Political Science 352 Jim Mahon

Fall 2018 Schapiro 337 (x2236)

W 10-noon and by app’t

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**POLITICS IN MEXICO**

This course surveys Mexican politics. Its four parts differ in content and in format. The first, historical section considers several themes, including the slow emergence of a stable national state and a national consciousness, how governments promoted economic development (or not), and how economic conditions and new conceptions of identity then reacted upon politics. During this part of the course, class time will be devoted mostly to lecture. In the second, longest part of the course, we turn to questions of political economy, political institutions, and culture before looking at contemporary issues such as crime, corruption, foreign relations, and migration. These classes will be a mix of discussion and lecture. Then, after several discussion/ lecture classes on recent political events and the remarkable 2018 elections, we end with a seminar with the presentation and discussion of student research proposals.

Requirements. This course is both writing-intensive and a PSCI research course. After a map quiz in the second full week, there is a short (3-page) paper at the end of the historical section. In the second and longest part of the course, students have three opportunities to turn in short (3-page) topical opinion papers, of which only the best two count. The final project is a research proposal (12-15 pages, one-page topic summary due 11/20) presented in the seminar. There is no final exam. Weights in the grade are:

Map quiz 5 percent;

First paper (3 pages) 15 percent;

Topical papers (2 x 3 pp.), each 15 percent;

Research proposal 30 percent;

Presentation of proposal 5 percent;

Class participation 15 percent.

Attendance is required and your preparation is essential to the success of the class. Honor code guidelines apply (see Student Handbook [at this link](https://dean.williams.edu/academic-misconduct-honor-code/)): give credit for ideas you get from others; put marks around direct quotations; and for course readings, internal abbreviated citations like this (Knight, 301) are fine.

Readings. The following books are required and available at the bookstore:

Emily Edmonds-Poli and David Shirk, *Contemporary Mexican Politics*, 3rd ed. (Rowman

and Littlefield, 2015);

Ioan Grillo, *El Narco* (Bloomsbury, 2012);

David Lida, *First Stop in the New World* (Riverhead/ Penguin 2009)

Michael Meyer and William Beezley, eds. *The Oxford History of Mexico* (Oxford, 2010).

This title is out of print but available used or as a Kindle edition via Amazon:

Joseph Contreras, *In the Shadow of the Giant* (Rutgers 2009), ISBN 978-0-8135-4482-3.

Most of the other readings are in a packet, the first part of which is available immediately, the rest once the enrollment is settled. I could also copy the assigned parts of the Contreras book if desired. All films, even those of which we only view excerpts in class, are up on Glow in their entirety, under the “Course Media Gallery” tab, then under the “library film” tab.

Keeping up with Mexico news. All students should read the news from Mexico regularly. This is an exciting time: the July 1 election produced a clear mandate for change in both the substance and the style of politics. Along with occasional stories on Mexico from the major US daily newspapers, English-language news sources on Mexico include [*Mexico News Daily*](https://mexiconewsdaily.com/), [*Business News Americas*](http://www.bnamericas.com/) (which nearly always has something on Mexico), or in the in-depth but sporadic [Americas Program](https://www.americas.org/) newsletter, based in Mexico City. In Spanish, the big daily newspapers include the more commercially oriented [*El Universal*](http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/)(still with free searchable archives), [*Reforma*](https://www.reforma.com/), and [*Excélsior*](http://www.excelsior.com.mx/), as well as the left-of-center [*La Jornada*](http://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas) and the leftish and relatively bold (weekly) [*Proceso*](https://www.proceso.com.mx/) (subscription only, I’ll share articles on request).

SCHEDULE

(\* = in packet; [[linked](https://www.amazon.com/Oxford-History-Mexico-William-Beezley/dp/0199731985/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1536334132&sr=1-1&keywords=oxford+history+of+Mexico)] = click on link, not in packet)

**9/7**  Introduction and overview

**I. State, Economy, and Nation in Mexican History**

**9/11** The Meaning of the Conquest and New Spain

*Contemporary Mexican Politics* (henceforth *CMP*)first part of Chapter 1 (pp. 7-19).

*Oxford History of Mexico* (henceforth *OHM*)*,* skim Chap. 3, read Chap. 4, skim Chaps. 6 and 9.

