

RACHEL A. SCHWARTZ

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of International and Area Studies
College of International Studies
University of Oklahoma
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma,
Fall 2022-present

Visiting Fellow, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre
Dame, Spring 2025

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Otterbein University, 2020-2022

Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR), Tulane
University, 2019-2020

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, WI, USA

Ph.D. in Political Science, 2019

M.A. in Political Science, 2015

Haverford College, Haverford, PA, USA

B.A. in Political Science and Latin American and Iberian Studies, 2011

BOOK

2023. *Undermining the State from Within: The Institutional Legacies of Civil War in Central America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009219907>

- Recipient of the APSA 2020 Gabriel A. Almond Award for the best dissertation in comparative politics

- Recipient of the LASA 2023 Donna Lee Van Cott Award for the best book on political institutions

- Selected as one of *Democracy Paradox*'s "Top 5 Books of 2023"

- Reviewed in *Perspectives on Politics*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Political Science Quarterly*, and *Política y Gobierno*

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

2024. "Guatemala 2023: From Authoritarian Deepening to Democratic Resilience." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 44(2): 323-345 [open access].

<https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-090x2024005000105>.

2024. "Embracing the Crisis of Research Design: How the Collapse of Case Selection in the Field Can Uncover New Discoveries." *Perspectives on Politics* 22(3): 836-847 [open access]. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724000586>.

2024. “When Counterinsurgent Institutions Persist: Unpacking Local Wartime Legacies” (with Reo Matsuzaki). *Studies in Comparative International Development* 59: 379-408. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-024-09427-1>.

2023. “Rewriting the Rules of Land Reform: Counterinsurgency and Agrarian Development in Nicaragua.” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 34(6): 1154-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2022.2033497>.

- Received an honorable mention for best paper at the 2021 REPAL (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*) Meeting

2022. “Guatemala 2021: Reconsolidating Impunity and Reversing Democracy.” *Revista de Ciencia Política* 42(2): 309-322. <https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-090x2022005000108>.

2022. “‘To Make Men Believe Their Rebellion Just’: Thomas Hobbes and the Study of Civil War” (with Dan Kapust). *Polity*. 54(2): 359-384. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718682>.

2021. “How Predatory Informal Rules Outlast State Reform: Evidence from Post-Authoritarian Guatemala.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 63(1): 49-71. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lap.2020.32>.

2021. “Conjuring the Criminal State: Rethinking the ‘State-Idea’ in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and International Statebuilding.” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa031>.

2020. “Civil War, Institutional Change, and the Criminalization of the State: Evidence from Guatemala.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(3): 381-401. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-020-09312-7>.

2018. “What Drives Violence against Civilians in Civil War? Evidence from Guatemala’s Conflict Archives” (with Scott Straus). *Journal of Peace Research* 55(2): 222-235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317749272>.

EDITOR-REVIEWED ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

2023. “How Guatemala Defied the Odds” (with Anita Isaacs). *Journal of Democracy* 34(4): 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a907685>.

- Most-read article published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2023
- Also published in Spanish: “Cómo Guatemala desafió los pronósticos,” *Argumentos* 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.46476/ra.v4i2.175>.

2023. “A Durable but Impoverished Peace: Evaluating Twenty-five Years of Peacebuilding in Guatemala.” *State-Society Relations in Guatemala: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Omar Sanchez-Sibony. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 147-172.

2022. “Nicaragua: Populist Performance and Authoritarian Practice during COVID-19” (with Kai M. Thaler). *Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19*. Eds. Nils Ringe and Lucio Rennó. Routledge Studies in Extremism and Democracy. London: Routledge. 184-195 [open access]. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003197614>.

2020. “Guatemala: The Military in Politics” (with Anita Isaacs). *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1893>.

2018. “Rethinking Comparison in the Social Sciences” (with Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith). *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 16(1): 1-7.
<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2562143>.

2018. “From Reconciliation to Rule of Law: The Shifting Landscape of International Transitional Justice Assistance in Guatemala” (with Anita Isaacs). *Transitional Justice, International Assistance, and Civil Society: Missed Connections*. Eds. Paige Arthur and Christalla Yakinthou. New York: Cambridge University Press. 27-51.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316711347>.

BOOK REVIEWS

2025. Diálogo entre autores: *Bringing War Back In* por Luis Schenoni y *Undermining the State from Within* por Rachel A. Schwartz. *Política y Gobierno* 32(1): 1-16.

