

Diplomacy in the Americas

The Penn Model OAS Program





In "Diplomacy in the Americas" students work with Philadelphia and Norristown public school students to explore solutions to critical problems facing the Americas.

Entrenched political, economic, and social inequality, combined with environmental degradation, weak institutions, pervasive health epidemics, weapon proliferation, and other issues pose formidable hurdles for strengthening democratic ideals and institutions. The Organization of the American States (OAS), the world's oldest regional organization, is uniquely poised to confront these challenges. "Diplomacy in the Americas" guides students through the process of writing policy resolutions as though the students were Organization of the American States (OAS) diplomats, basing their research and proposals on democracy, development, security, and human rights - the four pillars of the OAS.

Summary of the course

Course Objectives (for college students)

- Critically examine what it means to be civically engaged as a ***global citizen***.
- Develop a solid understanding of the challenges to democracy in the Americas, including inequality.
- Gain a better understanding of literature on transformative education, probing and thinking critically about the question of what it means to educate for a global democracy, especially in the context of a service-learning course.
- Become familiar with the history, role, workings, practices, successes and challenges of the Organization of American States.
- Gain a better understanding of the OAS' four pillars – security, democracy, human rights, and development – and how they apply to the region and one country in particular.





Course Objectives, cont.

- Acquire a deeper understanding of one country's history, politics, and economics.
- Develop a solid understanding of the roles and responsibilities of being a diplomat at the OAS, including how to write and pass policy proposals, engage in dialogue and diplomacy with other countries, and problem-solve on a global level.
- Serve as mentors and teachers for high school students participating in the High School Model OAS program. In this capacity, students will learn how to design and execute an effective curriculum on important issues pertaining to Latin America. Students will also help high school students with their writing, public speaking, and critical thinking skills.
- Be able to more fully examine their own experiences, knowledge, and interest in societal problems, from the local to global level, via participation in class discussions, the Model OAS simulation, and critical reflection of the readings. From this exploration, students should be able to propose and create ways to bring theory into praxis on a problem of their choice.
- Be able to construct well thought-out arguments and express them in class, reflection papers, and simulations.

Course objectives for high school students



- Critically examine what it means to be civically and politically engaged as a **global citizen**.
- Acquire knowledge on and analyze challenges to democracy in the Americas, including inequality.
- Acquire knowledge on the history, role, workings, practices, successes and challenges of the Organization of American States (OAS). Identify OAS' four pillars – security, democracy, human rights, and development – and analyze their application to the region and one country in particular. Analyze and assess the effectiveness of the OAS.
- Acquire a deeper understanding of Latin America and one country's history, politics, and economics.
- Develop a solid understanding of the roles and responsibilities of being a diplomat at the OAS, how to write and pass policy proposals, how to engage in dialogue and diplomacy with other countries, and to problem-solve on a global level.
- Examine your own experiences, knowledge, and interest in societal problems, from the local to global level, via participation in class discussions, the Model OAS simulation, and critical reflection of the readings.
- Construct well thought-out arguments and express them in class, reflection papers, and the final simulation. Debate seminal topics pertaining to the region with self-designed persuasive arguments. Enhance public speaking, writing skills, and the ability to analyze global political events by defending arguments with researched sources.

Course objectives, cont.



- Gain a first-hand view of what college life is like.
- Interact with college students and faculty, and attend special seminars with guest speakers including diplomats, international scholars, and other invited guests.
- Attend a fun, exciting, simulation in Washington DC with peers from Philadelphia, Norristown, and around the world.
- Receive invitations to many events on Penn's campus throughout the year.
- Be encouraged to work with students and faculty in Latin American and Latino Studies in possible future research projects and other endeavors.





Reflections

“From my experience being a summer researcher and a student in the Penn Model OAS program, it has been clear that educating for global citizenship is effective in this course due to its experiential, service-learning nature. Through active engagement opportunities, such as the college students building collaborative curriculum for high school students, engaging with various high profile speakers, and the D.C. simulation, all students have the opportunity to learn about diplomacy in the Americas in a student centered, contextualized manner. Since the course is not mere “banking” of materials deposited by teachers for students, the experiential learning nature of the course in essence is educating for a participatory democracy.” **Amira Chowdhury, Penn ('22)**

Reflections

“Over this course, I was able to learn both theoretically and experientially political theories and developmental routes of Latin America. The readings solidified my understanding of important concepts, such as oppression, democracy, and global education, but teaching high school students allowed me to master these concepts by explaining them to others. Following up on current news on cases of oppression in Latin America, such as human rights violations in Venezuela, pushed me to analyze the social structures needed for democratic development in recent contexts. As the first ABCS course I have taken, PSCI 328 proves an amazing hands-on opportunity to apply research and learning to structural community development in Philadelphia.” (Macy Huang, Penn '22)



Resources

- [Penn Model OAS Fall 2019 College Syllabus](#)
- [Penn Model OAS Fall 2019 High School Syllabus](#)
- [Penn Model OAS Family Handbook](#)
- [Penn Model OAS Student Position Papers and Resolutions](#)
- [Penn Model OAS In-Class Curriculum developed by College Students](#)
- [Penn Model OAS Online Blog and Reflections, with submissions by College and High School Students](#)
- [Penn Model OAS 2019 D.C. Video created by Diego Ledesma, high school participant](#)

