

Course Syllabus

HIST 6360, SEC. 001

DRUGS & VIOLENCE IN MEXICO

Fall 2021

T 1:00-3:45

JO 4.708

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the history of drugs and other related activities in Mexico through the lens of policy, the political economy, and cultural expressions. Students will engage in graduate level analysis of scholarly writings, policy initiatives, and primary sources dealing with the history of drugs and violence in Mexico. Particular attention will be devoted to recent developments in Mexico and the role of drug violence in U.S.-Mexican relations.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

- Students will demonstrate their knowledge of historical trends that helped to shape the recent escalation of drug-related violence in Mexico.
 - Students will demonstrate their ability to connect major political, economic, and social trends of the region to drugs and violence.
 - Students will improve their research skills by considering new sources in the examination of the drug war in Mexico.
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Classroom Conduct Requirements Related to Public Health Measures

UT Dallas will follow the public health and safety guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and local public health agencies that are in effect at that time during the Fall 2021 semester to the extent allowed by state governance. Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order [GA-38](#) prohibits us from mandating vaccines and face coverings for UT Dallas employees, students, and members of the public on campus. However, we strongly encourage all Comets to get vaccinated and wear face coverings as recommended by the CDC. Check the [Comets United: Latest Updates webpage](#) for the latest guidance on the University's public health measures. Comets are expected to carry out [Student Safety](#) protocols in adherence to the Comet Commitment. Unvaccinated Comets will be expected to complete the [Required Daily Health Screening](#). Those students who do not comply will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct for disciplinary action under the [Student Code of Conduct – UTSP5003](#).

Class Recordings

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction,

students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Books:

Benjamin T. Smith: *The Dope: The Real History of the Mexican Drug Trade* (W.W. Norton, 2021) ISBN: 978-1-324-00655-8

Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug* (UNC Press: 2009) ISBN: 978-0807859056

Isaac Campos, *Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs* (UNC Press: 2012) ISBN: 978-0-8078-3538-8

Carmen Boullosa & Mike Wallace, *A Narco History: How the United States and Mexico Jointly Created the "Mexican Drug War."* (OR Books: 2015) ISBN: 978-1-939293-79-4

Anabel Hernandez, *Narco Land: The Mexican Drug Lords and Their Godfathers*. (Verso: 2014) ISBN: 978-1-78168-296-8

Ioan Grillo, *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*. (Bloomsbury Press: 2011) ISBN: 978-1-60819-401-8

Michael Deibert, *In the Shadow of Saint Death: The Gulf Cartel and the Price of America's Drug War in Mexico*. (Lyons Press: 2014) ISBN: 978-0-7627-9125-5

Alfredo Corchado: *Midnight in Mexico: A Reporter's Journey through a Country's Descent into Darkness*. (Penguin Books: 2014) ISBN: 978-0143125532

Elaine Carey, *Women Drug Traffickers: Mules, Bosses, and Organized Crime*. (University of New Mexico Press: 2014) ISBN: 978-0826351982

Howard Campbell, *Drug War Zone: Frontline Dispatches from the Streets of El Paso and Juarez* (University of Texas Press: 2009) ISBN: 978-0292721791

Gabriela Polit, *Narrating Narcos: Culiacan and Medellin*. (University of Pittsburgh Press: 2013) ISBN: 978-0822962571

Elijah Wald, *Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas* (Rayo/Harper Collins: 2001) ISBN: 978-0-06-050510-3

Arturo Perez-Reverte, *The Queen of the South*. (Plume: 2005) ISBN: 978-0452286542

O. Hugo Benavides, *Drugs, Thugs, and Divas: Telenovelas and Narco-Dramas in Latin America*. (University of Texas Press: 2008) ISBN: 978-0-292-71712-1

Articles and Chapters on Library Reserve:

1. Paul Gootenberg and Isaac Campos, "Toward a New Drug History of Latin America: A Research Frontier at the Center of Debates," in *Hispanic American Historical Review* (95:1, 2015) pp 1-35.
2. David Shirk and Joel Wallman, "Understanding Mexico's Drug Violence," in *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (Vol. 59, No. 8: 2015) pp1348-1376.

