RACHEL A. SCHWARTZ

CONTACT INFORMATION

College of International Studies
University of Oklahoma
Farzaneh Hall, 317
729 Elm Avenue
Norman, OK 73019

Email: rachel.schwartz@ou.edu

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Associate Professor of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2026-present

Director, Center for the Americas, School of International Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2025-present

Assistant Professor of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, 2022-2026

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

BOOKS

2026. *New Forms of Democratic Erosion in Latin America* (with Laura Gamboa). Elements in Politics and Society in Latin America. New York: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009862486.

2026. *Socavar el Estado desde adentro: Los legados institucionales de la guerra civil en Centroamérica*. Translated by Knut Walter. Guatemala: Sophos, S.A.

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

2026. "International Anti-Corruption Commissions: Explaining Institutional Design and Autonomy." *Comparative Politics*. https://doi.org/10.5129/001041526X17686834944182.

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.

2024. "Leveraging Country Expertise: How Scholars in International Studies Can Support the Asylum Process" (with Hannah S. Chapman). *International Studies Review* 24(4): 518-532. https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1093/isp/ekae002.

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.

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. "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

2026. "Honduras's Missed Opportunity" (with Lucas Perelló). *Journal of Democracy* 37(2): 149-160. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2026.a986026.

2025. "Different Directions Towards Studying Civil Wars." In *Civil Wars* ISA Roundtable 2025, "Civil War and Intrastate Conflict: Reimagining a Field of Study," *Civil Wars* 27(2): 421-424. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2025.2542638.

2025. "Afinidades políticas en la época posverdad: vínculos epistémicos, desinformación y el futuro de la democracia." In *Serie Crítica* (2): "Posverdad, Democracia y Pensamiento Crítico," pp. 71-102. Guatemala: Universidad Rafael Landívar, Vicerrectoría de Investigación y Proyección.

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.

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

"Explaining Top-Down Escalation and the *Non*-Delegation of Violence: The Case of Guatemala's Genocide," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (accepted for publication)

"Making Arguments Mobile: The Promises of Transportability for Qualitative Research," *chapter for edited volume on rethinking generalization (edited by Nicholas Rush Smith and Erica Simmons)* (volume accepted by Cambridge University Press)

"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)*

"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)*

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

When Impunity Fights Back: International Anti-Corruption Support and Democratic Erosion in Post-Conflict Central America (book project under review, Cambridge University Press)

"Explaining Effective Pro-Democratic Resistance: Evidence from Guatemala and Peru" (with Laura Gamboa)

"Ruling Coalition Cohesion and the Reach of International Pressure: Evidence from Central America" (with Lucas Perelló and Natalie Chaudhuri)

SELECT POLICY WRITING & ANALYSIS

2026. "What Does the US' Anti-Bribery Retreat Mean for the Global Struggle Against Corruption?" (with Lauren Cargal). *E-International Relations*. July 17.

2025. "Why Honduras is Facing Election Chaos." *Journal of Democracy*. December 2.

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 reformer 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.

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.*

SELECT HONORS & AWARDS

Kellogg Institute Visiting Fellowship, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, Spring 2025
Centennial Center Grant ($9,000), 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
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Portuguese), US Department of Education, 2014-15

SELECT INVITED TALKS & WORKSHOPS

Georgetown University, Mortara Research Seminar, March 2027 (scheduled)
University of Notre Dame, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, March 2027 (scheduled)
Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA), Webinar: ¿Qué significa el triunfo demócrata en Estados Unidos para Centroamérica?, November 2026 (scheduled)
Florida Atlantic University, Department of Political Science, November 2026 (scheduled)
Universidad del Valle (Guatemala), VI Congreso Ciencias Sociales (virtual), August 2026
El Colegio de México, Cátedra Centroámerica, Seminario Internacional "Democracias en crisis: Estado, desigualdad y poder en Centroamérica," August 2026
Feria Internacional del Libro de Guatemala (FILGUA), Presentation of book *Socavar el Estado desde adentro*, July 2026
Sophos (Guatemala), Presentation of book *Socavar el Estado desde adentro*, 2026
Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (Peru), Taller de Reforma Política "Manuel Lorenzo de Vidaurre" (virtual), November 2025
Universidad de Costa Rica, Programa de Ciencia Política (virtual), November 2025
Tulane University, Center for Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR) Speaker Series, October 2025
Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), Especialidad de Ciencia Política y Gobierno, 20th Anniversary Seminar, September 2025
Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala), Foro "Posverdad, Democracia y Pensamiento Crítico," August 2025
Universidad de Costa Rica, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Inaugural Address, May 2025
University of Chicago, Comparative Politics Workshop, April 2025
Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA), "Conferencia internacional: Retos de la construcción democrática en Centroamérica," 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 (ASIES) 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, Political Institutions Section, "Charlemos" Series (virtual), 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
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
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, 2026
International Political Science Association, 2025
International Studies Association, 2023, 2025
Latin American Studies Association, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 2026 (Costa Rica)
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, 2026

TEACHING

University of Oklahoma

Undergraduate
International Sports, Fall 2024, Fall 2026
International Peacebuilding, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2026
Political Violence in Comparative Perspective, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2025, Fall 2026
Latin American International Relations, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025, Spring 2027

Graduate
Global Political Turbulence (online), Spring 2023, Spring 2024
Peace, Conflict, and Identity in the South Caucasus, Summer 2025

Otterbein University

Introduction to Global Politics, Fall 2020, Fall 2021
Comparative Government, Spring 2021
Methods of Research and Inquiry in Political Science, Spring 2021, Spring 2022
Latin American Politics and Society, Fall 2020
Studies in Political Violence, Spring 2022
International Law and Institutions, Fall 2021
World Regional Geography, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022

SERVICE

To the Community

Advisory Committee Member, Center against Corruption and Impunity in Northern Central America, 2024-2025
Country Conditions Expert for Guatemalan and Nicaraguan asylum cases in the United States (written and/or oral testimony in 25 cases), 2018-present

To the Discipline

Co-Coordinator, Central American Politics Consortium (CAPC), 2023-present
Academic Council Member, Red Iniciativa Centroamérica (Red ICA), 2025-present
Executive Council Member, Political Institutions Section, Latin American Studies Association, 2024-2027
Officer, Research Committee on Concepts and Methods, International Political Science Association (IPSA)
Secretary, Central America Section, Latin American Studies Association (LASA), 2023-2025
Chair, Donna Lee Van Cott Book Award Committee, Political Institutions Section, Latin American Studies Association, 2025
Advisor, Human Rights Foundation Tyranny Tracker, 2025-2026
Member, Bryce Wood Book Award Committee, Latin American Studies Association, 2025-2026
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
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, International Theory*, *Civil War*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Bristol University Press*

To the University

Director, Center for the Americas, 2025-present
Member, Strategic Planning Committee, School of International Studies, 2025-present
Member, Graduate Studies Committee, School of International Studies, 2022-present
Member, Global Affairs MA Program Executive Committee, School of International Studies, 2025-2026
Member, University-level Fulbright Committee, 2022-present
Member, Chinese Politics and Foreign Policy Faculty Search Committee, 2026
Member, International Security Faculty Search Committee, 2024
Faculty Leader, Washington and the World Study Away Trip, School of International Studies, 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), 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 RESEARCH 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

LANGUAGE SKILLS

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

Last updated: 14 November 2026