The first major "new" political unit in America was New Spain. But the popular and official versions of Mexican history downplay its importance--witness the country's name and the insignia on its flag—despite the obvious importance of the Spanish cultural legacy. But what kind of society did three centuries of Spanish colonialism, on top of two centuries of Mexica expansionism, leave behind?

**9/14** Independence and Political Failure

*CMP*, second part of Chapter 1 (pp. 19-21).

Mariano Otero, *Considerations Relating to the Political and Social Situation of the Mexican Republic in the Year 1847*, in Cecil Robinson, ed. and trans., *The View from Chapultepec: Mexican Writers on the Mexican-American War* (U. Arizona, 1989).\*

*OHM,* read Chapters 10 and 11.

The failure to build a stable order after Independence left Mexico exposed to conquest from the north; this event, in turn, only deepened the national crisis and was followed by almost two decades of intermittent civil war, including the intervention of French imperial forces and the rule of a Hapsburg prince (1862-67). Otero, an acute observer of his country, provided a catalog of ways in which Mexico in 1847 did not live up to the liberal ideal of the nation-state. Today’s readings thus raise the question why the nation-state has been the dominant political form in the world for two centuries—and what Otero saw that was pushing Mexico to conform to this pattern.

**9/18** Juárez, Liberalism, and the Porfirian Peace **MAP QUIZ**

*CMP*, last part of Chapter 1 (pp. 21-27) and first part of Chapter 10 (pp. 183-86)

*Oxford History of Mexico,* read Chapters 12 and 13.

The basic story of post-Independence Mexico is that the Liberals won, but not completely and not as they had envisioned. Slavery was legally abolished early, the state was finally consolidated on liberal lines, the Church was reduced in importance, and the *indio* and *mestizo* majority was sometimes quite visibly incorporated into national life--even at the top, as evidenced by the two key figures of the period, Juárez and Diaz. But these changes were extremely limited ones. The Liberal period became known as one of exploitation in which the economically strong (which often meant foreigners or those Mexicans who best connected internationally) dominated the weak, using the state against them and their liberty. There was order and progress, but the former was coercive and often explicitly racist, and few enjoyed the full benefits of the latter.

**9/21** The Mexican Revolution

*CMP*, Chapter 2 (pp. 29-47).

*OHM,* read Chapters 14 and 15.

The Mexican Revolution (with the War of the Triple Alliance and the US Civil War) was one of the bloodiest armed conflicts in the history of the Western Hemisphere. About a million people (out of a population of 14-15 million) died from the direct or indirect effects of the wars, mostly in central and central-northern Mexico.

It could be seen as a popular rebellion, or a series of civil wars, which broke out when an aging dictator faced the typical problem of dictatorships--succession. Each of its most famous leaders has been described as representing a different social group: Madero, the respectable middle class that wanted to imitate the United States and have stable democracy; Villa, rural and urban workers and small business who wanted public works and cheap credit; and Zapata, the traditional peasantry aggrieved by the expansion of capitalist farming, who wanted land reform. But even though today Zapata and Villa are the most popular Revolutionary heroes, neither was on the winning side of the Revolution. The winners were the Constitutionalists, led by Carranza and Obregón, propertied men of the north. Some of this had to do with military strategy and foreign intervention, but much was due to the alliances--and promises--they made in the 1917 Constitution. Some of the promises were kept only later by Lázaro Cárdenas after he came to the presidency in 1934. He built the corporatist state (this means people were "represented" by their social sector rather than by territory), did lots of land reform and nationalized oil and railroads, becoming a hero to peasants and workers and the ideal of many later politicians.

# 9/25 *Forjando Patria,* or the State as Agent of Cultural Change and Nation-building

Alan Knight, "Popular Culture and the Revolutionary State in Mexico, 1910-1940," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 74:3 (1994).\*

Excerpts from *Allá en el Rancho Grande* (1938, 1943) and *Rio Escondido* (1948), in class; full films streaming on Glow.

