

PSCI 3205B
Mexican Politics

Wednesdays 11:35 am to 2:25 pm

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

PLEASE NOTE: As long as face-to-face classes at Carleton remain suspended because of COVID-19, this course will meet in a synchronous online format via Zoom. Please find access information on Brightspace.

Instructor: Laura Macdonald

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00 to 4:30 (on Brightspace – see signup sheet)

Email: Laura.Macdonald@carleton.ca

Phone: 613-520-2600 x 2771

Course Objectives:

- To analyse the historical development of Mexican politics;
- To analyse the political institutions and actors of contemporary Mexican politics;
- To evaluate the economic, political, and social challenges facing Mexico in the coming years;
- To analyse Mexico's relationship with the United States and Canada and its position in the North American region.

Course Description:

The purpose of the course is to provide an introduction to contemporary Mexican politics. We will examine the evolution of the country's political institutions, as well as the transformation of the country's economy and how these changes affect the lives of ordinary Mexicans. We will also focus on how Mexico interacts with the international system (particularly the influence of the United States). We will cover such issues as historical development, market reforms, the operations of the traditional authoritarian system and how it has been democratised, the development of the party system, indigenous and women's rights, migration, and Mexico's long-lasting drug war.

Mexico is going through a deeply challenging period with a new president (Andrés Manuel López Obrador or AMLO) elected with a resounding majority in the 2018 elections who has promised a fundamental transformation of the country's political and economic systems. The external environment continues to be difficult. Former US President Donald Trump engaged in various forms of intimidation and pressure on Mexico, including, the re-negotiation of NAFTA, the threat to build a wall at the US-Mexico border, and threats to increase tariffs if Mexico did not act to restrict Central American migrants travelling through Mexico from claiming asylum in the United States. With the election of Biden, external pressure has eased in some ways, but the U.S. continues to engage in protectionist policies and to contain migrants from reaching the U.S. border. Mexico has also suffered heavy losses from COVID-19, which has revealed many of the

country's inequalities and institutional weaknesses. High levels of violence and human rights violations persist, despite the new president's promises to restructure the system to reduce violence. This course provides fascinating insight into the factors behind these events. **Previous knowledge of Mexican politics is not required. The course is designed to be highly topical so short readings and guest speakers may be added in response to current events.**

Format: While we are in an on-line format, most of the course will be synchronous but will contain some asynchronous elements. This is a lecture class, but class participation is an essential part of the class. The first part of every class will begin with a lecture (initially on Zoom), to be followed by a video, guest lecture, group discussion and/or group presentations. **Student participation based on faithful reading of the required texts is essential.**

Classroom courtesy: Out of respect for all of those in class, all cell phones, pagers, and any other noisemaking devices must be turned OFF during the entire class period. Laptop computers may be used in class provided they do not distract those around you. Please do not use your laptop for non-academic purposes during class. I reserve the right to ask you to turn off and put away your computer if it is creating a disruption.

Course Materials: Course materials are available online through the course's Brightspace site. Please advise the instructor immediately if you encounter difficulties in obtaining the course materials.

The required text is:

Emily Edmonds-Poli and David A. Shirk, *Contemporary Mexican Politics*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, **4th edition.**

Course books are available from Octopus Books, located at 116 Third Avenue at Bank Street in the Glebe. Online orders can be placed at octopusbooks.ca/students for in-store pickup or shipping across Canada. For questions, please call 613-233-2589 or email octopus@octopusbooks.ca.

I will also regularly share news articles on current events in Mexico.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

Class participation and attendance:	15%
6 quizzes (on-line – I will drop the lowest mark of the 6)	15%
Group Presentation and report	10%
Final research essay (10-12 pages - due on-line March 30th)	30%
Take home exam (available on line April 12th, due on-line April 28th - based on course materials):	30%

See discussion of requirements below.

Late Policy

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the course outline. **Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 2% a day.** Please let me know in advance if you have a justifiable reason for an extension.

***Policies on Assignments:**

All assignments in this course (with the exception of the single-space annotation) must be 12 pt font, double-spaced and have standard one-inch margins. They should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. They must include appropriate citations and bibliography. Assignments that do not have any citations from academic sources will be returned to the student ungraded.

Students will be permitted to re-submit the paper, within a specified deadline, but an automatic 10% penalty will be levied.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 - January 12 - Introduction

Week 2 –January 19 - An Overview of Mexican History

Required:

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, chapters 1 and 2.

Video: “A People's History of the Mexican Revolution, La Revolución Mexicana”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6olifItvePo>

For those with extra interest in the revolution, this is a longer, more detailed documentary (not required):

“The Storm that Swept Mexico,” PBS video available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVWcgOcvgV0>.

