



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Argentina Program, Summer 2025

Criminology 434: Organized Crime in Latin America

dlInstructor: Dr. James Kanan

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: This course will examine some of the manifestations of organized crime in a global context, with special focus on groups and activities in the southern American hemisphere, especially Argentina. Organized crime is an increasingly transnational phenomenon, but its presence in local environments make it a fascinating topic of study, with both local and global reach. We will explore issues like how to define organized crime, the role of drug trafficking in the ever-changing landscape of international crime, and the important intersection of local and state governments (namely those in Argentina) and criminal groups. We will compare and contrast these issues between Argentina and her more infamous Latino countries to the north ... Colombia and Mexico.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:	How students will practice each outcome:	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed:
1. Analyze transnational organized criminal groups and networks and/or issues on local and global scales.	Readings & Class Discussion	Short Essays
2. Demonstrate a basic level of understanding local and global interrelationships of criminal groups/networks and/or criminal activities, like drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking.	Readings/Class Discussion	Short Essays
3. Compare and contrast the consequences of decision-making processes by local and state governments regarding organized crime and its activities between Argentina and two Latino countries with more well-known reputations for organized crime challenges.	Readings/Class Discussion	Short Essays/Independent Research & Presentation

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Defining and describing organized crime, Network Analysis of Organized Crime Groups, Drug trafficking and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO's), Human trafficking and Human Smuggling, Money Laundering, Controlling Organized Crime.

5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: This course fulfills the WKU Colonnade Connections Course Requirement – **Local to Global** Category (3 hours). Upon completion, students should be able to recognize what organized crime refers to and what it is not, along with analyzing, examining, and evaluating its presence, influence, and impact on local lives in a global environment.

6. Required Readings and Materials:

- Albanese, Jay and Philip Reichel (eds.). *Transnational Organized Crime: An Overview from Six Continents*. 2014. Sage Publications.
<https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/products/transnational-organized-crime-1-241197> (Ebook). Hard copies can be purchased through various sources. Best to read this short book before arriving in Argentina.
- Google Classroom: Additional readings in .pdf format will be available through the Google Classroom site. The syllabus will also be found there.

- A generative AI account with ChatGPT (preferable), or other generative AI tools (Google Gemini, Perplexity, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, or Perplexity) will be very helpful. Free versions are fine.

7. Graded Assignments: Grades for the course will be calculated based on your work on the following items:

- **Participation (20%)** – You will be graded here on your active engagement with our guest speakers and tours and during class. Students are expected to attend every class and participate in all out-of-class activities as directed by the instructor/program director. KIIS requires that any unexcused absence results in a grade reduction. Your course letter grade will be deducted one full letter grade for any unexcused absence. Students with two or more unexcused absences may be expelled from the program.
- **Independent Research/Final Presentation (40%)** – Students will research a specific contemporary topic related to organized crime in Latin America. You can profile a significant individual, group, or criminal activity, with particular focus on Latin America (bonus if you are able to work Argentina into it). You will write a five-page essay (20%) and present your research to the class during our last meeting. You will be expected to reference academic and non-academic articles, books, and websites as your source material. Additional credit will be given if you are able to take advantage of on-site locations and contacts (e.g., guest speakers, etc.) for information about your topic. Use of generative AI will be helpful, but **MUST** include adequate attribution (see below)
- **Reflective Essays (40%)** – You will submit a short essay (250 – 500 words) describing “what you learned” from class materials, readings, or excursions (places we visit). Some essay topics will be assigned by instructor, while others will simply invite a “what I learned” response.

All course assignments must be completed in order to receive at least a passing grade in the course. No extra credit will be offered for the course. Work will be graded on the following scale:

90 – 100% = A 80 – 89% = B 70 – 79% = C 60 – 69% = D Below 60% = F

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KIIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

8. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Use of Generative AI technology: In general, I expect that the work you submit in this class will be your own, original work, and that you will use generative AI tools, such as (*ChatGPT*), to enhance your learning experience. In other words, generative AI can be helpful in expanding ideas, providing additional information, and exploring potential resources. The writing and words should be YOURS, but you can employ AI to help organize your thoughts. When employed in the writing assignment, you **MUST** describe how you used AI and it **MUST**

be cited. Again, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as (*ChatGPT*) may be used on a limited basis for (*brainstorming or gathering ideas*) with appropriate citation, but not for the origination of the writing text of this paper. If you are unsure if you are using AI tools appropriately in this course, I encourage you to visit with me. Examples of how to cite AI tools are available at <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- **Grammar and Style Checking:** AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- **Concept Understanding:** Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- **Research Assistance:** AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may NOT use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- **Plagiarism:** Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- **Data Manipulation:** Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- **Misrepresentation of Skills:** Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- **Confidentiality Breach:** Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

9. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

10. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs,

including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

11. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a

KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.

12. Tentative Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS Google Classroom (GC)
Class 1	Syllabus/Introduction	Albanese & Reichel, Chapter 1
Class 2	Defining Organized Crime	Finckenhauer, Problems of Definition (GC) Hagan, Organized Crime Definition Challenges (GC)
Class 3	Models of Organized Crime	McIlwain, Social Networks & Organized Crime (GC)
Class 4	Organized Crime in Latin America	Albanese & Reichel, Chapter 3
Class 5	Drug Trafficking Orgs	Natarajan, et.al., Classifying Variety of Drug Trafficking Organizations (GC)
Class 6	Colombian & Mexican Cartels	Martinez & Philips, Perfect Storm: Increasing Violence in Mexico after 2006 (GC)
Class 7	Drug Trafficking in Argentina	Sampó & Troncoso. Cocaine Trafficking: Argentina, Chile, & Uruguay (GC)
Class 8	Organized Crime in Asia & Africa	Albanese & Reichel, Chapters 5 & 6
Class 9	Comparing DTO's: Southeast Asia & Africa	Luong. DTO's in Vietnam (GC), Raineri & Strazzari. Studying Drug Trafficking in Africa (GC)
Class 10	Organized Crime in Europe	Albanese & Reichel. Chapter 4, Sergi. To Become 'Ndrangheta in Calabria (GC)
Class 11	Human Trafficking & Human Smuggling	Vitale. Coyotes, Caravans, and Central American Migrant Smuggling. (GC) – Begin research on paper/presentation topic
Class 12	Money Laundering	Levi. Professional Enablers & Money Laundering (GC). Continue your own research on paper/presentation topic
Class 13	Final Presentations	None