

This course is an introduction to contemporary Mexican politics. The goals for this course are (1) to apply the analytical tools learned in this course to other countries or research areas and (2) to develop your analytical and writing skills. The plan of the course is divided in four sections. First, we will review of the history of the country since the Mexican revolution. Second, we will learn about the most important political institutions and parties in the country. Third, we will learn about the role of election in the democratic development of the country. Finally, we will discuss some of the most important challenges Mexico faces nowadays. Although helpful, no previous knowledge of Mexican politics is required.

**Format**

We will meet twice a week for the duration of the semester. There are assigned readings for each lecture, and students are expected to come to each class having read all the required material. Class lectures are not a substitute for the readings or vice versa. The material from lectures and readings will be complemented with film sessions and a collective blog for the course.

**Course Requirements**

**Reading Exams:** There will be a exam at the beginning of Wednesday session. Each exam will consist on two questions based on the readings assigned for the week. There will not be trick questions and the answers will be obvious for those who read the material. Exams missed due to absences or late arrival cannot be made up. When estimating your final grade, I will drop out your three lowest scores, and the average of your remaining scores is worth 40% of your final grade.

**Blog posts:** The blog for the course is located at <http://politicsofmexico.tumblr.com>. The purpose of the blog is to discuss current issues in Mexico that cannot be extensively discussed in class. Each student is required to post two op-eds during the semester. Each op-ed should focus to a contemporary problem or contingent event in Mexico and should demonstrate the student's ability to apply readings and topics from the course. Posts should amount 1000 words. The schedule for posting and additional guidelines will be discussed the first day of class. Each op-ed is worth 22.5% of your final grade. You also need to submit the initial draft of your first post a week before it is due. This draft is worth 5% of your grade.

**Participation:** Class participation means that you are fully present during lectures, group presentations and other class activities. This entails offering relevant and informed insights, keeping competing conversations with classmates to a minimum, and refraining from use of electronic devices. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences.

**Grading**

Op-eds	$2 \times 22.5\% + 5\% = 50\%$
Quizzes	40%
Participation	10%
Total	100%

Final letter grades will be calculated in an absolute scale as follows: A (94-100%), A- (90-93%), B+ (87-89%), B (84-86%), B- (80-83%), C+ (77-79%), C (74-76%), C- (70-73%), D+ (67-69%), D (64-66%), D- (60-63%), F (0-59%).

**Electronic Devices**

Use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices is not allowed during class. Using laptops in class has detrimental effects for students,<sup>1</sup> and they distract others students around and myself. If you feel that your learning will be hampered by not having access to your laptop for note-taking or other legitimate purposes, please sit at the back row of the room. However, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation without notice if you do use electronic devices to engage in distracting behavior during class time.

### **Deadlines and extensions**

Unless very pressing (and fully documented) situations, extensions are not allowed. There are no make-up essays or quizzes.

### **Disabilities**

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, the University of Houston strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them.

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both me after you contacted the Center for Students with DisAbilities (CSD).<sup>2</sup>

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (<http://www.uh.edu/caps>) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.<sup>3</sup>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the honor pledge that will be provided the first day of class. There will be a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism in any of the required activities for this course, and any violation will be penalized in the terms cited by the UH's Academic Dishonesty Policy.<sup>4</sup> Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Feel free to consult with me before submitting your essay if you have concerns about the correct way to reference the work of others.

### **Office Hours**

Friday 2:30-3:30 p.m. at 429 Philip Guthrie Hoffman Hall. If you cannot make it at that time, please send me an e-mail to schedule a meeting outside those hours.

### **Teaching Assistant**

Paul Johnson ([pjohnson7@uh.edu](mailto:pjohnson7@uh.edu)). Office hours: Wednesday 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at 426 Philip Guthrie Hoffman Hall.

### **Readings**

The course requires the following textbook:

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York.

The rest of the readings are available on Blackboard. Please let me know if you have any economic restriction that may prevent you from obtaining the course material.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/05/16/why-smart-kids-shouldnt-use-laptops-in-class/>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.uh.edu/csd/>

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html)

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/\\_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf](http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf)

## **I. Mexico before 1982**

### **January 22. Logistics and Introduction of the Course**

No reading assigned.

### **January 24. The Mexican Revolution**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 25-43

Brandenburg, F. (1964). *The Making of Modern Mexico*. Prentice Halls, Englewood Cliffs: 47-58

### **January 29. The Revolutionary Legacy**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 43-53

Brandenburg, F. (1964). *The Making of Modern Mexico*. Prentice Halls, Englewood Cliffs: 58-78

### **January 31. Political Order**

**Read:**

Smith, P. H. (1979). *Labyrinths of Power: Political Recruitment in Twentieth-Century Mexico*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ: 242-277

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 128-130

"Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?" (NPR) <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687>

### **February 5. From Boom to Bust**

**Read:**

Haber, S., Klein, H. S., Maurer, N., and Middlebrook, K. J. (2008). *Mexico Since 1980*. Cambridge University Press, New York: 20-48, 54-65

## **II. Political Institutions**

### **February 7. The Executive Branch**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 189-196

Weldon, J. A. (1997). Political Sources of Presidentialismo in Mexico. In Mainwaring, S. and Shugart, M. S., editors, *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press:225-258

## **February 12. The Legislative Branch**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 196-202
- Casar, M. A. (2016). Parliamentary agenda setting in Latin America: The case of Mexico. In Alemán, E. and Tsebelis, G., editors, *Legislative Institutions and Lawmaking in Latin America*. Oxford University Press, New York:148-174

## **February 14. The Judicial Branch**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 202-208
- Edmonds-Poli, E. and Shirk, D. (2011). *Contemporary Mexican Politics*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD, 2 edition: 303-324

## **February 19. Federalism**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 208-214
- Beer, C. (2017). Making abortion laws in Mexico: Salience and autonomy in the policymaking process. *Comparative Politics*, 50(1):41–59

## **February 21. The Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI)**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 253-255
- Langston, J. (2017). *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI, 1982-2012*. Oxford University Press, New York: 90-105

## **February 26. The National Action Party (PAN)**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 246-249
- Wuhs, S. T. (2014). The Partido Acción Nacional as a right party. In Luna, J. P. and Rovira Kaltwasser, C., editors, *The Resilience of the Latin American Right*, pages 219–241. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore

## **February 27. First Blog Post Draft is Due at Midnight**

## **February 28. Writing Center Session**

## **March 5. The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA)**

### **Read:**

- Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 249-253
- Bruhn, K. (2012). The PRD and the Mexican left. In Camp, R. A., editor, *The Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics*, pages 187–209. Oxford University Press

### **March 6. First Blog Post is Due at Midnight**

### **March 7. Film: La Ley de Herodes**

## **III. Elections and Democratization**

### **March 19. Elections under a single-party regime**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 220-225

Preston, J. and Dillon, S. (2004). *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*. Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York: 149-180

### **March 21. Democracy through the ballot box**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 226-232

Greene, K. F. (2007). *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, New York: 210-254

### **March 26. 2006**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 232-240

Lawson, C. (2007). How did we get here? Mexican democracy after the 2006 elections. *Political Science and Politics*, 40(1):45-48

### **March 28. 2012**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 240-246

Domínguez, A. D. and Moreno, A. (2015). Effects of #YoSoy132 and social media in Mexico's 2012 presidential campaign. In Domínguez, J. I., Greene, K. F., Lawson, C., and Moreno, A., editors, *Mexico's Less Than Perfect Democracy: A Comparative Study of the 2012 Elections*, pages 227-251. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD: 227-241

### **April 2. The 2018 Presidential Election (I): The Electorate**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 82-111

### **April 4. The 2018 Presidential Election (II): The Campaign**

**Read:**

Readings TBD

## **IV. Political Economy of Contemporary Mexico**

### **April 9. Economic Stagnation**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 295-307

Hanson, G. H. (2010). Why isn't Mexico rich? *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48(4):987-1004

### **April 11. Poverty and Inequality**

**Read:**

Esquivel, G. (2015). Extreme inequality in Mexico: Concentration of economic and political power. Technical report, OXFAM

### **April 16. Race and ethnicity**

**Read:**

Trejo, G. and Altamirano, M. (2016). The Mexican color hierarchy. How race and skin tone still define life chances 200 years after independence. In Hooker, J. and Tillery, A., editors, *Task Force on Racial and Class Inequalities in the Americas*, pages 3-16. American Political Science Association, Washington D.C

### **April 18: Political Culture**

**Read:**

Camp, R. A. (2014). *Politics in Mexico*. Oxford University Press, New York: 59-81

Oppenheimer, A. (1996). *Bordering Chaos*. Little, Brown & Company, New York: 263-275

### **April 23. Violence (I)**

**Read:**

Trejo, G. and Ley, S. (Forthcoming). Why did drug cartels go to war in Mexico? Subnational party alternation, the breakdown of criminal protection, and the onset of large-scale violence. *Comparative Political Studies*

### **April 25. Violence (II)**

**Read:**

Calderón, G., Robles, G., Díaz-Cayeros, A., and Magaloni, B. (2015). The beheading of criminal organizations and the dynamics of violence in Mexico's drug war. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(8):1455-1485

### **April 30. Writing Center Session**

### **May 7. Second Blog Post is Due at Midnight**

## Op-ed

An Op-ed is a brief essay in a newspaper or magazine that expresses the personal opinion of an independent author. Along this semester, you will write two Op-eds that will be posted in course blog. Each Op-ed should focus on a contingent issue related to Mexican politics. Posts should amount 1000 words. The submission schedule and additional guidelines will be discussed the first day of class.

### Instructions:

- Choose an issue that you care about.
- Take seriously the challenge of adding something new to the public conversation, something you would like to have people read.
- Unfortunately, 1000 words are seldom enough to solve any world's problem. Nevertheless, you can present a single point in a clear and persuasive way. The message you try to explain should be summarized in no more than two sentences.
- Hook the reader since the beginning getting to the point as fast as possible and persuading the reader that it is worth to spend more time reading your text.
- At the end of every paragraph you should tell readers why they should care about your point.
- Go beyond a simple analysis and propose a solution or recommendation.

Think about where you want to see it in print. As a suggestion, look for an op-ed you find interesting. Mentally annotate that editorial, looking for such aspects as an opening hook, placement of thesis statement, length of sentences, and the closing punch line. Consider the intended audience of the publication and the way in which your op-ed reaches that demographic. For excellent tips on writing in a clear and concise way for publishing take a look at The Economist's style guide: <http://www.economist.com/styleguide/introduction>.

### Rubric:

Content	6 points
Organization	6 points
Style	5 points
Mechanics	5 points
Introduction	4 points
Sources	4 points
<b>Writing Center Meeting</b>	<b>4 points</b>
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 34 points