Course description
Mexico is one of the U.S.’s most important political, economic, and strategic allies. The history of both nations is inherently intertwined, and thus bears a unique combination of characteristics unseen in the rest of the world. This course will explore Mexico’s idiosyncratic political identity and the distinctive ways in which the U.S. has shaped it. We will explore critical debates between the two countries such as immigration policy, transnational crime, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Our goal is to discover the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, in all its complexities, debunking cartoonish stereotypes.

Skills to be developed
Students will be required to critically engage with qualitative and quantitative academic literature, identifying the implicit assumptions, veiled ideology, or measurement choices that drive U.S. Mexico relations. By the end of this course, students will be able to elucidate the scholarly theories behind the main challenges of U.S.-Mexico relations, and know how to analyze and evaluate policies on areas such as trade, immigration, illegal drug trafficking, and national security.

Attendance
Summer School policy requires attending all classes. Each missed class without medical excuse reduces grades by 8 points (out of a total of 100). Visit Summer School policies around Student Responsibilities to learn more. No exceptions can be granted.

Structure
Introduction (1 session).
Part I. Historical roots of U.S.-Mexico Relations (2 sessions).
Part II. U.S.-Mexico Trade (2 sessions).
Part III. Illegal Drug Trafficking (2 sessions).
Part IV. Immigration (3 sessions).
Part V. Homeland Security and the Border (1 session).
Wrapping up (1 session).

Required materials
To succeed in this course, you must read the required readings before class. In each class, I will generally tell you a bit about how to prepare for the next class. Expect to read a maximum of 120 pages per week.
All required materials have been uploaded to our website and will remain there for the length of the course. In addition, you will have a list of optional (not required) additional readings that provide you with further knowledge and alternative interpretations of the topics we study. You do not have to read the not required readings.

Grading
− Final paper (30%): Response paper (2000-2500 words) due on August 7, 2020 at 8:00pm (EST). The topic will be given on August 4, 2020 at 8:00am (EST).
− Team Presentation (30%): Students will be divided into 6 teams to prepare a presentation about materials that you will receive in advance. The presentation should be a 25-minute oral report explaining the problem described in the readings and how it relates to the required readings of the class. The presentation should include a 5-minute film/podcast clip (or shorter) related to the topic. Be ready to answer questions!
Participation (20%): Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class, actively engage in discussions, and link assigned materials to relevant debates in the media and politics. Readings marked as ‘additional readings’ are not required.

Reading Quizzes (20%): Students will be given three quizzes over the course of the semester. Dates won't be provided in advance.

Special requirements for graduate students: Participation (15%), final paper (35%). The quality of the response paper is expected to be significantly higher.

Late policy
Barring an extraordinary excuse, late papers will be marked down one-third of a grade (e.g., A to A-minus) per day.

Academic integrity
This course follows the policies on academic integrity of the Harvard Summer School. Please, carefully read the Harvard Summer School policies on academic integrity. For help with citing your sources correctly, please also visit the Resources to Support Academic Integrity. Summer School assumes that collaboration on assignments is prohibited unless permitted by the instructor. Please, take a look at Harvard Guide to Using Sources.

Collaboration in written work
Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, professional editing, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Detailed syllabus

Session 1: Introduction (June 23)

Required readings

Additional readings

Part I: Historical roots of U.S.-Mexico relations

Session 2: History of the border (June 25)

Required readings

Additional readings


Session 3: Mexico’s history and challenges (June 30)

Required readings

Additional readings
Part II: U.S.-Mexico Trade

Session 4: North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (July 2)

Group presentation #1: Femicide.

Required readings

Additional readings


Additional readings


Part III: Illegal Drug Trafficking

Session 6: Drug Demand (July 16)

Group presentation #3: From Nixon to Trump. History of America’s drug policy.

Required readings


Additional readings

**Session 7: Drug War (July 21)**

*Group presentation #4: Drug cartels & the avocado industry*

**Required readings**


**Additional readings**


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**Part IV: Immigration**

**Session 8: Recent trends (July 23)**

**Required readings**

Additional readings


Session 9: Migration policy (July 28)
Group presentation #5: How sanctuary cities work

Required readings

Additional readings


Session 10: Future’s migration policy (July 30)
Group presentation #6: Climate change and emigration.

Required readings

**Additional readings**


**Session 11: Homeland security (Aug 4)**

**Required readings**

*Homeland security*


**Additional readings**


**Film: Drug Lord: The Legend of Shorty.** Directed by Angus MacQueen and Guillermo Galdos. PBS Frontline. March 7, 2014.

**Fiction:** Slater, Dan (2016). *Wolf Boys: Two American Teenagers and Mexico’s Most Dangerous Drug Cartel*. Simon & Schuster.

**Part VI: Wrapping up**
Session 12: Wrapping up (Aug 6)

Required readings

Additional readings

Wrapping up