution: a very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Carlos Fuentes. *The Campaign*.

2. Part II. The 20th Century

Isabel Allende. *The house of spirits*.

3. Part III. The 21st Century

Francisco Goldman. *The Art of Political Murder*.

Grading policy:

There are five types of assignments in this course:

1. Quizzes. On most weeks, you will have to complete a timed (10-minute) pop quiz in class. The quizzes will address your required readings for that day. Together, the quizzes will comprise 10% of your final grade (1% each).
2. Worksheets. Every week, at least one class will include a worksheet addressing the day's material. Together, the worksheets will comprise 15% of your final grade (1.5% each).
3. Midterm Exams: The midterm exams will take place after each of the first two parts of the course. More details will be provided one week before the exam. Each midterm exam will account for 20% of your final grade.
4. Book responses. During the semester, you will read a historical fiction book during each of the three parts of the course. At the end of each part, you will receive a prompt addressing the book's content and will be required to write a response. There will be three book responses, comprising 15% of your final grade (5% each).
5. Final Presentation. The final presentation will address a key theme covered in the course. It will account for 20% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	65-69%
F	0-64%

Attendance policy:

While student attendance is not explicitly considered for the final grade, failure to join class meetings will significantly affect student grades, insofar as both quizzes and worksheets are completed during class time.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: how do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes: students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion