POSC 337: Mexican Politics

Course Syllabus

Fall 2013

Chapman University
Department of Political Science
Roosevelt Hall 101
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 628-2767

Instructor: Dr. Christina Wagner Faegri
Email: faegri@chapman.edu
Class meetings: Thursday, 4:00-6:45pm, Argyros Forum 206B
Office hours: Wed. 2:30-3:30pm; Thur. 2:30-3:30pm; by appointment
Skype hours: Mon. 8:00-9:00pm; by appointment (Skype name: Cfaegri)

Required Texts:

Catalog Description:
This course provides an overview of contemporary Mexican Politics. It uses Mexico as a case to examine prospects and challenges for democracy in the developing world more generally. While intended to provide substantive knowledge about Mexican politics, the course places Mexico in a broad comparative perspective, highlighting contrasts and communalities with the politics of other developing countries, particularly in Latin America. 3 credits. No prerequisites.

Department of Political Science Program Learning Outcomes:
We expect the following learning outcomes from our majors:

(Democratic Citizen)
1. Demonstrate an appreciation for the possibilities and responsibilities of national and global citizenship, including understanding opportunities for political
participation and an ability to use critically the many sources of information about politics to make political choices and solve political problems.

2. Identify political principles and theories connected with democratic citizenship.

3. Be able to use theoretical perspectives to identify and explain domestic and global political problems and the linkages among them.

(Critical Thinking)

4. Identify domestic and international policy issues facing the U.S and the world community and able to critically analyze policy choices.

5. Demonstrate the habit of accession sources of political knowledge and the skill to critically interpret, assess and apply evidence.

6. Apply rigorous criticism to all political ideas, principles, and be able to propose alternative paradigms.

(Research Skills)

7. Demonstrate writing component and carefully articulated empirical research papers and demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills regarding the study of politics.

8. Employ research skills including the ability to conceptualize a research question, formulate a testable research hypothesis, and apply relevant statistical techniques, and draw appropriate conclusions from their analysis.

(Theoretical and Practical Knowledge)

9. Students will differentiate political structures, institutions, and governing processes in the U.S and other countries.

10. Students will be trained as a new generation of leading political scientists who employ a clear understanding of current theoretical debates, cutting edge methodological techniques, and deep area of knowledge to answer important substantive questions in the world today.

Course learning outcomes:
A primary objective of this course is to introduce students to contemporary politics in Mexico. The first part of this course will discuss pivotal events in Mexico’s political history that have shaped contemporary politics, including the broader political consequences of key events that followed Mexican Independence and the formation of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), today known as the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Essential to contemporary Mexican politics, we will study its formation, rule and policies, as well as its demise in the 2000 election. We will furthermore discuss the debt crisis of the 1980s which marked a fundamental turning point in Mexico’s political and economic trajectories. With the abolishment of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and state-led development strategies, Mexico embarked upon a substantial reform agenda that resulted in radical economic changes. The last section of this course looks at how Mexico has
responded to the social and economic challenges such as poverty and inequality. We will end with a discussion of Mexico’s so-called war on drugs and look at how Mexico’s foreign relations have impacted national policy debates.

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<tr>
<th>A successful student of Mexican Politics (POSC 377) student will be able to:</th>
<th>Students will accomplish these objectives by:</th>
<th>Evident to Grade and Assess Student Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain the relevance of key political and economic developments in contemporary Mexico to each one of us and our immediate communities</td>
<td>Critically engaging in assigned course materials and lectures within their broader intellectual and political contexts</td>
<td>Classroom discussions, paper assignments, and an op-ed.</td>
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<td>Identify and illustrate basic principles and concepts in the study of political and economic reforms as relevant to contemporary Mexican politics</td>
<td>Illustrating critical concepts and expand on course specific material in their written work, group discussions, and other assignments</td>
<td>Classroom discussions, paper assignments, and an op-ed.</td>
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<td>Distinguish how the study of historical events can inform our ability to understand Mexican politics</td>
<td>Critically engaging the readings and lectures within their broader historical contexts</td>
<td>Classroom discussions, paper assignments, and an op-ed.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate ability to engage in critical analysis and construct clearly articulated arguments</td>
<td>Explaining and debating the causes and consequences of key political and economic events</td>
<td>Classroom discussions, paper assignments, and an op-ed.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate techniques to improve research and communication skills</td>
<td>Illustrate the material gained through assigned course material, lectures, classroom discussions and research for assignments</td>
<td>Classroom discussions, paper assignments, and an op-ed.</td>
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**Course content:**
The main topics covered in this course are:

- The formation of the PRI
- Policies and strategies of the PRI
- Debt crises and economic reform
- Transition to democracy
- The consolidation of democracy
- Political representation and party politics
- Poverty, inequality, and socio-economic exclusion and integration
- The creation of state-led social compensation programs
Instructional Strategies:
This course is designed around a series of lectures which introduce students to politics in contemporary Mexico. Each lecture is designed to build upon selected readings and supplemented with short segments of radio interviews and documentaries to provide a visual and more comprehensive understanding of Mexico’s economic and political challenges. These include segments from major news sources, interviews with policymakers provided by major international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and documentaries of key events in Latin America. Each class assignment – 2 short essays and an opinion piece – is designed to teach students to become effective communicators. To this end, students will learn to formulate arguments and corroborate their arguments using scholarly research and/or relevant data. A primary goal of these exercises is to introduce students to scholarly material. More specifically, students will learn to make a distinction between peer-reviewed articles, edited volumes, and monographs. Students will also learn to identify sources and learn practices essential to academic research.