Andrés Uc Dzib, "La Escuela Rural, una Nueva Escuela de la Época de Oro de la Educación en México," first part only, and

María del Carmen Cano Sandoval, "Memorias de una Maestra," from *Los Maestros y la Cultura Nacional, 1920-1952*, vols. 5 and 4, respectively (Mexico City, Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1987) [originals followed by my translation in packet].\*

[Vicente Fernández, “El Martes Me Fusilan”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6k39qKvKdg) [linked to YouTube video]

The post-Revolutionary state set out to civilize and include the masses, even as it claimed to represent them. These readings touch on a general theme: how states, especially through public education and public art, try to create citizens who feel themselves part of a nation. Playing an important role were intellectuals and artists, including the famous muralists who sought to create an authentically Mexican art form that would represent the country’s uniqueness to the world, while performing a didactic function for its local viewers. Knight offers a valuable and complex overview. *Allá en el Rancho Grande* represents a very popular, romanticized, reactionary view of the pre-Revolutionary countryside, where men are gallant, women are virtuous and demure, and the *patron* commands deference. *Rio Escondido* gives a stirring argument for the government’s side of the controversy described by Knight, a heroic teacher bringing civilization and liberation to a village oppressed by a corrupt *cacique*. The next two readings are testimonials by teachers about their early experiences in the profession, collected by the education ministry in an oral history series celebrating the government's achievements in this area. Note the attitudes toward indigenous people, landed interests, and the Church and the teachers’ unapologetic attitude about the role of state power to redeem future citizens. The Fernández song depicts a *Cristero* rebelling against the government’s radical secularism in the late 1920’s.

**9/28** The Contradictions of the Institutional Revolution

*CMP*, Chapter 3 (pp. 49-67)

*OHM,* read Chapters 18 and 20.

[Short documentary about the Tlatelolco massacre with English subtitles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw2KsKXrF5o) [linked] (the unidentified first witness on camera is Sergio Aguayo, an author cited in various places later on).

[Longer documentary (*La Jornada/ Canal6dejulio*) in Spanish only](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfOP4frjiO8) [linked].

These readings consider the ossification and weakening of the revolutionary regime. In the post-WW2 generation the system became “institutionalized,” symbolized by the change in the party’s name from PRM to PRI. Nobody did more to help its birth than Miguel Alemán (President 1946-52). He became the representative figure in the creation of a new moneyed elite out of the Revolutionary political one. He also (in contrast to Cárdenas's public presence) abetted the corruption and disenchantment summarized in the cynical phrase, "*la Revolución le hizo justicia*" (the Revolution did him justice--that is, gave him a chance to become illicitly rich), even though this process started well before him.

The system lost different pillars of its legitimacy at different times. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz was an enigmatic and authoritarian man of the system (1964-70), who in the Tlatelolco massacre of October 1968 killed off many people’s illusions that the middle letter in “PRI” actually stood for something. Two documentary videos tell the story. Luis Echeverría (1970-76) and José López Portillo (1976-82) oversaw the PRI’s final failures—its inability to become more transparent or to manage oil and public debt sustainably. The crisis of 1982 (and López Portillo’s final spasm of nationalism in response to capital flight) ruptured the state-centered development model that underpinned the remaining legitimacy of the PRI. This began a decade of economic slump and the prolonged agony of the PRI system, led by bloodless technocrats, burdened by external debt, and increasingly challenged by new social and political movements. These showed up in the wake of the 1985 earthquakes and found a voice in the presidential campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1988, who lost what was widely regarded as a blatantly fraudulent election.

Carlos Salinas tried to build his presidency (1988-94) on a dramatic turn away from the historic commitments of the PRI. Not only did he push NAFTA, but he also terminated the periodic distribution of land to *ejidos* that had been a defining part of Mexican presidencies since Cárdenas, thereby dashing the hopes of many land-poor peasants, especially in the south, and contributing to the outbreak of the Zapatista rebellion in 1994. Both of these moves were intended to spur investment by offering more secure guarantees of property rights. Taken together, the Salinas reforms led directly or indirectly to a series of crises—in politics, the economy, and in Mexican national identity.

**10/2** The Decline and Fall of the PRI System

*CMP*, Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 69-96) and the second part of Chapter 10 (pp. 186-92).

*OHM*, read Chapter 19.

[Photo and story about (President 1994-2000) Ernesto Zedillo and the movement in 1968 in *El Universal*, 30 July 2018 [linked].](http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/sociedad/en-el-68-comenzo-la-democratizacion-de-mexico-zedillo)

The crisis year of 1994—a guerrilla rebellion in Chiapas, a financial crisis, and the assassination of the PRI’s presidential candidate--produced a modest President who was both a skilled technocrat and a political novice. Facing this crisis with few traditional levers of power, and leading a government that had turned away from its historic sources of legitimacy, Ernesto Zedillo followed his inclination to open the political process, against the electoral interests of his own party.

***PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3 at 4:00pm***

**II. Political Economy, Culture, and Policy Issues**

**10/5** The Post-NAFTA Crisis of National Identity: Modernity and *Mexicanidad*

José de Córdoba, “Oh Say, Can You See That Very Big Flag?” *Wall Street Journal*, 12/11/98.\*

Carlos Monsiváis, *Mexican Postcards*, Essay 3, "Tradition Hour."\*

Carlos Monsiváis, *Mexican Postcards* Essay 7, “Cantínflas: That’s the Point!”\*

Alma Guillermoprieto, “Mexico City 1992,” from *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now* (1994), (originally published as "Serenading the Future" in *The New Yorker*)*.*\*

[Juan Gabriel, “El México Que Se Nos Fue” [The Mexico We Have Lost](1995)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvuX7WhV1U0) [linked to YouTube video], lyrics and translation in packet.

Sam Quiñones, Chap. 3 (“Telenovela,” 1998) and Chap. 14 (“The Popsicle Kings,” 1999), from *True Tales of Another Mexico* (UNM, 2001).\*

Shocking events, rapid economic change, and the neoliberal reorientation of the PRI led to a period of intellectual and political questioning. Here we touch on some of the important markers of national identity and popular culture in the context of this crisis. After De Cordoba’s exploration of the origin of the big flags, Monsiváis discusses a figure that many people name first when they try to define Mexican identity, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Her traditional veneration was one of the targets of the culture-reformers Knight wrote about. Cantínflas (Mario Moreno) was the garrulous, alienated, but good-hearted vagrant of many, many popular movies between the late 1930's and 1981 (becoming less alienated and more preachy over time). Here Monsiváis brings us back to Samuel Ramos, Octavio Paz, and the early inquiries into Mexican “national character.” Guillermoprieto asks about what happens when popular ideas of *Mexicanidad* collide with a modernity imported from the north. Next, in the title track from a multimillion-selling album, Juan Gabriel gives one of the dominant responses—a deep, nostalgic pessimism. Finally, on a lighter note, Quiñones tells about the most famous telenovela actress of all time, Veronica Castro, and the humble origins of the ubiquitous “La Michoacana” franchise.

**10/9 No class, Fall Reading Period** (read ahead in Lida, *First Stop in the New World* if possible)

**10/12** Urban Life in Unequal Mexico

*CMP*, Chapter 11.

Carlos Monsiváis, “Identity Hour,” from *Mexican Postcards* (1997).\*

Photographs in Rossell, *Ricas y Famosas* 2002 ([selection at this link, see also video linked at end](http://www.slate.com/blogs/behold/2012/12/11/daniela_rossell_documenting_the_rich_and_famous_mexican_youth_photos.html)).

David Lida, *First Stop in the New World*, pp. 27-50 (“Where the Money Is and Isn’t”) and 210-42 (“Who’s Afraid of Mexico City?”), and read ahead for next time.

*Amores Perros* 2000 Alejandro González Iñárritu, 153’ [video streamed on Glow].

Around 1960 Mexico became majority urban (at this writing, about 80 percent of Mexicans live in cities). The rapidity of this transformation, together with the cultural legacies of the Revolution, meant that the country encountered the challenges of urban life while holding an image of itself, or its authentic self, as rural. Several of the important challenges have been directly political: crime and insecurity; state corruption; and the experience of vast and growing income disparities. The ongoing crisis of urban public order can be traced in part to the 1994-96 economic recession. But the most common response in many other countries—more power to the police—has been problematic because their corruption has led many to conclude that they are more likely to be part of the problem than part of the solution.

After an overview, we begin with Monsiváis. Regarding the photos, Daniela Rossell scandalized Mexican high society not only because she gained incomparable access to the homes of so many through family contacts and mild subterfuge, but also because the book exposed the tawdry, self-involved, kitschy sensibility of the self-regarded aristocracy. Following up, we read the parts of Lida’s book that relate directly to income disparities and criminality. The film *Amores Perros* had a big impact with its gritty hyper-realism and the metaphor of colliding lives and classes.

**10/16** Mexico City

David Lida, *First Stop in the New World*, as much as you can, skipping pp. 296-323 (“Globalization and *Malinchismo*” and “The Other Side”) but making sure to read the last parts, pp. 324-51 (“Piedra” through the epilogue).

