

# Laura R. Blume

1664 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89557  
lblume@unr.edu  
www.laurarossblume.com

## Academic Appointments

University of Nevada, Reno in Reno, NV

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, 2020 – Present

Faculty Associate, Department of Gender, Race, and Identity, 2022 – Present

## Education

Ph.D. in Political Science, Boston University, Boston, MA, May 2020

Dissertation Title: *Thinking Like a Kingpin: An Ethnography of Narco-Violence in Central America*

Dissertation Committee: Taylor Boas, Steven Rosenzweig, John Gerring, Julie Klinger

Comprehensive Exams: Comparative Politics, American Politics

B.A. in Political Science, cum laude, Simmons College, Boston, MA, May 2013

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

Blume, L. (2022). Collusion, Co-Optation, or Evasion: The Politics of Drug Trafficking Violence in Central America. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(8), 1366–1402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140211066218>

Blume, L., Sauls, L., & Knight, C. (2022). Tracing territorial-illicit relations: Pathways of influence and prospects for governance. *Political Geography*, 97, 102690. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102690>

Blume, L. (2021). Narco Robin Hoods: Community support for illicit economies and violence in rural Central America. *World Development*, 143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105464>

Blume, L. (2017). The Old Rules No Longer Apply: Explaining Narco-Assassinations of Mexican Politicians. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 9(1), 59–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X1700900103>

## Book

Blume, L., (2025). *The Art of Trafficking: How Politics Shape Narco-Strategies and Violence in Central America*.

- The book is under contract with Oxford University Press.
- The manuscript has completed peer review and is in production.
- The book is expected to be forthcoming in late 2025.

## Original Datasets

Violence Against Public Figures (VAPF) Dataset, <https://www.vapfproject.com/>

## Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

Harry Frank Guggenheim Distinguished Scholar Award, 2022

Faculty Travel Grant for the College of Liberal Arts and Reynolds School of Journalism, UNR, 2024/2025

Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG) Student Travel Award, 2020

Summer Research Fellowship, Boston University, 2017, 2019

Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship, Boston University, 2018 (short-term), 2017 (long-term)

Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award, Department of Political Science, Boston University, 2017

Latin American Studies Research Travel Grant, Boston University, 2015, 2016

Carroll F. Miles Award, Simmons College, 2013

## Under Review

Blume, L., Harvey, L., Meza, D., Heath, P., & Vaskov, A. (*n.d.*) Assassinations of Public Figures: Global Context and Central American Cases. [Revise & resubmit at *Perspectives on Politics*]

Blume, L., Sauls, L., & Galeana Rodriguez, F. (*n.d.*) Militarized Margins: Counter-Narcotics Policy and the Struggle for Territorial Governance in Central America. [Under Review at *Geoforum*]

## Additional Publications

Blume, L., Hernandez, V., Meza, D., & Weitzel, V. (2024, August). Dying for Justice in Central America. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 56(3), 247–251.

Blume, L. (2024). “Honduras: A Narco-State Made in the United States.” *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

Blume, L., Meza, D., & Heath, P. (2023, January 31). “Honduran Women Leaders in the Crosshairs.” *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

Blume, L. & Sauls, L. (2022). “Combating Narcos or Criminalizing Indigeneity?” *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

Blume, L. (2018). “A Tale of Two Dictatorships.” *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

Blume, L. (2018). “The Powder Keg of Nicaraguan Politics.” *Intercontinental Cry*.

Blume, L. (2016). “¡Basta Ya! The United States is Overdue for a New Policy Approach in Honduras.” *International Affairs Review*.

Blume, L. (2015). “Chasing El Chapo.” *International Affairs Review*.

## Book Reviews

Blume, L. (2024). Book Review of *Narco Media: Latinidad, Popular Culture, and America's War on Drugs*, by Jason Ruiz. *Journal of Latin American Geography*.

Blume, L. (2023). Book Review of *Undermining the State from Within: The International Legacies of Civil War in Central America*, by Rachel A. Schwartz. *Perspectives on Politics*, forthcoming in December.

Blume, L. (2023). Book Review of *Drugs Wars and Covert Netherworlds: The Transformation of Mexico's Narco Cartels*, by James H. Creechan. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 22 (1): 170-173.

