Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 4:00 PM – 5:50 PM, Perloff 1102
Course Website: https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/17F-POLSCI154A-1
Instructor: Jesse Acevedo
Email: jesseacevedo@ucla.edu
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:
This course examines the politics of Mexico and the five Central American Republics (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica). The beginning of the course will be about Mexican politics from the Revolution to the present. Afterwards, we will cover Central American Politics from the 1930s to the present. The final couple weeks of the course will be about contemporary issues these countries face. We will identify and analyze the evolution of key political institutions and how they shape politics in the region. This course will also cover relevant issues such as economic globalization, migration, rising drug and gang violence, and the role of the United States.

Grading
Your grade will be based on two in-class exams, a take-home final exam, and a geography quiz. The final grade of the course is composed of weighing each exam based on performance. The highest score of the three exams will make up the highest percentage of the overall grade. Your lowest score will have the lowest percentage of the final grade. I do not provide extra credit.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Geography Quiz</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1: Mexico</td>
<td>October 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2: Central America</td>
<td>November 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final Exam</td>
<td>Due Finals Week</td>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Geography Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowest Scored Exam</td>
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<td>Median Scored Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest Scored Exam</td>
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Exam Policy
Please contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) as soon as possible if you have any conditions that require special accommodation for the exams. Please note the exam dates. If you are involved in sports or other official campus activities, please send me the appropriate documentation in advance. If you are ill, please provide a doctor’s note. We will reschedule the make-up exam within 7 days from the original date.

University policies regarding plagiarism and academy honesty apply to this course. If in doubt about something, ask an instructor. I will refer to the Dean of Students in the case cheating is suspected.

For grade disputes, please send an email explaining the parts of the exam that are in question and these will be the only parts of the exam that will be re-evaluated.

CLASS SCHEDULE & READINGS

Week 0

September 28: Course Introduction. Mexico and Central America after Independence

MEXICAN POLITICS

Week 1

October 3: Introducing Mexico & The Mexican Revolution
  • Edmonds-Poli, Emily, and David A. Shirk. Contemporary Mexican Politics. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Chapter 1 (20-31) and Chapter 2

October 5: Institutions and Parties
  • Edmonds-Poli, Emily, and David A. Shirk. Contemporary Mexican Politics. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Chapters 6 (all), 7 (pages 117-127)

Week 2

October 10: PRI and Single Party Dominance
October 12: **The Fall of the PRI and Democratization**
- Greene, Kenneth F. *Why dominant parties lose: Mexico's democratization in comparative perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. **Chapter 7 (READ 210-222, 252-254, the rest is optional)**

**Week 3**

October 17: **“Democratic” Politics in Mexico**
- Edmonds-Poli, Emily, and David A. Shirk. Contemporary Mexican Politics. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. **Chapters 5**

October 19: **Mexico Today and the Upcoming Election.**
- 2018 Election (to be determined)

**Week 4**

***October 24: MEXICO EXAM***

**CENTRAL AMERICAN POLITICS**

October 26: **Introducing Central America**

**Week 5**

October 31: **Guatemala and Costa Rica – Opposite ends of the spectrum**
November 2: **Nicaragua and El Salvador – Repression and Revolution**

**Week 6**

November 7: **Nicaragua and El Salvador – End of conflict and democratization**

November 9: **Honduras and Central America Today – Challenges to Democracy**

**Week 7**

November 14: **The Role of the United States in Central America – Overlooked or Overblown?**

***November 16: CENTRAL AMERICA EXAM***

No class Week 8.

**Week 9**

November 28: **Migration – Why do people leave and what happens to the countries left behind?**
November 30: **Remittances – How do migrant wages affect the home country?**


**Week 10**

December 5: **Narcos – The evolution of organized crime and violence in Mexico**


December 7: **Maras – Street gangs and politics in Central America**

- The Economist: “The Tormented Isthmus”

***Finals Week: TAKE-HOME EXAM***