

# SA.551 (THE AMERICAS)

## Courses

### SA.551.100. Economics of Immigration. 4 Credits.

Examines the economic causes and consequences of international migration. The central focus is an economic analysis of the general patterns of population flows, their determinants and their impact. Analyzes these primarily within a comparative context of the North American experience, although also considers other case studies. Current US migration policy is examined so as to understand how the US system is 'broken' and what is meant by 'true immigration reform'. Includes consideration of the Canadian experience, in that Canadian immigration policy seems to get many things 'right'.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.840.715[C]

### SA.551.101. Energy in the Americas: Conflict, Cooperation & Future Prospects. 4 Credits.

Analyzes the political economy of energy conflict and cooperation in the Americas by function and in terms of major players. The functional component covers the politics of oil, natural gas issues, biofuels, energy infrastructure, energy organization and regulation, private and public sector participation, geopolitics and other energy topics. The major players component includes the politics of energy in Canada, Mexico, the United States, the Andean countries, Brazil, the Southern Cone and Venezuela, and also offers a global perspective on the impact of the world's major energy producers and consumers (i.e. China, India, the Middle East countries and Russia) on the Americas.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.761[C]

### SA.551.102. Financial Crises and Policy Dilemmas in Emerging Markets and Latin America. 4 Credits.

The course will focus on key macroeconomic and financial policy issues with a focus on Emerging Markets. The course is divided into two parts. The first part explores the causes, dynamics and consequences of selected crises episodes affecting emerging markets, especially in Latin America; from the debt crises of the 1980's to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second part of the course addresses selected issues regarding crisis resolution, including the political economy of crises, their long run impacts on the economy, and the future of the international financial architecture. By the end of the course, it is expected that students will be able to identify the major factors leading to crises in emerging markets, assess the difficult policy trade-offs that policymakers face when dealing with crises, and evaluate alternative policy options.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.727[C]

### SA.551.103. Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean: New Challenges Amidst Growing Insecurity. 4 Credits.

Introduces students to the changing political economy of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. The course is divided into three parts: Mexico (eight sessions), Central America (three sessions) and the Caribbean basin (two sessions). Devotes particular attention to political and economic institutions, political culture, social and political conflict, market liberalization in the region's countries and a case study of Cuba.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.903[C]

### SA.551.104. Middle Power Diplomacy. 4 Credits.

International relations scholarship pays close attention to the Great Powers, and concern over failed states. With the formation of the G20, there is a multilateral forum where Great Powers and the Rising Powers of Brazil, Russia, India, and China can shape the global agenda. Yet in every era and every stable international order there is an important role for Middle Powers – countries whose capacity to foster or disrupt order leads them to “punch above their weight” in international relations. Canada self-identifies as a Middle Power, but today the status of Middle Power is claimed by states in every region and on every continent. This course considers the dilemmas and strategies of Middle Power diplomacy, and how the United States, Great Powers and Small States interact with them. Over the course of the semester, we will consider what role Middle Powers play in the contemporary international system, and what to do about it.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.840.706[C]

### SA.551.105. Policy Consulting Practicum. 4 Credits.

This course gives students the chance to work as a team on a consulting project for a Canadian public sector client. An MOU serves as the consulting contract, and the client provides research questions; a point of contact; and access to government professionals, subject matter experts, and contacts in the private sector to facilitate research. The client and policy topic change every year; contact the instructor for details. Note: successful completion of this course fulfills the capstone requirement for second-year MAIR students. <a href="https://livejohnshopkins.sharepoint.com/sites/SAISInsider2/SitePages/DC-Capstones,-Professional-Skills-Courses.aspx" target="\_blank">Click here for Capstone course application information</a>

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.840.718[C]

### SA.551.106. Politics of North American Economic Integration. 4 Credits.

As the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) after 25 years demonstrated, economic linkages in North America continue to be contested politically at the national and subnational level. The proposed update, the United States Mexico Canada Agreement, would recommit to deepening continental economic integration while retaining the NAFTA model's governance structure: sovereign governments negotiate regulatory and border security cooperation on an ongoing basis and conduct investment, intellectual property, and monetary policy independently. Students in this course will explore the governance of economic flows among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The course will evaluate how important sectors have adapted supply chains and market strategies in response to regional economic integration and how economic partners outside North America – like China, the European Union, and Japan – operate in the North American market.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.610.705[C]