2024. Review of Sarah Zukerman Daly’s *Violent Victors: Why Bloodstained Parties Win Postwar Elections* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022). *Journal of Latin American Studies*.

2023. “Contesting Development Practice and Discourse in Cold War Guatemala.” Review of Sarah Foss’ “On Our Own Terms: Development and Indigeneity in Cold War Guatemala.” *Diplomatic History*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhad093>.

WORKING PAPERS

“International Anti-Corruption Commissions in Central America: Pathways of Emergence”

“Explaining Top-Down Radicalization and the *Non-Delegation* of Violence: The Case of Guatemala’s Genocide,” *submitted for special issue on cumulative radicalization and genocide (edited by Robert Braun and Scott Straus)*

“Linkage, Leverage, and Lobbies: Analyzing the United States’ Role in Guatemala’s Regime Trajectory,” *invited chapter in edited volume on autocratization in Guatemala (edited by Omar Sánchez-Sibony)*

“Iterative Casing and the Possibilities of External Validity in Small-n Research,” *invited chapter for edited volume on rethinking generalizability (edited by Nicholas Rush Smith and Erica Simmons)*

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

When Impunity Fights Back: International Anti-Corruption Efforts and Democratic Backsliding in Central America (book project)

“New Pathways of Democratic Backsliding in Latin America” (with Laura Gamboa), *in progress for “Elements on Politics and Society in Latin America” Series, Cambridge University Press*

“Democratic Crisis and Resilience in Contemporary Guatemala,” *invited chapter for edited volume on regime trajectories in Central America (edited by Manuel Meléndez-Sánchez and Steven Levitsky)*

**COMMENTARY,
POLICY ANALYSIS,
& REPORTS**

2024. El Barómetro de las Américas de LAPOP toma el *Pulso de la Democracia en Guatemala 2023* (with Regina Bateson). Nashville, TN: LAPOP.

2024. “When Impunity Fights Back: The Legacies and Lessons of Guatemala’s CICIG.” Dossier: Impunidad. *LASA Forum* 55(2): 40-48.

2024. “Is Central America Doomed?” (with Mateo Jarquín and Kai M. Thaler). *Journal of Democracy*. March 8.

2023. “Guatemala’s underdog reformer won the presidency. Can he remake the country’s politics?” *LSE Latin American and Caribbean Blog*, August 24.
- Also published in Spanish: “El candidato sorpresa ganó las elecciones de Guatemala pero, ¿podrá reformar sus políticas?”

2023. “If Election Deniers Succeed, Guatemala Will Have Lost the Battle for Democracy” (with Anita Isaacs and Álvaro Montenegro). *The New York Times*. July 6.
- Also published in Spanish: “¿Es posible resistir el ascenso del autoritarismo? Guatemala será la prueba.”

2023. “Guatemala: Resisting Democratic Backsliding in the Least Likely of Places?” *Democracy Paradox*. June 26.

2021. “The Biden Administration has pledged significant aid to Central America. But where should it go and how should it get there?” *Voces*. The Inter-American Dialogue. April 22.

2019. “Guatemala will elect a new president on Sunday. Here are three things to know.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. August 9.

2019. “A Victory for Guatemala’s Pacto de Corruptos.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (online). June 21.

2019. “Guatemala’s Anti-Corruption Struggle Teeters on the Edge.” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (magazine) 51(2): 200-205.

2018. “Why are so many children coming to the U.S. from Central America in the first place?” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. June 29.

2018. “Is Russia interfering in Guatemala’s anti-corruption commission? The real story might surprise you.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. May 9.

2017. “Guatemala’s president tried to expel the U.N. commissioner who announced he was under investigation.” The Monkey Cage. *The Washington Post*. September 6.

2015. “Confronting Government Corruption in Guatemala and Honduras.” *SSN Basic Facts*. Scholars Strategy Network. December 11.

2013. “Repression, Resistance, and Indigenous Rights in Guatemala” (with Anita Isaacs). *Americas Quarterly* (Winter): 32-7.

2012. “Democracy in Progress: El Salvador’s Unfinished Transition” (with Michael Shifter). *World Politics Review*, Feature Report: *After the Ink Dries: Long-Term Postconflict Reconciliation*.

2012. “El Salvador’s Gang Truce Raises Troubling Questions for the Region.” *World Politics Review*, May 11.

2012. “Central America Moves Toward a Truly Regional Stance on Drugs.” *World Politics Review*. March 23.