Daniel Hernández, *Down and Delirious in Mexico City* (2011), Chap. 8 (“The Delinquent Is Us”).\*

Tenochtitlán/ México has been a big city for centuries. Around 2000 it was the largest metropolitan area in the Western Hemisphere (which it had also been c.1500) and the second largest (after Tokyo/ Yokohama) in the world. But its many serious challenges—earthquakes, drainage, fresh water, air pollution, transport, crime—mean that it can often seem to teeter on the edge of habitability. This has spawned jokes, legends, and the grim sophistication of the *chilango* mindset. We finish Lida’s book and consider a provocative part of another, slightly more recent exploration of life in the capital.

**10/19**  The Political Significance of Race

Deborah Yashar, “Does Race Matter in Latin America?” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2015.\*

Claudio Lomnitz, “Mexico’s Race Problem,” *Boston Review*, Nov. 1, 2005.\*

Emiko Saldívar, “‘It’s Not Race, It’s Culture’: Untangling Racial Politics in Mexico,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 9: 89-108 (2014).\*

Rogelio Sáenz, “A New Book Targets Deadly Racism- in Mexico” (review of Federico Navarrete, *México Racista: Una Denuncia*), *San Antonio Express-News*, Nov. 19, 2016.\*

Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga and Iván Flores Martínez, “Is Mexico a Post-Racial Country?

Inequality and Skin Tone across the Americas,” Americas Barometer Topical Brief no. 31, LAPOP, Vanderbilt University (6 Nov. 2017).\*

[Manuel Betancourt, “Netflix’s First Mexican Reality Show Is a Glimpse at Young Rich Fresas in Their Natural Habitat,” *ReMezcla*, 21 August 2018 [link].](http://remezcla.com/film/netflix-made-mexico-reality-show/)

The treatment of racial difference in Mexican culture is a fascinating topic. Yashar gives us a general comparative orientation: as in most of Latin America, in Mexico the twentieth-century nation-building period featured a myth of racial mixture that is at once unifying (“We’re All Mexicans”) and hypocritically damaging (“Race Doesn’t Matter in Mexico”). The Sáenz review and the Saldívar article take this up in detail. Lomnitz discusses an incident that highlighted a national forgetfulness, not only about race in general, but about Afro-Mexicans in particular. The next two pieces subject this habit of oblivion to critical interrogation. The next, short article summarizes some public-opinion research demonstrating that Mexico is not, in fact, post-racial. The new Netflix reality show seem to confirm it.

***First topical paper due at start of class. Topic: What’s at stake in how Mexican nationality is represented in literature and mass media, and by the state? How does it matter for everyday urban life, in your opinion? 3 pages (about 750 words)***

**10/23**  The Turn toward the North in Economic Policy

*CMP*, Chapter 10, third part (pp. 192-98).

Anthony DePalma, “How a Tortilla Empire Was Built on Favoritism,” *NY Times* 2/15/96.\*

David Luhnow, “The Secrets of the World’s Richest Man,” *Wall Street Journal* 8/4-5/07.\*

Joseph Contreras, *In the Shadow of the Giant*, Introduction, Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 10.

As noted above, after the easing of the debt crisis in 1989-91, Mexico under Salinas tied its economic future to the USA. In a sense, this had been anticipated by laws in 1965 allowing the creation of a *maquiladora* or in-bond manufacturing sector along the border. (Companies selling in the US take advantage of cheap Mexican labor while being taxed only on the value added by the labor.) Hoping to attract investment, Salinas proposed to freeze in treaty form a set of legal commitments that would grant investors the assurance that rules would remain stable. It worked—in the sense that it did what Salinas and his allies anticipated. Whether it worked for Mexico as a whole is a different question. Given the importance of Mexican operations for many US companies, Mexico preserved more jobs in manufacturing than did many countries in South America over this period. But often, the profits of multinationals and well-connected Mexicans did not correspond to benefits for the Mexican consumer.

**10/26** The Turn toward the North in Foreign Relations

*CMP*, Chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 249-89).

Contreras, *In the Shadow*, Chapter 2 and Conclusion.

The NAFTA did not exist in isolation. It was followed by a more general diplomatic warming toward the USA, one that gained speed under Vicente Fox and his first foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda. This represented a rejection of what had been, since the Revolution, a tradition of non-aligned, non-interventionist, multilateralist, and pro-revolutionary diplomacy.