## Teaching Experience

Instructor, Department of Political Science, University of Nevada - Reno, 2020 - Present

Political Systems of Latin America (PSC407E)

Political Violence (PSC407Q/607Q)

The Drug War (PSC403Q/603Q)

Research Design in Political Science (PSC781)

Border Politics (PSC408/608F)

Problems in World Politics (PSC405F/605F)

Special Topics in Public Policy and Public Administration: The U.S. War on Drugs (PSC403Z)

Introduction to Comparative Politics (PSC211)

Public Service Internship (PSC490F)

International Affairs Internship (IAFF 350)  
Instructor, Department of Political Science, Boston University, 2016 - 2020  
The Politics of the Drug War (PO300)  
Introduction to American Politics (PO111)  
Graduate Teaching Fellow, Department of Political Science, Boston University, 2014 - 2019  
Introduction to American Politics (PO111)  
Introduction to Public Policy (PO141)  
Introduction to Comparative Politics (PO151)

## Invited Talks & Guest Lectures

“Governance and Violence in Latin American Migration,” Invited Speaker on Roundtable, Kansas University, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, November 2024, *Virtual*

International workshop on “Targeted violence against social activists: data, patterns, and cases,” Hosted by Goethe University Frankfurt, in cooperation with the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and the research center Transformations of Political Violence (TraCe), July 2024, Frankfurt, Germany

“Modern Security Challenges in Latin America,” Guest Lecture, National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School, May 2024, *Virtual*

“Special Topics in Latin American Studies: Sex, Drugs, Tourism, & Migration,” Guest Lecture, University of Kansas, May 2024, *Virtual*

Extra-Legal Governance in Global Perspective conference, Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Brown University, October 2023, Providence, RI

“The Politics of Drug-Trafficking Violence in Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica,” Programa de Política de Drogas, CIDE (Mexico), y la Revista Nexos, October 2022, *Virtual*

“Comparative Ethnography & Fieldwork,” Guest Lecture, Boston University, October 2022, *Virtual*

“The Art of Trafficking,” Boston University Center for Latin American Studies, May 2022, Boston, MA

“Illicit Economies and Violence in Central America,” Guest Lecture, Barnard College/Columbia University, November 2021, *Virtual*

“Drug Trafficking & Immigration,” Guest Lecture, Boston University, April 2021, *Virtual*

“Confronting Legacies of Policing and Violence,” Thought on Tap Series, University of Nevada Reno, December 2020, *Virtual*

“Fieldwork on Criminology and Conflict,” Workshop at the Peace Science Society, November 2020, *Virtual*

“Field Research and Ethnography,” Guest Lecture, Boston University, October 2020, *Virtual*

“Violence, Organizations and Political Psychology in Latin America,” Symposium hosted by the Stanford University Center for Latin American Studies, November 2018, Palo Alto, CA

“Violence against Politicians: Theories, Data, and Implications,” Exploratory Seminar at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, October 2018, Cambridge, MA

## Conference Presentations

Southern Political Science Association, January 2025, San Juan, Puerto Rico

American Political Science Association, September 2024, Philadelphia, PA

Latin American Studies Association, June 2024, Bogotá, Colombia

Midwest Political Science Association, April 2024, Chicago, IL

Northeastern Political Science Association, November 2023, Boston, MA

Midwest Political Science Association, April 2023, Chicago, IL  
Illicit Economics and Extra-Legal Actors Conference, October 2022, San Diego, CA  
Latin American Studies Association, May 2022, *Virtual*  
American Political Science Association, September 2021, Seattle, WA  
Latin American Studies Association, May 2021, *Virtual*  
Red de Estudios Sobre Drogas en América Latina, May 2021, *Virtual*  
Western Political Science Association, April 2021, *Virtual*  
American Political Science Association, September 2020, *Virtual*  
Northeastern Political Science Association, November 2019, Philadelphia, PA  
American Political Science Association, August 2019, Washington DC  
Latin American Studies Association, May 2019, Boston, MA  
Western Political Science Association, April 2019, San Diego, CA  
Midwest Political Science Association, April 2019, Chicago, IL  
American Political Science Association, September 2018, Boston, MA  
Latin American Studies Association, May 2018, Barcelona, Spain  
American Political Science Association, September 2017, San Francisco, CA  
Southwest Council of Latin American Studies, March 2017, Campeche, Mexico  
Northeastern Political Science Association, November 2016, Boston, MA  
Midwest Political Science Association, April 2016, Chicago, IL  
New England Council of Latin American Studies, November 2015, Medford, MA  
Western Political Science Association, April 2015, Las Vegas, NV  
New England Council of Latin American Studies, November 2014, Storrs, CT  
Midwest Political Science Association, April 2014, Chicago, IL  
International Consortium for Social Development, July 2013, Kampala, Uganda

## **Additional Research Works in Progress**

“Scapegoats or Perpetrators? How Narco-State Relations Explain Patterns of Violence,” solo-authored paper to be presented at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting in April 2025 and the Latin American Studies Association conference in May 2025.