2011. “¿Equilibrio en la frontera? México en los medios de comunicación norteamericanos” (with Michael Shifter). *Temas* 68 (Oct.-Dec.): 46-55.

SELECT HONORS & AWARDS

Kellogg Institute Visiting Fellowship, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, Spring 2025

Centennial Center Grant, American Political Science Association, 2024

Donna Lee Van Cott Book Award, Political Institutions Section, Latin American Studies Association, 2023

Outstanding Faculty Award, College of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2023

Big Ideas Challenge Grant, “Climate Information and Actionable Timescales for Climate Security in Latin America” (\$135,000), Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships, University of Oklahoma, 2024-2026

Junior Faculty Fellowship, College of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2023, 2024

Presidential International Travel Fellowship, College of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2023

New Voices Initiative Teaching Fellow, Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research (IQMR), Syracuse University, 2023

Civil War Paths Fellow, Centre for the Comparative Study of Civil War, University of York, 2022-2023

New Teacher of the Year, 2021-2022, Otterbein University

Best Paper Award, Honorable Mention, REPAL (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*) Annual Meeting, 2021

Gabriel A. Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics, American Political Science Association (APSA), 2020

Best Dissertation Award, Comparative Politics, UW–Madison Political Science, 2018-19

Mildred Hovland Article Prize, UW–Madison Political Science, 2018

Institute for Legal Studies Law and Society Graduate Fellow, UW–Madison Law School, 2018-19

Fulbright US Student Award (Guatemala), 2016-17

United States Institute of Peace Jennings Randolph Peace Scholarship, 2016-17

Graduate Student Fieldwork Award, International Institute, UW–Madison, 2015

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Portuguese), US Department of Education, 2014-15

Tinker Nave Field Research Grant, Latin America, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies, UW–Madison, 2014, 2015

**SELECT
INVITED TALKS
& WORKSHOPS**

Universidad de Costa Rica, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Inaugural Address, 50th Anniversary Conference, May 2025
 University of Chicago, Comparative Politics Workshop, April 2025
 Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA), “Conferencia internacional: Retos de la construcción democrática en Centroamérica,” Antigua Guatemala, November 2024
 Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala), Keynote Address, Primer Encuentro de Ciencias Sociales, September 2024
 Centro de Estudios Estratégicos Centroamericanos (virtual), “Retos de la democracia en Latinoamérica y el mundo,” July 2024
 Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales and USAID Guatemala, Presentation of AmericasBarometer Report, June 2024
 Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA) (virtual), “La crisis de la democracia en Guatemala: Características y perspectivas de solución,” May 2024
 University of Bristol, Peace, Conflict, and Violence Research Group (virtual), March 2024
 Latin American Studies Association (virtual), Political Institutions Section, “Charlemos” Series, February 2024
 Princeton University, Program in Latin American Studies, February 2024
 Duke University and University of North Carolina, Duke/UNC Latin America Working Group (virtual), February 2024
 University of Birmingham and University of Nottingham, Research Centre for the Study of Parties and Democracy (virtual), “Democratic Resilience in Latin America,” November 2023
 Ohio State University, Department of Political Science (virtual), November 2023
 University of California Berkeley, “Radicalization in Comparative Perspective” Workshop, October 2023
 City College of New York, “Rethinking Generalization” Workshop, October 2023
 Universidad de Costa Rica, Escuela de Ciencias Políticas (virtual), October 2023
 Harvard University, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Seminar Series (virtual), September 2023
 University of Notre Dame, Kellogg Institute of International Studies Flash Conversation (virtual), September 2023
 Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala), Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias Socio Humanistas (ICESH), July 2023
 CIDE (Mexico), Seminario de Política y Gobierno (virtual), November 2022
 Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research (SWMMR), University of Notre Dame, October 2022
 University of Wisconsin–Madison, “Populists and the Pandemic” Workshop, September 2022
 UW–Madison and the University of Brasília, “Populism and the Pandemic” Lecture Series (virtual, with Kai Thaler), September 2020
 Louisiana State University, Department of Political Science, September 2019
 Haverford College, Symposium on Archives and Historical Memory in Guatemala, April 2019
 City College of New York, “Rethinking Comparison in the Social Sciences” Workshop, October 2017
 United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Peace Scholar Workshop, October 2016

**CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS**

American Political Science Association, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2024, 2025
(scheduled)
Guatemala Scholars Network Conference, 2017
International Political Science Association, 2025 (scheduled)
International Studies Association, 2023, 2025
International Studies Association-Northeast, 2022
Latin American Studies Association, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
(scheduled)
Midwest Political Science Association, 2018
Repal (*Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina*), 2021, 2023
Southern Political Science Association, 2020, 2024
Western Political Science Association, 2019
World International Studies Committee Conference, 2022

TEACHING

University of Oklahoma

Undergraduate

IAS 2133: International Sports, Fall 2024
IAS 3003: International Peacebuilding, Spring 2023, Spring 2024
IAS 3003: Political Violence in Comparative Perspective, Fall 2022, Fall 2023
IAS 3313: Latin American International Relations, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024

Graduate

IAS 5902: Global Political Turbulence (online), Spring 2023, Spring 2024

Study Away

Washington and the World, College of International Studies, Spring 2024

Otterbein University (undergraduate)

POLS 1300: Introduction to Global Politics, Fall 2020, Fall 2021
POLS 2270: Comparative Government, Spring 2021
POLS 2300: Methods of Research and Inquiry in Political Science, Spring 2021,
Spring 2022
POLS 3520: Special Topics: Latin American Politics and Society, Fall 2020
POLS 3870: Studies in Political Violence, Spring 2022
POLS 4100: International Law and Institutions, Fall 2021
GEOG 1000: World Regional Geography, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021,
Spring 2022

Tulane University (undergraduate)

POLI 2500: Introduction to International Relations, Fall 2019

SERVICE

To the Community

Advisory Committee Member, Centro contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad en el
Norte de Centroamérica [Center against Corruption and Impunity in
Northern Central America], Cristosal, Guatemala, El Salvador, and
Honduras, 2024-present

To the Discipline

Secretary, Central America Section, Latin American Studies Association (LASA), 2023-2025
Executive Council Member, Political Institutions Section, Latin American Studies Association, 2024-2026
Co-Coordinator, Central American Politics Consortium (CAPC), 2023-present
Chair, Donna Lee Van Cott Book Award Committee, Political Institutions Section, Latin American Studies Association, 2025
Member, Peace Scholar Review Committee, United States Institute of Peace, 2025
Member, Best Article Award Committee, Committee on Concepts and Methods, International Political Science Association (IPSA), 2025
Member, Kendra Koivu Paper Award Committee, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (QMMR) Section, American Political Science Association, 2022
Advisory Committee Member, *Politai: Revista de Ciencia Política* (Peru), Issue on “Organized Crime and Corruption in Latin America”
Reviewer, *American Political Science Review*, *Comparative Politics*, *International Security*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Cornell University Press*, *Cambridge University Press*, *International Peacekeeping*, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *Latin American Research Review*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, *Política y Gobierno*, *Routledge*, *Development and Change*, *Global Studies Quarterly*, *Revista de Ciencia Política*, *The Extractive Industries and Society*, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *Alternatives*, *Journal of Aggression*, *Maltreatment and Trauma*, *Revista Elecciones*

To the University

University of Oklahoma, International and Area Studies, Graduate Studies Committee, 2022-present
University of Oklahoma, Fulbright Committee, 2022-present
University of Oklahoma, Center for the Americas, Advisory Committee, 2023-present
University of Oklahoma, International Security Search Committee, 2024

**OTHER
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE**

Research Affiliate, Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Vanderbilt University, 2023-present

Instructor, Curso especializado sobre Centroamérica (virtual), “Entre la continuidad y el cambio: las sociedades y las economías centroamericanas en el siglo XXI,” Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA), March 2025

Instructor, International Political Science Association (IPSA) and University of São Paulo Summer School in Concepts, Methods and Techniques in Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations, 2025

Instructor, Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR), Syracuse University, 2023, 2024

Inter-American Dialogue, Washington, DC, USA, Program Assistant/Associate,
2011-2013

**FIELD
EXPERIENCE**

Guatemala: June-July 2014; June 2015; September-November 2016; March-
December 2017; June-July 2023; June 2024
Honduras: May-June 2024
Nicaragua: November 2016-March 2017

**ADDITIONAL
TRAINING**

PEN America Workshop, “Campus for All: Fostering Open and Respectful
Exchange,” 2021
Teaching Academy Summer Institute, UW–Madison, 2018
Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research, Syracuse University, 2016

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English (native), Spanish (fluent), Portuguese (intermediate)

Last updated: 26 March 2025