**10/30**  Migration and the Northern Border

Juan Gabriel, “Canción 187,” from *El México Que Se Nos Fue* (1995) [linked], lyrics in packet.

Alfredo Corchado, *Homelands: Four Friends, Two Countries, and the Fate of the Great Mexican-American Migration* (2018), Chapters 7, 13, 24, and 27 (pp. 79-87, 137-47, 232-40, and 257-63).\*

Fernando Riosmena and Douglas Massey, "Pathways to El Norte: Origins, Destinations, and Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to the United States," *International Migration Review* 46 (2012).\*

Rachel Schmidtke and Raquel Chuayffet, “Reintegrating Returned Mexican Migrants through a Comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy,” *Forbes*, 22 Aug. 2018.\*

Ginger Thompson, “Some in Mexico See Border Wall as Opportunity,” *NY Times* 5/25/06.\*

Contreras, *In the Shadow*, Chapter 9.

The main theme today is how migration to the USA has affected Mexico economically and politically. The recent heightened attention to the border in the US comes just as, mainly for demographic reasons, out-migration of Mexicans is becoming less (and return migration more) of an issue. Historically, Mexican migration to the US evolved from serving mostly agriculture, mining, and a few service sectors to constituting a key source of labor in many sectors virtually everywhere in the USA. Migrants’ length of stay, gender composition, and source areas also changed significantly. Even before 9/11/01, US immigration policy had become more militarized and more focused on media-visible, urban parts of the border, which drove up the price for a crossing. This, in turn, encouraged the participation of organized crime networks as migrant flows shifted into more lethal borderlands, such as the Sonoran Desert. Migrants were also starting to go to new US destinations unaccustomed to their presence.

JuanGa offers the dominant view of migrants as bold heroes, but with a twist—a happy (and seemingly permanent) return home. Corchado gives us some personal stories to go along with the quantitative analysis of Riosmena and Massey. The next piece discusses return migration and has two useful maps depicting migrant flows. Thompson shows us that the border wall has been an issue for a long time, and a complicated one. Contreras looks at the complex role of remittances.

**11/2**  Migration and the Southern Border

[Valeria Luiselli, “Riding the Beast: Child Migrants Reveal…” *The Guardian* 10/5/17](https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/oct/05/riding-the-beast-child-migrants-reveal-full-horror-of-their-journeys-to-us).\*

Photographs to accompany the Luiselli article [here](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/gallery/2017/dec/13/mexico-central-american-migrants-la-bestia-pictures).

Maya Averbuch, “Mexico Can’t Handle Your Tired, Poor, and Huddled Masses,” *Foreign Policy*, 30 July 2018.\*

Begin Grillo, *El Narco* (see readings for next week).

If you have been paying attention to the details of the migration issue in the USA, you will have noted that a lot of the people arriving at its southern border these days are coming from Central America—that is, they will have already crossed one international border, into Mexico, before encountering the US border. The treatment of these people by the Mexican state has seen various sins of omission (failing to protect them against criminals) and commission (brutal enforcement methods, most recently at the behest of the USA). We begin with some of the shorter and more recent journalism on *La Bestia*, as the northbound freight train is known. (Some of you might be familiar with the pioneering long-form effort in this realm, *Enrique’s Journey* by Sonia Nazario, W ’83, which was a 2002 series at the *Los Angeles Times* before it became a book.) Averbuch brings us up to date while also noting Mexico’s history as a landing place for refugees.

**11/6** Crime and the Drug Trade

Ioan Grillo, *El Narco,* Part I and as much as you can of Part II (pp. 1-222).

Grillo’s is one of the best examples of the risk-embracing genre of journalism about organized crime and the trade in illegal drugs. While it might seem sensationalist at times, the mafias challenge the state at its most fundamental level, the ability to keep the peace. And their actions have in fact shocked Mexicans, making insecurity into the major political issue.

**11/9** Crime and the Drug Trade (continued)

Grillo, *El Narco*, Part III and Afterword (pp. 224-98).

*CMP*, Chapter 12.

Grillo guides us toward the range of possible futures of organized crime, while Edmonds-Poli and Shirk enlarge the issue into one of the rule of law, placing this into historical context.

