Latin America in the International System

Professor: Mariano Turzi, Ph.D.  
mt118@nyu.edu  
Mon & Wed  
17:15 - 18:45

Objectives
The aim is for the student to have a full understanding of Latin America’s insertion in the global structure of international relations. Covering in parallel the evolution of the international system and the changing position of the region in that same system, the course attempts to reinterpret the frameworks of analysis as perceived from the Western Hemisphere. The student will be provided with a Latin American view of the main economic developments and political processes that have given shape—at each stage in time—to the structure and dynamics of the international system. The ultimate goal is to make students aware that “where you stand depends on where you sit” by exposing them to alternate views on concepts they are already familiar with.

Structure
In order to achieve the stated goals, the course will provide a historical and a topical approach.

1) The first section is divided analytically in two:
   a. The first and briefest is an introduction and an overview to the main theories of international relations: realism, liberalism and constructivism. Theory will provide a common language for the class and patterns to order and interpret reality.
   b. The second part is historical. We will cover the history of the international system and the history of Latin America, bridging both processes looking for divergences and convergences. We will review the patterns of insertion of Latin America in the broader global system and the influences of the system in the region. We begin at the so called “discovery” and journey through colonial times and the national organization period. Then we go into the XX century and the impact of the World Wars and the Great Depression. After that, the Cold War as the organizing paradigm in world affairs and how it was anything but Cold in Latin America. We then move to the end of the Cold War, the “New World order” and the rise of the neoliberal order. The last period we cover is from 2001 onwards. We will explore the transformations in American foreign policy, the rise of new powers in the world and the backlash against the Washington consensus in the region, the new left and the rise of the merging countries. We conclude by at the same time looking back and ahead. At this stage we will be able to unearth recurrent patterns and identify breaks with the past, always looking for its causes and implications.
2) The second part of the program is topical. We will analyze here the main issues in the international agenda and how are they perceived from Latin America. How are they incorporated into the regional agenda? How and to what extent are they taken into account in the national foreign policies? We will cover a wide array of topics such as poverty, inequality, climate change, terrorism, trafficking, drugs, energy and natural resources. What are the areas of coincidence between the global and the Latin American agenda? What does Latin America bring into the international agenda? We will be examining the mutual interaction and the interdependent effects in the context of globalization.

**Course evaluation**

20% Class participation
The first 15 minutes of each class will be devoted to discuss a topic of current relevance for Latin American international affairs. Students are encouraged to bring topics of their interests to class and relate them to the topic of the day or the class readings.

35% Presentation
In the topical part of the course, each student will have to choose one of the issue areas outlined to make an oral presentation on it. Other topics not covered by the syllabus are acceptable, provided they are of the interest of the student and are cleared beforehand with the professor.

The in-class presentation will last no more than 10 minutes. It must present and explain the topic in terms of causes and consequences, while setting it in the broader national, regional and/or global levels of analysis. Theoretical and historical themes are acceptable. The aim is not a definitive exposition of the topic, but rather to highlight and issue and make classmates aware of its importance. Besides the professor’s grading, classmates will submit their grades.

45% Final Exam
The format of the final exam will be a policy memo. Students will take up the role of consultants to a Latin American government, international organization or Latin America related regional body (Inter American Development Bank, Organization of American States, UNASUR). It could also be a corporation or a US government agency. They will have to summarize an issue, present its relevance for their clients, identify the client’s interest, lay out possible courses of actions and recommend the actions/policies with basis on their analysis. Further instructions and models will be distributed.
READINGS

• **Week 1 (August 29 - 31)**
  Course overview, topics introduction, program presentation, readings overview. 

Readings:
- Hormazábal, Ricardo y Eduardo Carreño; *Introducción a la Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales*, INAP – Universidad de Chile, Documentos de Apoyo Docente Nº 14, Diciembre 2006.

**PART 1**

Latin America’s international history

• **Week 2 (September 5 and 7)**
  Latin American international relations before "discovery". Columbus and the impact of European arrival. Colonial era and metropolitan international relations. Spanish and Portuguese colonies. The English model. Independence (1790-1828): Haiti, Relations between the new countries and between the Latin American republics and Europe.

Readings:

• **Week 3 (September 12 and 14)**

Readings:

• **Week 4 (September 19 and 21)**
  The rise of the United States (1883-1933): the politics of new America vs. old Europe. The end of British preeminence and victory over Spain in the Caribbean. The Panama Canal. Mexican revolution: regional shockwaves and the limits of independence. World War I. FDR and the “good neighbor policy”.

