

**GEORGE I. BLANKSTEN (1917-2001) PAPERS, 1952-2002**

**Series 11/3/22/8**

**Boxes 1-2**

**Biography**

George I. Blanksten, Latin America expert and political science professor, was born in Chicago on September 19, 1917. He received his B.A. (1939) and M.A. (1940) from the University of Chicago and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1949. His dissertation, on Ecuadorian constitutional problems, was published in 1951 as *Ecuador: Constitutions and Caudillos*. Throughout his career, his interests lay in comparative politics and in the political and economic issues facing underdeveloped countries.

Prior to joining Northwestern University, Blanksten was an Instructor at Chicago Public Junior Colleges, 1940-42. He served as a political analyst for the Office of the U.S. Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (1942-44) and for the Department of State (1944-46). He started his career at Northwestern as an Instructor in 1947, became a full professor in 1957, and chaired the Political Science Department in 1956-57, 1963-64, and 1965-70. He taught courses in comparative politics, the politics of Latin America, and political analysis. With Professor Barry Farell, Blanksten also taught the relationships among Canada, the United States, and Central and Latin America. He organized an Institute on Latin America in 1962 (geared at training high-school teachers) and chaired a 1964 conference on comparative and international politics. Blanksten held visiting professorships at several universities nationwide and in Mexico. He retired from Northwestern University in 1988.

Blanksten took a number of research trips to the countries of Latin America and was the author of many books and journal articles on Latin American politics and economies. A Ford Foundation Fellowship, granted to Blanksten in 1959, allowed him to pursue research in the United States on the relationship between economic development and political change in underdeveloped countries. In the early 1960s, he chaired an Advisory Committee of the National Academy of Science's National Research Council, advising the U.S. Army Research Office on "Project Camelot," which considered social scientists as trainers for military personnel, helping them understand those "indigenous cultures" that were susceptible to the influences of insurgent (anti-American) factions. As a result of this involvement, he was called upon to testify before the United States Senate in 1967 about the advisability of establishing a National Foundation for the Social Sciences. In 1967-68, Blanksten chaired the coordinating committee of the National Council for Freedom and Democracy in Greece, which worked to restore Andreas Papandreou's position as President of Greece. He also served as a Peace Corps instructor.

George Blanksten died on December 31, 2001 in Glenview, Illinois.

**Description of the Series**

The George Blanksten Papers fill two archival boxes and span the years 1952 to 2002, with the bulk of the papers falling between 1960 and 1976. The papers provide an overview of Blanksten's career at Northwestern University and of his contribution as a consultant/Latin America expert to the U.S. government during that time.

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**Biographical materials** include C.V.s, obituaries, clippings and press releases.

Spanning the years 1960 to 1973, **Correspondence** is arranged chronologically. Included are letters and a few memos. The majority of the letters is outgoing and concerns an Institute on Latin America to be held at Northwestern University in 1962.

Most of Blanksten's **Non-Northwestern University Activities**—such as his Ford Foundation Fellowship and his consultation work for the U.S. government—are documented by a few reports and memoranda. Records include a report on his expenditures and activities relating to his 1959-60 Ford Foundation Fellowship in Economic Development and Administration; a research concept paper, meeting minutes, and report on “Project Camelot,” circa 1964; and a copy of Blanksten's 1967 testimony before a U.S. Senate sub-committee on government research. More fully documented is his involvement in the National Council for Freedom in Democracy in Greece in 1969-70. Materials include copies of outgoing correspondence, such as a form letter seeking support from faculty and political leaders. Incoming correspondence includes a response to the appeal from Hubert H. Humphrey. There are also articles (two in French), an agenda, transcripts from radio interviews and notes. A memo from Blanksten to NU president Robert Strotz recommends against allowing a planned anti-Papandreou student protest.

Blanksten's **Speeches/Addresses/Papers** include a transcript of a 1952 appearance on Northwestern's “Reviewing Stand” radio program and typescripts of papers delivered before the American Political Science Association. One undated paper is based on Blanksten's Ford Foundation Fellowship research.

**Publications** include a copy of a 1962 booklet, aimed at high school/college-age students, on *The United States' Role in Latin America*, as well as a number of offprints of Blanksten's articles from books, journals, and conference proceedings, dating between 1952 and 1973. One article is a 1966 Spanish translation of a paper on “Local Government in a Rising Technology” originally delivered at the APSA in 1964 (see Speeches/Addresses/Papers). Two undated book reviews and a typescript article for the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences on “Latin-American Political Thought” are also included.

The **Teaching Files**, as a whole, are rather bare with only a few documents per folder. The dated material spans 1960-1983. The lecture notes are handwritten, from unidentified classes and undated. Some are written in Spanish. Teaching files are arranged by department and then by class number.

**Student Survey: Political Science C95**, 1960-65, contains student name, local address grades received on other political science courses and approximate grade point average.

**Student Examinations**, 1975-76, are graded test essays for Latin American Politics C34 and Political Science C35. There are also loose sheets of papers in the back that may be student notes or the essays continued from the blue/yellow books onto regular paper.

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**Student Papers, Ph.D. Proposals/Doctoral Exams/Questionnaires** span the years 1966–1970. They are arranged by department, then by class number. Within each folder they are arranged by date and then by student's surname.

**Dictated letters, proposals, reports** are on blue microgroove phonograph records made of a thin floppy plastic. While several of these are unidentified, others retain notations that they contain letters to Latin American Institute participants (January 23, 1962), a Latin American Proposal (May 1962) and a Ford Report (June 1, 1962).

**Provenance:** The George Blanksten Papers comprise three accessions: Accession No. 88-245, transferred to the University Archives by the University Library Gifts and Exchanges Department on October 17, 1988; Accession No. 93-42, separated from the R. Barry Farrell Papers (donated to the Archives on April 4, 1993 as Accession No. 92-109); and Accession No. 82-95, transferred from the Archives Biographical Files.

**Restrictions:** Student papers may be only consulted with the permission of the University Archivist.

**Separations:** Four inches of duplicate and extraneous materials were discarded. Course syllabi, bibliographies, and exam questions for Blanksten's courses were transferred to the University Archives' Political Science Department General Files.

**Processor:** Denise E. Ard; March 4, 2002.

**Reformatted by:** Rachel C. Teuer; July 12, 2004.

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Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Biographical Materials	1953-2002
	2	Correspondence	1960-1973, n.d.
NON-NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES			
	3	Ford Foundation Fellowship	1959-1960
	4	“Project Camelot” (U.S. Army Research Office)	1964-1965
	5	Testimony (before U.S. Senate) for Establishment of National Foundation for the Social Science s	1967
	6	National Council for Freedom and Democracy in Greece (Andreas Papandreou libel suit)	1967-1969, n.d.
	7	Speeches/Addresses/Papers	1952-1966, n.d.
	8	Publications: Offprints, articles, book reviews	1952-1973, n.d.
	9	Publications: <i>The United States’ Role in Latin America</i>	1962
	10	Teaching Files: Political Science C34	1964-83, n.d.
	11	Teaching Files: Political Science C39	1962-64, n.d.
	12	Teaching Files: Political Science C95	1960-64. n.d.
	13	Teaching Files: Political Science D51	1964-76. n.d.
	14	Teaching Files: Lecture Notes: Unidentified Class	n.d.
	15	Student Survey: Political Science C95	1960-65, 1980
	16	Student Papers: Political Science C34	n.d.
	17	Student Papers: Political Science D51	1966
2	1	Student Papers: Political Science D51	1967
	2	Student Papers: Political Science D51	1969-70, n.d.
	3	Student Papers: Political Science D54	1966
	4	Student Papers: Political Science Honors C98	1970
	5	Student Examinations	1975-76
	6	Student Ph.D. Proposals/Doctoral Exams/Questionnaires	1968-69, n.d.
	7	Dictated letters, proposals, reports on floppy 6” microgroove phonograph records	1962