

**SKIDMORE COLLEGE**  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES**

*Government 309*  
*Fall 2010*  
*Ladd 207*  
*Tu-Th: 2:10 - 3:30 pm*  
*e-mail: [avacs@skidmore.edu](mailto:avacs@skidmore.edu)*

*Aldo C. Vacs*  
*Ladd 319 (X 5249)*  
*Office Hours:*  
*Tu-Th: 9:30-11:00 a.m.*  
*Wed: 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m.*

The purpose of this course is to examine the relations between the Latin American countries and the United States, including their political, strategic and economic aspects. The course reviews some of the major interpretations made about the characteristics of these relations (Western hemisphere idea, sphere of influence, hegemonic domination, dependency, and interdependence), and analyzes some crucial historical events (Monroe Doctrine, Central American and Caribbean interventions, the Good Neighbor policy, the Cuban revolution, Alliance for Progress, Central American crisis of the 1980s, end of the Cold War, etc.) as well as some important contemporary issues (interamerican collective security, financial and trade problems, regional economic and political integration, U.S. impact on Latin American democratization, violence, drug traffic, immigration, etc.). Special emphasis is placed on problem areas such as instability and security issues, radical change, imperialism, anti-imperialism and nationalism, economic relations and capital flows, human rights, the surge of democracy, U.S. neo-conservatism vs Latin American populism, drug policy controversies, and international migrations.

**Course requirements**

Class attendance and participation are required. Attendance will be taken by signing an attendance sheet. Class participation is an important component of this course. In order to be able to participate in the discussions you must read the assignments **BEFORE** the day they are scheduled for analysis in class. To ensure the informed participation of most of the class in these discussions a number of short reaction papers are required.

In addition to the specified readings, students are expected to keep **informed** of current issues related to the topics analyzed in class. Good sources of information are major newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Miami Herald, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor) and national weekly magazines (Time, Newsweek) that can be accessed electronically. To study more in-depth certain topics and update the information contained in the texts it is recommended to consult some of the specialized journals found in the Scribner Library, including among them: *Latin American Politics and Society* (formerly known as the *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*), the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, the *Latin American Research Review*, and *Latin American Perspectives*. One of the best web sites containing information on Latin America and U.S.-Latin American

relations is LANIC (Latin American Network Information Center) maintained by the University of Texas [Electronic address: <http://info.lanic.utexas.edu>]. There you will find the information organized by topics and countries as well as a number of links to other important sites that may be useful to consult before the class discussions, to prepare the outlines of the final papers, and to write these papers.

The discussion of issues of interest for the students that are related to the contents of the course is encouraged. In order to follow the lectures and participate in the discussions it is necessary to become familiar with the names and map locations of the Latin American countries.

- \* **Class attendance and participation** are taken into account to calculate your final grade. **(20% of the grade)**. Unexcused absences and lack of adequate preparation for class discussions will affect your grade. Attendance will be taken by signing an attendance sheet. Class participation is an important component of this course. In order to be able to participate effectively in the discussions you must read the assignments **BEFORE** the day they are scheduled for analysis in class. You should read the assigned materials carefully and come to class prepared to examine them critically. Class discussion of current issues of interest for the students that are related to the contents of the course is strongly encouraged.
- \* **Three short papers, around 5 typed pages, double space, in length.** These reaction papers will be focused on readings to be analyzed in class and should present your critical reaction to the materials rather than summarizing them. These position papers should be completed in advance and delivered at the end of the session in which the issues are scheduled to be debated in class. **(30% of the final grade)**.
- \* **An outline of the term paper (10% of the grade)**. The topic is selected by the student but should be discussed in advance with the instructor. This outline should include a thesis statement, a clear enumeration of the intended contents of the paper, and a tentative bibliography (books, articles and other sources not assigned as readings in this course).
- \* **Final research paper --around twenty (20) typed pages, double space, in length, including footnotes and bibliography--** based on your outline and following the established rules for academic research **(40% of the final grade)**. This paper must be the result of your personal effort. All materials taken from someone else's work should be acknowledged using quotation marks and footnotes, if quoting directly, or using footnotes, if paraphrasing. Remember that plagiarism is a serious violation of the College's code of conduct. If you have any doubt concerning this aspect please consult with me about the appropriate use of footnotes or read the guide published by the Writing Center. A draft of the final

paper might be presented before the end of the course for comments and suggestions.

