

Announcing Recipients of the Annual LeoGrande Prize and LeoGrande Award

American University's School of Public Affairs and Center for Latin American & Latino Studies are pleased to announce the 2016 recipients of the William M. LeoGrande Prize for the best book on U.S.-Latin American relations, and the William M. LeoGrande Award for the best scholarly book or article on Latin American or Latino Studies published by a member of the American University community, for 2015–2016.

Aragorn Storm Miller, recent Ph.D. and Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Texas, is this year's winner of the LeoGrande Prize. With this prize Dr. Miller is recognized for his book, *Precarious Paths to Freedom: The United States, Venezuela, and the Latin American Cold War* (University of New Mexico Press, 2016). Dr. Miller's book is an outstanding and well-researched piece of scholarship that unpacks the U.S.-Venezuelan relationship during the 1950s and 1960s, in the context of the Cold War as it played out in Latin America. Dr. Miller's book addresses an important gap in this story by at once demonstrating Venezuela's critical role in determining U.S. strategy toward the region during a crucial phase of the Cold War, and in helping to cultivate a pro-U.S. Latin America, but also by showing how this relationship formed part of a more complex set of regional interactions and contests that included Trujillo's Dominican Republic and Castro's Cuba. Miller's work, furthermore, addresses important arguments about the relative ideological versus pragmatic sources of U.S. conduct during the Cold War, and the often debated results of democracy promotion efforts in the hemisphere. He convincingly shows how ideology eventually gave way to an inclination to preserve order, which coincided with efforts to advance liberal democracy, as the best way to ensure America's interests.

Austin Hart, Assistant Professor of Quantitative Methods and Coordinator of the Graduate Methods Program, in AU's School of International Service, is the 2016 recipient of the LeoGrande Award. Professor Hart receives the award for his book, *Economic Voting: A Campaign-Centered Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), which uses innovative methodological contributions to address a major question in the social science of voting behavior: the influence of an economy's performance on how a person votes. Hart's study foregrounds the kinds of influence candidates can exercise through campaign messaging, convincingly demonstrating the role of priming in political communication. He is able to show how the choices that candidates make, and effective priming, allow winning candidates to capitalize on economically favorable periods and to minimize the negative effects of economic downturns. Deftly combining economic voting theory with cognitive-psychological research on priming, Hart shows how effective economic messaging was a key to the surprising victory of Felipe Calderón in Mexico's 2006 presidential election, in contrast to the election of Vicente Fox in 2000, a conclusion that constructively complicates conventional wisdom about voting behavior in Latin America.

The William M. LeoGrande Award and the The William M. LeoGrande Prize were established in 2012 to honor William M. LeoGrande's tenure as Dean of American University's School of Public Affairs from 2003 to 2012. The endowed award was made possible through the financial support of alumni, friends, and colleagues of Professor LeoGrande. One of the world's most accomplished scholars in Latin American politics and U.S. foreign policy, Professor LeoGrande continues to serve as a professor of government at American University.