



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Panama Program, Summer 2025

HIST 315 / AFAM 490 Topics: A History of American Intervention in the Caribbean

Instructor: Prof. Nikki Brown

Email: nikki.brown@uky.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

Across the twentieth century, the United States has developed an uneven record of success in international interventions in the Caribbean. From President Theodore Roosevelt to President Bill Clinton, the directives of American administrations have pursued economic and political interests that haven't consistently benefitted the regimes of Caribbean countries, including Panama. This course will focus on American foreign policy in the Caribbean, using Panama as our learning laboratory. We'll talk about the development of the Panama Canal under Theodore Roosevelt and the political upheaval that came later. We'll also talk about U.S. policies and occupation of Haiti, from 1915 to 1934, the U.S. relationship with Grenada, and U.S. foreign policy to Latin America in the 1980s, at the height of the Cold War and Drug Wars. Most of all, we'll talk about how American foreign policy through the 20th and 21st centuries have been fluid and if we can predict future developments.

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:

In this course, you will:

DEMONSTRATE, via in-class presentations, your understanding of American foreign policy in the Caribbean since the building of the Panama Canal.

EXPLAIN to an audience of your peers some of the recurring themes over the 20th and 21st centuries in American foreign policy in Caribbean, such as freedom, security, exchange of ideas, liberal vs. conservative, intervention, and resistance.

SEARCH, LOCATE, and ANALYZE primary source documents, in order to fully how American foreign changes across time, geography, economics, and political beliefs.

CONTEXTUALIZE the evidence and your use of evidence, in the form of brief annotations and class presentations.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

Reasons given for U.S. intervention in the Caribbean

Elements of foreign policy, including soft diplomacy, economics, national security, human security, arms dealing, and migration

Major figures of intervention, like U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy, Fidel Castro, Maurice Bishop (Grenada), Manuel Noriega (Nicaragua)

Thinking about American foreign policy broadly

The role of Panama in current U.S. foreign policy

5. Required Readings and Materials:

There is no textbook or book that you must purchase.

All readings are available on Canvas.

6. Graded Assignments:

From President Theodore Roosevelt to President Bill Clinton, the directives of American administrations have pursued economic and political interests that haven't consistently benefitted the regimes of Caribbean countries, including Panama. The assignments will explore questions of Black and indigenous identity and representation, colonialism, resistance to slavery and its afterlives, transnationalism, and diaspora.

Excursion reflections - written

Impressions of the excursions; relationship to the Caribbean 25%

Site Analysis Assignments - written

Thoughts about how the site reflects complex relationships 25%

Group Presentation – oral

10 – 15 minute presentations on a major theme of U.S. foreign policy 25%

Class Participation -

25%

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (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 KIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.