Concerning the writing standards applicable to the papers, please see the attached brochure on *The Writing Requirement in the Department of Government* and consult *The Hodges Harbrace Handbook* (available at the Skidmore Shop)

\*\*\* Late assignments will lose half a grade point for each day they are late \*\*\*

**Required Texts** (available at the Skidmore shop)

**Frank Mora & Jeanne Hey (eds.), Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Policy (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003)**

**Peter H. Smith, Talons of the Eagle. Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations. Second edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)**

**A. Lowenthal , T. Piccone, and L. Whitehead, eds. The Obama Administration and the Americas (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2009)**

**Other Selected Sources** (useful for consultation):

*Werner Baer and Donald B. Coes, eds., United States Policies and the Latin American Economies.*

*Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley, eds., The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda.*

*John Coatsworth & Alan Taylor, eds. Latin America and the World Economy since 1800.*

*Jorge I. Domínguez, ed. The Future of Inter-American Relations*

*Albert Fishlow and James Jones, eds. The United States and the Americas: A Twenty-First Century View*

*Mark T. Gilderhus. The Second Century. U.S.-Latin American Relations since 1889.*

*Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz, & Augusto Varas, eds., The United States and Latin America in the 1990s: Beyond the Cold War.*

*Grace Livingstone, America's Backyard*

*M. LaRosa & F. Mora, eds. Neighborly Adversaries. Readings in U.S.-Latin American Relations.*

*Abraham F. Lowenthal. Partners in Conflict. The United States and Latin America.*

*Abraham F. Lowenthal, ed. Exporting Democracy. The U.S. and Latin America: Themes and Issues.*

*Abraham F. Lowenthal and Gregory F. Treverton, eds. Latin America in a New World.*

*Abraham F. Lowenthal , T. Piccone, and L. Whithead, eds. The Obama Administration and the Americas*

*John D. Martz, ed., United States Policy in Latin America: A Quarter Century of Crisis and Challenge, 1961-1986.*

*Kevin J. Middlebrook and Carlos Rico, eds. The United States and Latin America in the 1980s.*

*Harold Molineu. U.S. Policy toward Latin America. From Regionalism to Globalism.*

*NACLA--Report on the Americas, Report on US Policy: Window of Opportunity.*

*Robert A. Pastor. Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean.*

*----- Exiting the Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean.*

*Fred Rosen, ed., Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America*

*Lars Schoultz, Beneath the United States. A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America.*

*Schoultz, Smith, & Varas, eds., Security, Democracy and Development in U.S.-Latin American Relations.*

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **I. LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

**September 7 - 14**

#### **1. The Early Setting of the Relations between Latin America and the United States: The Western Hemisphere from Independence to Cold War.**

Smith: Introduction (pp. 1-8); and Part I, "The Imperial Era" (pp. 9-110).

**September 16 - 23**

#### **2. The Postwar Evolution of the Relations between Latin America and the United States: The Sphere of Influence during the Cold War Years.**

Smith: Part II, "The Cold War" (pp. 111-210).  
Mora & Hey: Chapter 1 (Covarrubias: *Mexico*)

**September 28**

**First Class Discussion**

*Topic: A Complicated Neighborhood:*

*Continuity and Change in the Relations between Latin America and the United States*

**First reaction paper due, in class, September 28, 2010**

**II. CONTEMPORARY RELATIONS BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES**

**September 30 - October 7**

**3. The Post-Cold War Evolution of the Hegemonic/Dependent Relationship**

Smith: Chapter 10 ("George Bush and Latin America"), pp. 307-336, Chapter 11 ("Latin America: Exploring Unexpected Opportunities" ), pp. 337-368; and Chapter 12 ("Can There Be Policy Alternatives?"), pp. 369-394.

*Pastor: Chapters 5, "The Bush Administration" (pp. 87-107); and 6, "The Clinton Administration" (pp.109-134)*

Mora & Hey: Chapters 3 (Fagot Aviel: *Nicaragua*); and 4 (Sanchez: *Panama*)

**October 12 - 14**

**4. New Challenges and Prospects in the Latin American - U.S. Relations.**

Lowenthal et al.: Chapters 1 (A. Lowenthal, "Renewing Cooperation in the Americas") and 2 ("Daniel Zovatto, "Building a Constructive Inter-American Partnership")

Smith: Conclusion ("Structure and Change in U.S.-Latin American Relations" ), pp. 395-414)

Mora & Hey: Chapters 10 (Hey: *Ecuador*); and 15 (Vacs: *Argentina*)

**October 19**

**Second Class Discussion**

*Topic: Conflict and Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era:*

*Traditional Problems and New Issues in Latin American-United States Relations.*

**Second reaction paper due, in class, October 19, 2010**

**III. CURRENT CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONS**

**October 21 - 28**

**5. U.S. Economic Influence, Latin American Dependency and Integration in the Americas**

*Dominguez, ed: Devlin et al., Some Economic and Strategic Issues in the Face of*

*the Emerging FTAA*” (pp. 153-196); and Bouzas, “Trade and Investment Issues in the Americas” (pp. 197- 214).