**SA.551.107. Security, Conflict, and Migration in Latin America. 4 Credits.**

This course provides an introduction to the study and analysis of both the history and the evolution of the security policy sphere. This policy sphere is defined in a broad sense—from nation states, to guerrillas and insurgencies, to organized crime, gangs, traffickers, that is, all enemies of the state. The main lens of analysis is the study of the multiple strategies that the US has implemented to confront the evolving conflict and security challenges in Latin America: some debatably successful like Plan Colombia, and others less so, such as the interventions in Nicaragua. The lack of economic opportunity, rampant corruption, weak rule of law and fragile government institutions continue to riddle Latin America and serve as migration factors. Newer initiatives such as the Merida Initiative, the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the Alliance for Prosperity are also analyzed to learn from the past and the present to address shortfalls and potential solutions in a region beleaguered by insecurity and violence, in spite of the absence of international wars.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.724[C]

**SA.551.108. Latin America's Political Economy: From Colonial to Contemporary Challenges. 4 Credits.**

Covers the basic interpretive frameworks that have been employed to analyze political and economic change in Latin America, from the original debates between modernization and dependency theory through the rise of authoritarian regimes to the more recent studies on democratic transitions, democratic strength/weakness, neoliberal politics and economics, the post-Washington consensus years, and the great challenges the region still faces in, among others, effective governance, sustained economic growth, migration, poverty and inequality, and energy and environmental considerations.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.700[C]

**SA.551.109. Urban Economics for the Developing World: Economy, Equity, and Sustainability. 4 Credits.**

Focuses on the urban trends in Latin America and other emerging markets, reviews the factors that explain urban form and discusses public policies that aim at dealing with urban growth while promoting livable and sustainable cities. Reviews the macro and micro foundations of urban economics and urban markets. Looks at the functioning of local governments, the role of city development strategies, municipal finance, access to credit and capital markets, corruption, violence prevention and urban poverty.

**Prerequisite(s):** SA.100.303[C];SA.100.304[C];Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.810.799[C]

**SA.551.110. Latin America Research Seminar/Study Trip. 4 Credits.**

The Latin America Research Seminar is a capstone course that is paired with a week-long research trip to Colombia during the spring break. The course is designed to provide students with practical field research experience and will guide students during the semester in developing a strong research question, in conducting rigorous analysis, and in providing clear, actionable recommendations for policy makers. Students will gain an in-depth knowledge of Colombia on the specific area of their research, which will be complemented by meetings and interviews in Colombia. The course will give students practical experience in planning, executing, and leading a research trip overseas. The final deliverable for the course will be a 5,000 to 6,000 word capstone research paper on Colombia addressing a well-defined research question accompanied with a final capstone presentation (approximately 10 minutes) followed by Q&A. Note: successful completion of this course fulfills the capstone requirement for second-year MAIR students. <https://livejohnshopkins.sharepoint.com/sites/SAISInsider2/SitePages/DC-Capstones,-Professional-Skills-Courses.aspx> target="\_blank">Click here for Capstone course application information</a>

**SA.551.111. Contemporary Issues of Inter-American Relations. 4 Credits.**

The Americas face daunting, interlinked challenges not seen in over four decades, impacting the contours and dynamics of Inter-American relations. This policy seminar course exposes students to the current dynamics prevalent in the complex web of relationships between Washington and other Latin American and Caribbean capitals, and the diplomatic and geopolitical dynamics at play across the continent at a time of growing global uncertainty. In recent years, some of the hemisphere's disturbing trends, such as political and social polarization and dysfunctional governance, institutional erosion or distrust in government and institutions have been compounded by a challenging mix of growing public insecurity, income inequality, social and economic dislocation, the impact of climate change, migration flows, and a growing footprint and appetite by extra-regional revisionist powers, amongst other salient issues. The course is structured around a specific set of policy issues relevant in the Americas today. Each topic module, designed to analyze and understand policymaking processes across the region, will cover and address both the policies at stake and key relationships and stakeholders (State and non-State actors). In the face of a serious lack of regional and subregional cooperation and common Inter-American purpose to find practical, constructive solutions to many of those challenges, students will be encouraged throughout the course, via policy memos and simulation exercises, to debate -as applied professionals or practitioners- specific policy issues and craft policy resolution roadmaps, with both U.S. and Latin American and Caribbean perspectives in mind.

**SA.551.112. Drugs, Walls and Aging Guerrillas: Seminar on U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Latin America. 4 Credits.**

This seminar course examines U.S. political, economic and security relations with Latin America from WWII through to today, deepening understanding of the origins of today's key controversies of drugs, immigration, and entrenched political conflicts (aging guerrillas). The first half of the course covers the Cold War period by U.S. administration debating major controversies and policies such as covert operations in Chile under Nixon. The second half of the course is divided by issue areas – drug policy, immigration, trade, extra-regional actors (China, Russia). Students will debate and discuss key events and policies based on weekly readings of multiple viewpoints.