“Love and Resistance on the Margins: Rural Women and the War on Drugs,” coauthored paper with Jeffrey Griffin (UNR) to be presented at the AMEI-ISA Joint International Conference 2025 in Oaxaca, Mexico.

“Who Killed Carolina? Explaining Assassinations of Honduran Public Figures,” coauthored paper with Julia Johnson (UNR), Laura Otero (UNR), Diana Meza, and Piper Heath. Paper to be presented at the Southern Political Science Association meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in January 2025.

“Conceptualizing and studying the killing of public figures: Towards an integrated research agenda,” Proposal for an *International Studies Review* forum organized by Juan Albarracín (University of Illinois Chicago) & Jonas Wolff (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt), with contributions from Matthew Krain (College of Wooster), Amanda Murdie (University of Georgia), Philippe Le Billon (University of British Columbia, Canada), Fran Lambrick (Not1More, UK), Mary Menton (Heriot-Watt University, UK), Felipe Milanez (Federal University of Bahia, Brazil), Raione Lima (Pastoral Land Commission – CPT, Brazil), & Mala San (Not1More, Cambodia).

“Cataloguing Murder: Tracking Violence Against Public Figures in Central America,” coauthored paper with Lauren Harvey (Rice University), Angelica Posadas, Diana Meza, and Piper Heath. Working paper.

“Reconsidering the Assassin’s Gambit: Factions, Violence, and the Assassination of Political Leaders,” coauthored paper with Robert Ostergard (UNR) and Susanne Martin (UNR).

“Titling Lands and Trafficking Cocaine: An Analysis of Territorial Governance on Narco-State Relations,” coauthored paper with Laura Sauls (George Mason University).

“Who is Left to Fight for Us? Migration, Militarization, and Violence Against Defenders,” coauthored book chapter with Virginia Weitzel, Amanda Vaskov, Daniel Guerrero Napoles, and Millie Sanchez Torres.

## **Service to the Profession**

Reviewer: American Political Science Review; American Journal of Political Science; Journal of Conflict Resolution; Comparative Political Studies; Journal of Politics; Latin American Politics and Society; Latin American Research Review; Journal of Illicit Economies and Development; Information, Communication and Society; Social Inclusion; Politics & Gender; Journal of Latin American Geography; International Journal of Drug Policy; Political Geography; World Development

Co-organizer of the Illicit Economies and Extra-Legal Actors Conference, hosted by the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California San Diego, 2022

Giovanni Sartori Book Award Committee, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research Section, American Political Science Association, 2022

Co-organizer of the mini conference on “The Politics of Illicit Economies, Organized Crime, and Extra-Legal Actors” at the American Political Science Association, 2021

Co-organizer of the roundtable on “Complex Interactions among Global Illicit Supply Chains” at the Latin American Studies Association, 2021

## **University Service**

Graduate Committee, Political Science Department, UNR, 2024 - Present

Pack Research Experience Program (PREP) Mentor, UNR, Spring 2022, Fall 2023 – Present

Nevada Undergraduate Research Award (NURA) faculty mentor, UNR, 2022 – Present

Panelist for Thought on Tap, “Provide for the Common Defense,” Core Humanities, UNR, February 2023

Bilinski Fellowship Committee, UNR, 2021

Webinar Organizer and Panel Chair, “Criminal Governance in the COVID-19 Era”, Second Tuesdays with Political Science, UNR, February 2021

Diversity Committee, Political Science Department, UNR, 2020 – 2022

Panelist for Thought on Tap, “Confronting Legacies of Policing and Violence,” Core Humanities, UNR, December 2020

Graduate Student Organizer, Research in Comparative Politics Workshop, Boston University, 2019

Workshop Leader at BUnited Student Diversity Conference, Boston University, 2019

## **Volunteer Work**

Expert Witness in Immigration Court, Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, 2022 – Present

Website Design, Alternativas y Oportunidades, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 2016

President of Amnesty International at Simmons College, Boston, MA, 2010-2013

English Tutor, Brazilian Women’s Center, Allston, MA, 2011

## **Skills & Miscellaneous**

Languages: English (native), Spanish (proficient), Patois/English Creole (conversational)

Computing: R, STATA, Excel