***Second topical paper due at start of class. Topic: Has globalization (trade, investment and other capital flows, migration, cultural mixing) been good for Mexico? Citing key readings from this section, why or why not? 3 pages (about 750 words)***

**III. Recent Political Developments**

**11/13** Political Institutions, Parties, and Public Opinion

*CMP*, Chapters 6, 7, and the last part of 8 (pp. 99-140 and 147-55).

Kathleen Bruhn and Kenneth Greene, “Elite Polarization Meets Mass Moderation,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40:1 (Jan. 2007).\*

“2014 Political-Electoral Reform,” Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute blog, c. 5/2015.\*

Cynthia McClintock, *Electoral Rules and Democracy in Latin America* (Oxford 2018), Introduction and section on Mexico (pp. 1-10 and 80-86).\*

In order to make sense of recent events in Mexico, we first need to understand its political institutions, electoral processes, and the contours of public opinion. Mexico is a very different country than it was in 1950—or 1980. Electoral democracy is no longer a novelty, and those who have grown up under it tend to expect it to work as advertised. Edmonds-Poli and Shirk describe some of this in general terms, including the electoral reforms under Peña Nieto in 2014 (part of the reform package described further next time). Bruhn and Greene were part of a sophisticated wave of polling around the 2006 election, and McClintock adds a point of continuing relevance, the lack of provision for a runoff in elections not won by absolute majority.

***11/14-19 Consultations on Research Topics***

**11/16**  Peña Nieto and the Issues of the Moment: Energy, Education, Corruption, and State Failure

Myrna Santiago, “Mexico’s Energy Reform,” *ReVista*, Fall 2015.\*

Peter Watt, “Selling Off and Selling Out,” *NACLA* blog, 18 Dec. 2013.\*

[Andrés Tovar, “Mexico’s Energy Reform: Flight of the Eagle,” *Energia16*, 3 June 2018 [linked].](https://www.energia16.com/mexicos-energy-reform-the-flight-of-the-eagle/?lang=en)

Lorne Matelon, “Mexico Energy Reform Spurs Larger Scale Cross-Border Electricity Transmission,” UT Austin Energy Institute, 25 May 2017.\*

[Gabriel Stargardter, “Uneasy Energy: As Mexico’s Oil Sector…” *Reuters* 28 June 2018 [linked].](https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/mexico-oil-violence/)

Kent Patterson, “The Fall of Mexico’s Powerful Education Chief,” *MexiDataInfo,* 11 Mar. 2014.\*

Paula Chouza, “Rebel States Boycott Mexico’s Education Reform,” *El País*, 15 May 2014.\*

David Agren,”Release of Jailed Union Boss…,” *The Guardian,* 21 Dec. 2017.\*

“Old-Time Union Boss Returns Triumphant in Mexico,” *Associated Press,* 20 August 2018.\*

Azam Ahmed, “In Mexico, ‘It’s Easy to Kill a Journalist,’” *NY Times*, 29 April 2017.\*

Alexis Okeowo, “A Mexican Town Wages Its Own War on Drugs,” *New Yorker*, 27 Nov. 2017.\*

[Gabriel Stargardter, “The Refinery Racket: Mexico’s drug cartels, now hooked on fuel, cripple the country’s refineries,” *Reuters*, 24 Jan. 2018 [linked].](https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/mexico-violence-oil/)

Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, “Mexico’s Record Violence Is a Crisis 20 Years in the Making,” *NY Times*, 28 October 2017.\*

Enrique Peña Nieto (commonly EPN) began his term by forging a multi-party working coalition in Congress (the *“Pacto por México”*), which passed a series of important reforms to policies relating to education, taxation, election law, electricity, and hydrocarbons. The first and the last two proved to be very controversial, because they affected established interests (unions, especially) as well as nationalist symbols. We read journalism and diverse analyses of the energy (comprising both electricity and hydrocarbons) and education reforms. EPN also campaigned in 2012 against Calderón’s approach to crime and the narcotics trade, so we conclude with the theme of insecurity. Insofar as insecurity is a product of corruption and impunity (as argued by AMLO in 2018), it intersects with the other issue areas--most notably in hydrocarbons, as the articles from Reuters describe. We end with an interpretive piece that blames political institutions for a good deal of the problem.