Readings:
- Smith, Peter H; Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World; Oxford University Press, 2008, Capítulos 1 a 4.

**Week 5 (September 26 and 28)**

Cold War? East vs. West and North vs. South. NIMBY. Decolonization, nationalism and revolution. The third world. Democracy and dictatorship and the road to modernization and development.
The Cuban revolution and Latin American communism. The OAS and the polarization of relations in the Western Hemisphere. USA vs. USSR in Latin America: the missile crisis.

Readings:
- Domínguez, Jorge I; U.S.-Latin American Relations During the Cold War and its Aftermath, Harvard Institute of Latin American Studies, January 1999

**Week 6 (October 3 and 5)**


Readings:
- Persson, D; Central American Civil War Refugees and Civic Foreign Policy, PhD dissertation, Chapter 5.

**Week 7 (October 10 and 12)**

Semester break
PART 2
Latin America in the international agenda

- **Week 8** (October 17 and 19)

Readings:
- CEPAL; Panorama de la inserción internacional de América Latina y el Caribe 2008 2009. Capítulo 3, "Crisis y espacios de cooperación regional”.
- Hakim; Peter; "Is Washington Losing Latin America?" By Foreign Affairs, January/February 2006.
- Peña, Félix; “La integración del espacio sudamericano. ¿La Unasur y el Mercosur pueden complementarse?”, Revista Nueva Sociedad 219, Enero / Febrero 2009.
- Maira Luis; “¿Cómo afectará la crisis la integración regional?”, 224, Noviembre / Diciembre 2009.
- Castañeda, Jorge; "Latin America's Left Turn", Foreign Affairs, May/June 2006 and Russell, Roberto; "The 'New Left' and Democratic Governance in Latin America" (Sección Foreign Policy), Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, August 2007.

- **Week 9** (October 24 and 26)
  *Impact of transnational movements. Human rights as a policy issue and civil society as an actor. The intermestic level of analysis through two case studies:* Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Argentina) and Movimento Sem Tierra (Brazil).

Readings:

- **Week 10** (October 31 and Nov 2)

Readings:
• **Week 11 (November 7 and 9)**

Security and Defense. The role of the military in Latin America. Legacies of authoritarian states and autocratic regimes. From the old state rivalries and territorial armed conflicts to the paradigm of Latin America as a “zone of peace”. Inter-state and intra state conflicts: guerrillas.

Readings:

• **Week 12 (November 14 and 16)**


Readings:
- Tokatlian, Juan Gabriel; *Política pública y drogas ilícitas: el caso de América Latina*, UdeSA, 2007.

• **Week 13 (November 21 and 23) November 18 make up day for November 28**

Poverty and inequality. From consequences to causes. Concentration of resources and institutional structures for concentration of power. Comparing case studies: Chile and Cuba. Compared innovations in poverty alleviation: Brazil’s Bolsa Familia vs. Argentina’s Plan Trabajar. Foreign policy impacts of political economy coalitions that exclude or redistribute.

Readings:
- Thorp, Rosemary; *Progress, poverty and exclusion*
- De Ferranti, D; *Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: Breaking with History?*, The World Bank, 2003, Capítulos 1 y 5.

• **Week 14 (November 30)**

November 28 holiday

Natural resources: curse or blessing? From the banana republics to the Soybean Republic? Governance, governments and economic cycles of commodity economies. Latin America in the international markets. The 2008 crisis and its impact in Latin America: models of growth and models of development.

Readings:

• **Week 15 (December 5 and 7)**
The new international system and the new Latin America. The rise of the emerging powers: South America and Brazil as a BRICS. American decline and inter-American relations. The role of extra-continental powers: China, Russia and India in Latin America. New regional and global power games: Venezuela and Iran.

Wrap up of the course: lessons learned from the past to look into the future. Final memo to be handed in the last day of class.

Readings:
- Boto, Mercedes Isabel; “Cambio de agenda o de procedimientos?”, El Argentino, Julio 2010.
- Nye, Joseph; “BRIC: una sigla pegadiza no implica poder real”, Clarín, 20/06/2010.
- Moreira, Susana; “India’s expanding role in Latin America”, Portuguese Journal of International Affairs, Spring 2009.