Week 3 –January 26– The “Perfect Dictatorship” – Mechanisms of Semi-Authoritarian Rule

Required:

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, Chapter 3

Quiz 1 – January 28

Week 4 – February 2 – Mexican Political Economy - From Economic Nationalism to Neoliberalism

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Hepzibah Muñoz Martínez, Department of Political Science, University of New Brunswick, Saint John

Required:

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, chapter 10

Hepzibah Muñoz Martínez, *Uneven Landscapes of Violence: Geographies of Law and Accumulation in Mexico*, Introduction and Chapter 2 (pp. 1-50)

Quiz 2 – February 4**Week 5 –February 9 – Democratization, Human Rights, Civil Society****Required:**

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, Chapters 4, 9

Peter H. Smith, “Mexican democracy in comparative perspective,” in Roderic Ai Camp, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 77-97.

Amnesty International Annual Report Mexico 2021, available at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/north-america/mexico/report-mexico/>

Alma Guillermoprieto, “Mexico, The Murder of the Young” in *New York Review of Books*, January 8, 2015. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/01/08/mexico-murder-young/>

Week 6 –February 16 – Political Parties and Elections**GROUP 1 PRESENTS****Required:**

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, Chapters 5, 6, 7

Quiz 3 - February 18**February 23 - No class! WINTER BREAK****Week 7 – March 2 – Poverty and Human Rights****GROUP 2 PRESENTS****Required:**

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, Chapter 11.

Carlos Alberto Jiménez-Bandola, “Development in Southern Mexico: Empirical verification of the ‘Seven erroneous theses about Latin America’,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 45:2, 129-141.

Other resources:

UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, Addendum: Mission to Mexico” accessed at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/MXIndex.aspx>

Week 8 – March 9 –AMLO and the MORENA government

GROUP 3 PRESENTS

Required:

Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer and Kenneth F. Greene, “Is Mexico Falling into the Authoritarian Trap?” *Journal of Democracy*, 32: 4, 2021, 56-71.

Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer, “Mexico 2019: Personalistic Politics and Neoliberalism from the Left,” *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 40:2, 2020.

Nick Burns, “Mexico’s Opposition Searches for a Winning Message,” *Americas Quarterly*, November 11, 2021, Accessible at: <https://americasquarterly.org/article/mexicos-opposition-searches-for-a-winning-message/>

Nacha Cattan and Vernon Silver, “Mexico Forgets its COVID Crisis,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 15, 2021 Accessible at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-07-15/mexico-covid-crisis-amlo-government-s-response-ahead-of-delta-variant>

Quiz 4 – March 11

Week 9 – March 16 –Gender and Ethnicity

Guest speaker: Dr. Dolores Figueroa, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) **(by Zoom)**

Required:

Jennifer M. Piscopo, “Leveraging Informality, Rewriting Informal Rules: The Implementation of Gender Parity in Mexico,” in Georgina Waylen, *Gender and Informal Rules*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Holly Michelle Worthen, “Rights to the rescue? The promotion of Indigenous women’s political-electoral rights and the rise of the Mexican security state,” *Political Geography* 85, 2021.

Recommended:

Shannon Speed, “Rights at the Intersection: Gender and Ethnicity in Neoliberal Mexico,” in Shannon Speed et al, eds, R. Aída Hernández Castillo, and Lynn M. Stephen, *Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 203-221.

Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil, “Indigenous Rights, AMLO’s Wrongs,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 53:2, 2021, 118-120.

Annie Wilkinson, “Gender as Death Threat to the Family: How the ‘Security Frame’ Shapes Anti-Gender Activism in Mexico.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 23, no. 4 (August 8, 2021): 535–57. doi:10.1080/14616742.2021.1957974.

Week 10 – March 23 – Mexico-US relations and NAFTA/USMCA

GROUP 4 PRESENTS

Required:

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, chapter 13

Isidro Morales, “The shaky understanding between Mexico and the United States under the López Obrador administration: Will it be normalized?” *Latin American Policy*, 11:1, 175-187.

Kathleen Staudt, “How NAFTA has changed Mexico,” *Current History*. 117, 2018, 43-48.

Rebecca Watts (2019) NAFTA in the Time of AMLO, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 51:1, 9-12.

Recommended:

Gustavo Flores-Macías and Mariano Sánchez-Talanquer, “The Political Economy of NAFTA/USMCA,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1662>

Quiz 5 – March 25

Week 11 – March 30 – Drug Wars and the Rule of Law

FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY

GROUP 5 PRESENTS

Required:

Edmonds-Poli and Shirk, chapter 12.

Joel Salvador Herrera, “Cultivating Violence: Trade Liberalization, Illicit Labor, and the Mexican Drug Trade,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, 61:3 August 2019.