**11/20** The 2018 Elections

Shannon O’Neil, “Mexico’s Election Could Leave Its Economy in Limbo,” *Council on Foreign Relations* blog, 5 April 2018.\*

Steve Ellner, “López Obrador’s Moment,” *NACLA Update* 3 July 2018.\*

Jon Lee Anderson, “A New Revolution in Mexico,” *The New Yorker,* 25 June 2018.\*

“Tropical Messiah,” *The Economist*, 23 June 2018.\*

Jon Lee Anderson, “Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Donald Trump, and the Error of Comparison,” *The New Yorker*, 3 July 2018.\*

TBA on election analysis from official results and exit polling

[Results nationally and by district (Instituto Nacional Electoral)](https://computos2018.ine.mx/#/presidencia/nacional/1/1/1/1)

Andrés Manuel López Obrador (aka AMLO, El Peje) won a historic victory on July 1. It was the first presidential election in which the winner took an absolute majority since the PRI era--when the government invented the numbers. MORENA, AMLO’s party, also won (with its coalition partners and after the defection of some Partido Verde deputies) majorities in both houses of the legislature. We read a diverse set of pre- and post-election commentary before engaging in a detailed analysis of the 2018 vote, using official figures and exit polling. O’Neil represents a view from the US business community and foreign policy establishment; Ellner a longtime fellow traveler with Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro; Anderson a leftish writer, author of the best biography of Ché Guevara; and *The Economist* the liberal (as in somewhat libertarian) center in the UK.

***11/20 One-page summary of research proposal topic, with preliminary bibliography, due in class***

**11/23 No class, Thanksgiving Break**

**11/27** The Promise and Challenges of an AMLO Government

George Grayson, *Mexican Messiah* (2007), Introduction, Chapter 17, and first part of Chapter 18 (pp. 1-12, 247-74).\*

“Will AMLO Deliver?” and

“Mexico’s Motley New Congress,” *The Economist*, 5 July 2018.\* [Online edition, figure in color](https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2018/07/05/mexicos-motley-new-congress).

James Fredrick, “Mexico’s new president has a radical plan to end the drug war,” *Vox* 8/15/18.\*

“Donald Trump Makes Migration Mexico’s Problem,” *The Economist*, 18 Aug. 2018.\*

Denise Dresser, “Can Mexico Be Saved?” *Foreign Affairs*, Sept/Oct 2018.\*

Jo Tuckman, “Meet Chumel Torres,” *The Guardian*, 8/28/15.\* [[link here](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/28/el-pulso-de-la-republica-chumel-torres-mexico-youtube-show)]

[“El Pulso de la República” YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/elpulsodelarepublica) and [site with archived shows.](https://www.elpulsodelarepublica.com/)

Paulina Villegas, “As Violence Soared in Mexico, This Town…,” *NY Times*, Sept. 1, 2018.\*

TBA

AMLO promised that his election would bring a “Fourth Transformation” (after Independence, the Reform, and the Revolution) to Mexico. The post-election period has brought some indications (such as the appointment of Manuel Bartlett at the electricity company or the rehabilitation of Elba Esther Gordillo) that it might turn out to be less than sweeping. It has also reminded us about the heterogeneity of MORENA’s electoral coalition (which included the socially conservative PES) as well as the movement/ party itself. Grayson’s biography is uneven but it is the only thing out there in English; *The Economist* gives us a good sense of the challenges, while Fredrick takes on the amnesty-plus-scholarships plan for reducing drug crime. Dresser is probably Mexico’s most respected political scientist and (along with Carmen Aristegui) political commentator. Next up is [Chumel Torres](https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/chumel-torres-32733.php), a web phenomenon since about 2015, sort of like a sillier John Oliver (*warning—continual vulgar and occasionally homophobic and misogynist language*), who might be taken to represent the skepticism and sophistication of web-savvy millennials. The *Times* piece offers a more hopeful view with the success of community policing in Morelia. We will also discuss where AMLO is most likely to succeed or fail, and what this could mean for Mexico.

***Third topical paper due at start of class. Topic: Is Mexican democracy consolidated, in your opinion? What are its main strengths and weaknesses? 3 pages (about 750 words)***

**IV. Research Seminar**

**11/30, 12/4, and TBA (Prof out of town on 12/7) Student presentations**

Five to ten minutes of formal presentation followed by five to ten minutes of question and answer.

***RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE FRIDAY DECEMBER 14 AT 4:00pm***