Equity and Diversity
Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy: [http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination](http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination). Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in according with this policy.

Chapman University’s Academic Integrity Policy:
Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor and referral to the University’s Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University’s Policy on Academic Policy online: [http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/_files/academic-integrity-policy.pdf](http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/_files/academic-integrity-policy.pdf)

Chapman University’s Students with Disability Policy:
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services. If you need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be
utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 if you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

**Class Preparation and Attendance:**
Please note that each lecture will cover one week of material. Given that the class only meets once a week, you will be required to read twice as much for each class meeting. I recommend dividing the material into at least two study sessions so that you are able to read and comprehend the material assigned for each lecture. Attendance is mandatory and essential for your success in this course. Each lecture is designed to complement the assigned readings and both the midterm and the final will include material only covered in class.

**Exam Schedule and Grading:**

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<tr>
<th>Due dates and exams:</th>
<th>Course requirements</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 19, 2013</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Oct. 17, 2013</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 7, 2013</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21, 2013</td>
<td>Assignment 3 (Op-ed)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 12, 2013</td>
<td>Final exam (4:15-6:45pm)</td>
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**Exams and Assignments:**

- **Midterm exam:** The midterm will consist of key concepts, short answers, and an essay question.
- **Paper assignments:** There will be two 7-8 page paper assignments. Each of these papers should be built around the course content (that is, cite relevant class readings). Each paper should also incorporate at least 4 new sources from which at least one is from a peer reviewed journal and at least one from a book or chapter of an edited volume. Feel free to use interviews with policymakers, specialists, and academics in your assignments. Proper citations are required. Each paper should be developed around a clearly articulated argument and be professionally designed.
- **Op-ed:** You are to write an op-ed on a pressing topic in contemporary Mexico. Please refer to newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times for examples of how to construct a clearly articulated opinion piece.
Your argument should be backed up by relevant data and scholarly work. A list of sources consulted is required.

- Final exam: A closed-book final exam will be proctored according to university policy.

Weekly Schedule

Weeks 1 and 2: Thursday August 29/Thursday September 5 – Introduction to Mexican Politics: Economic Reform and Democratization

- In Haber et. al., Mexico since 1980
  - Chapter 1, pgs. 1-19
  - Chapter 2, pgs. 20-65

Week 3: Thursday September 12 - Creating Modern Mexico I

- In Bethell (ed.), Mexico since Independence
  - Chapter 4, pgs. 201-240

Week 4: Thursday September 19 – Creating Modern Mexico II – The Formation of the PRI

Note: Your first assignment is due in class at 4:00pm.

- In Bethell (ed.), Mexico since Independence
  - Chapter 5, pgs. 241-320

Week 5: Thursday September 26 – The PRI: Policies and Strategies

- In Bethell (ed.), Mexico since Independence.
  - Chapter 6, pgs. 320-396

Week 6: Thursday October 3 – Debt Crises and Economic Reform
- In Haber et al., Mexico since 1980
  - Chapter 3, pgs. 66-94

**Week 7: Thursday October 10 - The Demise of the PRI**
- In Haber et al., Mexico since 1980
  - Chapter 5, pgs. 123-160

**Week 8: Thursday October 17: Midterm Examination**
- Please bring bluebooks for your midterm

**Week 9: Thursday October 24 – Democratization and Democratic Consolidation**

**Week 10: Thursday October 31 – Political Representation and Political Parties**

**Week 11: Thursday November 7 – Political Representation Cont’d.: Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy in Contemporary Mexico**
*Note: Your second assignment is due in class at 4:00pm*

- In Haber et. al. Mexico since 1980
  - Chapter 6, pgs. 161-200.


**Week 12: Thursday November 14 – Mexico’s “War on Drugs”**

- Atlantic. After Six Years of Bloodshed, Mexico’s Drug War Shows Little Sign of Waning. May 2012. [Bb reading].

**Week 13: Thursday November 21 – Mexico’s Trade Strategies**

*Note: Your op-ed is due in class at 4:00pm*


**Thursday November 28: Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week 14: Thursday December 5 – Conclusion**

- In Haber et. al. Mexico since 1980
  - Chapter 7, pgs. 201-220.

**Week 15: Thursday December 12 – Final examination, 4:15pm-6:45pm**

- Please bring bluebooks for your final exam.