Video: “World’s Most Wanted,” BBC, Film on Demand:

http://fod.infobase.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=115662

Week 12 – April 6 - Migration and Border Politics

GROUP 6 PRESENTS

Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*, New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 1-37.

David FitzGerald and Rafael Alarcón, "Migration: Policies and Politics," in Peter H. Smith and Andrew Selee, eds., *Mexico and the United States: The Politics of Partnership*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 2013.

Guadalupe Chávez, "Undoing Trump-Era Policies is Not Enough to Transform the Immigration System," NACLA, 3/8/2021, Accessible at: <https://nacla.org/blog/2021/03/07/biden-amlo-immigration-mexico>

Recommended:

John Gramlich and Alissa Scheller, "What's Happening at the US-Mexico Border in 7 Charts," Pew Research Center, accessible at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/11/09/whats-happening-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-in-7-charts/>

Quiz 6 – April 8

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Evaluation Guidelines:

- A. Participation (15%):** Online/in person attendance in both lectures and tutorial groups is crucial for students to succeed in the course. **It is essential to do the required readings before the classes (which take place on Wednesdays) and quizzes (which take place on Fridays).** Participation can take the form of comments or questions relevant to the course materials. Your participation will be graded based on the frequency of your comments and questions, and how prepared you are for the discussion. I may call on people if you don't volunteer to participate. I will keep track of your attendance, which will count for 25% of your total participation grade. To facilitate discussion while we are in an on-line environment I will either divide the class into two groups and spend 45 minutes with each group in turn, or use breakout groups.
- B. 6 quizzes (25% total):** There will be **6 short quizzes** throughout the term to test your knowledge and understanding of course content. The quizzes will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short-answer questions. Your final grade will be based on your best results in 5 of them (the grades on the bottom one will be dropped or you can just write 5 if you are confident in your ability – I don't recommend doing this!). The quizzes will occur on Fridays and will cover course content from the period since the previous quiz (or since the beginning of term in the case of the first quiz).

Each quiz will contain a set of 5-7 questions, based on readings and lectures. You should be able to complete the whole quiz in 15-20 minutes. You can use your notes, lecture recordings, and readings, when answering the quiz. You will be able to access the quiz during a 13 hour window. **Once you access the quiz, you have 25 minutes to complete it.** I

recommend strongly that you complete all readings and attend all recorded lectures before starting the quiz.

Quizzes will be opened up on the following dates: January 28, February 4, February 18, March 11, March 25, April 8. The quizzes will be open for 13 hours between 9 a.m. and 10 pm on these dates.

- C. Group Presentation (10%) Dates of Presentations and group memberships will be arranged during the second class. You should come to the second class with your top two selections for topics. The first presentation will be on February 16th. See course schedule for other presentation dates (the presentation schedule may change depending on the number of people in the class)**

The group will be evaluated based on: success in covering diverse aspects of the issue under discussion; research; communication skills, and success in stimulating class participation in discussion. Your grade for this assignment will be based on a combination of three factors: grade for individual presentation; group mark, and group members' evaluation of their fellow group members (you will be asked to submit a grade for each of your fellow group members based on their contribution to the group effort, this evaluation will be confidential). I encourage you to be creative in designing a dynamic group presentation – you may want to consider using a debate format, powerpoints, multimedia, game show format, and/or handouts. **Speakers should not just read their presentations** but present material in an interesting fashion with lots of eye contact! But you should also ensure that you provide a thorough analysis of the issues under discussion.

NOTE: hopefully we will be back in person by the time presentations start but if not they will take place on Zoom – instructions to follow.

Written Summary:

Each group member is also required to submit a two-page summary (double-spaced) of their own oral presentation. This summary is due in the same class as your presentation. This summary will not be evaluated separately, it will help me assign a grade for your oral presentation.

- D. Final Research Paper (30%)**

Due Date: March 25th to be submitted online

Length: 10-12 pages, 12 point font, one inch margins.

Topic: You will write a research paper based on a topic related to the course material. I would **strongly recommend** that you discuss the topic for your paper with me in person.

Marking: The paper will be marked on three criteria:

Argument, organization and logic. Is the thesis presented in a logical and convincing manner?

Research and use of evidence: Does the paper contain extensive and effective use of available research sources? Does it contain proper footnotes/endnotes and bibliographic style?

Communication: Is the paper organized and written as clearly and concisely as possible?

Citation Style: You may use any recognized academic citation style as long as you are consistent and correct in your use of that style.

E. Take-Home examination. – Details to be provided later in the term.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Appendix

Covid-19 Information

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) When accessing campus you must fill in the [COVID-19 Screening Self-Assessment in cuScreen](#) each day before coming to campus. You must also check-in to your final destination (where you plan on being longer than 15 minutes) within a building using the [QR location code](#).

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more information, please visit carleton.ca/pmc.

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain

information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the University’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.