

# INTA 3241a / 8803 Syllabus

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Latin American Politics: INTA 3241a  
M-W 9:30-10:45 • Fall 2026

## **Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Kirk Bowman

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## **General Course Information**

### **Description**

Latin America is an exciting, diverse, and dynamic region that has considerable variation in economic success, political stability, culture, sustainability, and development. The purpose of this course is to learn the historical, cultural, political, and economic foundations of the region. We will use a variety of methods and sources to give you a flavor of Latin America. We will also follow contemporary events in the region through readings from current news sources. Our special focus will be on narcotics and how those shape politics, economics, society, and international relations throughout Latin America. We will also examine important 2026 Latin American elections.

This is an advanced undergraduate course suitable for serious undergraduate students of any year and graduate students. It is reading intensive and you are expected to carefully read the assignments before class and not merely skim them. If you do not like to read, this is possibly not the class for you.

### **Core Impacts:**

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

### Course Learning Outcomes

- *Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.*
- *Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence the global system.*
- *Students will demonstrate mastery of Latin American geography and be able to describe how geography shapes societal and political outcomes*
- *Cultural and ethical awareness. Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world. Able to understand key issues with respect for a range of different variables.*
- *Effective communication skills. Students will be able to express their arguments clearly and effectively both in written reports and in their research and oral presentations.*

### Required Course Materials

Eduardo Galeano, *The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. 1997 Edition. Monthly Review Press. PDF in Files in Canvas. Don't buy.

Gregory Weeks, *Understanding Latin American Politics*. 2015 edition. Creative Commons book. Don't buy.

Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Years of Blood: Stories from a Reporting Life in Latin America*. 2025. Duke University Press.

### Grading Policy

Component	Weight
TedX Talk	15%
Discussion Questions	10%
Midterm	35%
Final	40%

**Grade Scale:** A > 90; B > 80; C > 70; D > 60

### Assignments

<b>TedX Talk</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Discussion questions</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Midterm</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Final</b>	<b>40</b>

## **Description of Graded Components**

The exams are in class and closed book and notes. There will be discussion questions for every class. 7 will be collected at the beginning of class and 5 will count 2 points each for final grade. TedX talk will be

## **Course Policies**

### **Screens**

There will be no screens of any type allowed in class. If you need to check your phone or use your laptop, you **MUST** exit class. Evidence has demonstrated that screen usage in class is like second hand smoke to those near and behind an active screen and leads to lower performance for all.

### **Attendance and/or Participation**

This will be an active classroom, where you will be expected to participate. I have noticed a drastic difference in the exam performance between students who regularly attend class and those who don't. You are expected to come having carefully read the materials for that day. Exam content will include reading not covered in class and class material not covered in the readings. Lecture slides will **not** be shared.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source."

If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. USING AI WITHOUT PROPER CITATION IS PLAGIARIZING. IF YOU USE AI WITHOUT PROPER CITATION, YOU WILL BE HANDLED BY THE DEAN OF STUDENTS. If you use AI and it is "invented or false AI garbage," your grade will be adjusted. AI is wrong a lot.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## **Pre- &/or Co-Requisites**

None

## **Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI**

Discussion questions are to be your own work, written by you and not AI! Exams are to be your own work. All in-class exams will be closed book and notes.

## **Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams**

Late discussion questions will be penalized accordingly. Make-up exams are given for illness, approved Institute activities or religious observances.