Marichal, “The Finances of Hegemony in Latin America”, in Rosen, ed. *Empire and Dissent*

Smith: Chapter 7, "Superpower Economics" (pp. 213-240)

Mora & Hey: Chapters 7 (Erisman: *CARICOM*); and 14 (Guilhon Albuquerque: *Brazil*)

### **November 2 - 9**

#### **6. The Problem of Drug Traffic and Transnational Crime: Policies and Controversies.**

Hartlyn, Schoultz & Varas: Chapter 9 (Bagley and Tokatlian, "Dope and Dogma: Explaining the Failure of U.S.-Latin American Drug Policies"), pp. 214-234.

Smith: Chapter 8 ("Illicit Flows and Military Force"), pp. 241-259.

Youngers & Rosin: Chapter 1 (Youngers & Rosin, "The U.S. 'War on Drugs'"), pp. 1-13.

Mora & Hey: Chapters 9 (Tickner: *Colombia*) and 12 (Quesier Morales: *Bolivia*)

Lowenthal et al.: Chapters 4 (Shifter); and 11 (Gray Molina).

### **November 2: Outline of Final Paper Due in Class**

### **November 11 - 16**

#### **7. Democracy and Human Rights in the Context of Latin American - U.S. Relations: Confrontation and Cooperation.**

Lowenthal et al.: Chapters 3 (T. Piccone, "Supporting Democracy in the Americas"), 6 (Erikson), 7 (Valdéz), and 12 (Elizondo and Magaloni).

Youngers & Rosin: Chapter 10 (Younger, "The Collateral Damage of the U.S. War on Drugs"), pp. 339-366.

Smith: Chapter 11 ("Latin America: Exploring Unexpected Opportunities"), pp. 337-368.

Mora & Hey: Chapters 2 (Peeler: *Costa Rica*); and 13 (Morandé: *Chile*)

### **November 18 - 30**

#### **8. The Perception of Security Threats: Sovereignty and Intervention**

Domínguez, ed.: Yopo, "Hemispheric Security: Toward the Twenty-First Century (pp. 49-62).

Youngers & Rosin: Chapter 2 (Isacson, "The U.S. Military in the War on Drugs"), pp. 15-60

Lowenthal et al.: Chapters 8 (Pérez-Stable), 9 (Hoffmann), and 10 (McCoy).

Mora & Hey: Chapters 5 (Fernández: *Cuba*); and 8 (Cardozo da Silva & Hillman: *Venezuela*)

*November 24 - 28: Thanksgiving Vacation*

**December 2**

**Third Class Discussion**

*Topic: Real Threats or Imaginary Menaces?: Strategic Concerns in the Post Cold War Years*

**Third reaction paper due, in class, December 2, 2010**

**December 7 - 9**

**9. The Issue of Migration in the Context of the Bilateral Relations.**

Bulmer-Thomas & Dunkerley, eds.: *Chapter 11 [Suarez-Orozco, "Latin American Immigration to the United States", pp. 227-244].*

Domínguez, ed.: *Mitchell, "The Future of Migration as an Issue in Inter-American Relations" (pp. 217-236); and Fernandez de Castro & Rosales, "Migration Issues" (pp. 237-258).*

Smith: Chapter 8 ("Illicit Flows and Military Force"), pp. 259-272.

Mora & Hey: Chapters 1 (Covarrubias: *Mexico*); and 6 (Spanakos & Wiarda: *The Dominican Republic*)

**December 9, 2010: Final paper due in class**

## Department of Government

### Skidmore College

#### **Policy on Civility and Comportment in the Classroom**

The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the Student Handbook, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam – it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: *“I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.”* Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to *“conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.”*

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following:

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.
2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.
3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.
4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one’s mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.
5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the housekeeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following.

6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already possess it, you should acquire it.
7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day's assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.
8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don't let them get away with it.
9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.