**SA.551.113. China and Latin America. 4 Credits.**

Over the past decade, China has emerged as a principal economic partner for much of Latin America. China is a top trade partner for several countries in the region and the primary export destination for South America. China's policy banks issued over \$130 billion in finance to the region since 2005. And Chinese companies are becoming increasingly dominant actors in some of the region's main economic sectors. This course will examine whether and how China's economic activity in Latin America will evolve in the coming years, taking China's domestic considerations, evolving Belt and Road objectives, Latin American political economy, US policy, and other factors into account. We will explore the growing literature on China's economic interests and impact in Latin America, including perspectives from China, the Latin American region, the US policy community, and other actors. The course will also address the political, social, and security-related implications of Latin America's over two decades of enhanced relations with China. The course will be carried out as a seminar, requiring active participation from all students. Students will be expected to engage in analytical exploration, serve as class discussion leaders, practice peer review, and carry out and present a case study/research project.

**SA.551.114. Contemporary and Evolving Policy Challenges in Latin America. 4 Credits.**

This seminar is a culminating 4-credit course designed to thoroughly analyze the most pressing security policy challenges in the Latin America and cultivate the student's ability to formulate effective policy recommendations under time constraints. The course will cover challenges such as improving environmental protection in addressing deforestation and illegal fishing; confronting and containing the growing and expanding influence of gangs; limiting and reducing corruption in public institutions; and address the political stalemate of Venezuela. The course is designed into three-week modules. Each module will focus on a specific subject and will analyze in depth the evolution of the policy challenge and pursue solutions through the analysis and synthesis of best practices from around the world, customized to fit each particular challenge. The modules will consist of readings, guest lecturers, and a simulation exercise. Students will be expected to write a policy memo at the end of each module that clearly identifies the problem and provides policy recommendations based on the instruments of national power.

**SA.551.115. Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Latin America. 4 Credits.**

Guerrilla wars infused with a Cold War logic in Central America came to an end after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But other conflicts continued and in the case of Colombia, continue to this day. The course will explore the factors that have contributed to, as well as impeded, negotiated, political solutions to internal insurgency and conflict. It will also examine the similarities and differences in the political trajectory of post-war societies, touching, among others, on issues of accord implementation, structural limitations to peacebuilding, the quality of democracy, and the role of illegal economies in civil war. Cross-cutting themes such as the role of international actors and mechanisms of transitional justice in post-conflict settings will also be explored.

**SA.551.116. Brazil: Democracy and Sustainability. 4 Credits.**

This course provides an examination of Brazil's political landscape, focusing on recent trends of polarization and their implications for democracy and environmental governance. Students will analyze the socio-political dynamics behind Brazil's heightened polarization in recent years and its impact on policymaking, particularly in the context of environmental issues. Special attention will be given to Brazil's National Climate Change Policy and the Climate Fund, exploring their objectives, effectiveness, and challenges in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation. Additionally, the course delves into the significance of Brazil's Amazon Fund as a mechanism for financing conservation and sustainable development initiatives in the Amazon region. Through case studies, discussions, and critical analysis, students will gain insight into the complex interplay between politics, democracy, environmental policies, and international cooperation in Brazil.

**SA.551.118. Everything Changes but Nothing Changes: Contemporary Brazil from 1950-present. 4 Credits.****SA.551.119. Mass Migration in Latin America, Causes and Consequences. 4 Credits.****SA.551.120. U.S. and China Rivalry in Latin America and Africa. 4 Credits.**

China and the United States have engaged in an ever-deeper rivalry in Latin America and Africa seeking to build political and security alliances, secure access to natural resources, invest in critical infrastructure, and win over skeptical publics. Both countries have shown willingness to mobilize expensive investments to solidify their ties in Africa and Latin America. In 2024, the PRC President Xi inaugurated the Chancay Port in northern Peru while the U.S. President Biden launched the Lobito Corridor Railway connecting the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia with Angola's Lobito port on the Atlantic Ocean. This seminar will explore the nature and breadth of competition from the policy maker perspective, including that of African and Latin American senior officials. Students will analyze the dynamics of the relationships looking at the interests of Latin American and African nations as well as the United States and China. Outside speakers with direct policy making experience will contribute to the discussion. This is a graduate level course with students expected to write short policy analyses and orally brief on topics frequently.

**SA.551.121. Dynamics of North American Business and Trade. 4 Credits.**

This course examines how firms operate, compete, and adapt within the integrated North American economy shaped by the USMCA. Students analyze business strategy, trade policy, and regulatory dynamics across key sectors such as automotive, energy, and digital services. Emphasis is placed on supply chains, innovation, and the dynamics for business and competitiveness of regional integration. Designed for future policymakers and business leaders, the course combines case studies, simulations, and policy analysis to prepare students for cross-border decision-making in an evolving trade landscape.