3. June S. Beittel, "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations," Congressional Research Service, July 3, 2018 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41576.pdf>
4. Seth Harp, "Blood and Oil: Mexico's Drug Cartels and the Gasoline Industry," in *Rolling Stone* <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/drug-war-mexico-gas-oil-cartel-717563/>
5. "Long Lines and Guarded Fuel: Mexico's Gas Crisis Explained," in *New York Times* January 11, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/11/world/americas/mexico-gas-crisis.htm>
6. Eduardo Guerrero-Gutiérrez, "Security, Drugs, and Violence in Mexico: A Survey," (7th North American Forum, Washington DC, 2011). <https://cei.colmex.mx/Estudios%20sobre%20violencia/Estudios%20Violencia%20M%C3%A9xico%20Materiales%20recibidos/Eduardo%20Guerrero,%20Security,%20Drugs,%20and%20Violence%20in%20Mexico,%20A%20Survey.pdf>
7. Paul Gootenberg, "Blowback: The Mexican Drug Crisis," *NACLA Report on the Americas*. November/December 2010.
8. Gabriela Recio, "Drugs and Alcohol: US Prohibition and the Origin of the Drug Trade in Mexico, 1910-1930," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, (2002) 34:1, 21-42.
9. Maria Celia Toro, "The Internationalization of Police: The DEA in Mexico," *The Journal of American History*, (1999) 86:2, 623-640.
10. Hector Amaya, "The Cultures of Anonymity and Violence in the Mexican Blogosphere," in *International Journal of Communication* (11: 2017) pp3815-3831.
11. Hector Amaya, "The Deterritorialized Political Economy of Narcocorridos in the United States," in Maria Elena Cepeda and Dolores Ines Casillas (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Latina/o Media*
12. Sean Penn, "El Chapo Speaks: A Secret Visit with the Most Wanted Man in the World," *Rolling Stone*. January 9, 2016. <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/el-chapo-speaks-20160109>
13. Deborah L. Jaramillo, "Narcocorridos and newbie drug dealers: the changing image of the Mexican Narco on US television," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Vol 37, No 9: 2014) pp1587-1604.
14. "Jesus Malverde," in Sam Quinones, *True tales from another Mexico: the Lynch Mob, the Popsicle Kings, Chalino, and the Bronx*, pp 225-232.
15. Howard Campbell, "Narco-Propaganda in the Mexican 'Drug War:' An Anthropological Perspective," in *Latin American Perspectives*, 2014, Vol. 41 (2) p. 60-77.
16. Oswaldo Zavala, "Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Drug War: The Critical Limits of Narconarratives," in *Comparative Literature* 66:3 (2014) pp340-360.

GRADING POLICY

The grading in this course is based on weekly discussions, weekly notes, and a final project (written and presentation). The breakdown of the grading is as follows:

Weekly Notes	25%
Class Participation	25%
Final Project (Written & Presentation)	50%

COURSE & INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

Class Attendance: Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. Absences due to COVID-19 will not be counted against a quarantined student.

- If you or someone you live with tests positive for COVID and/or if you need to take care of someone who tests positive for COVID, please contact me as soon as possible. We will make all appropriate accommodations.
- Please check your email and eLearning regularly for any changes to the schedule and/or teaching modality that might arise due to COVID.
- We will establish a seating chart early in the semester to facilitate contact tracing should the need arise. Please ensure that you sit in your assigned seat every class period.

All assignments for this class are mandatory. Materials used in this course have been carefully selected for their scholarly value, but some audiences may take offense at topics of a sensitive nature. There will be no substitutions of readings, films, documents, presentations, and/or other course requirements to suit personal preferences and/or sensitivities. There are no exceptions to this rule.

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Notes: You will prepare weekly notes in the form of a reading response for all readings assigned. The papers should include a statement of the author's main argument, followed by supporting evidence the author provides. You should examine the author's use of sources, methodology, and theory. Your notes should conclude with a critical analysis of the readings. In your analysis, you should provide your critique of the readings. This is also where you should include any information you have about the author that may influence your interpretation of the readings. It is also appropriate to compare your critique to published reviews of the readings (where available). Peer-reviewed journals publish reviews of many historical monographs, and these should be available for the books assigned in this course. Weekly notes should be typed and prepared prior to class meetings.

Since this is a graduate-level reading seminar, I expect your reading responses to be thorough and to reflect graduate-level analysis. I suggest using the following note-taking format. But please be aware that some of the readings (ie. journalistic accounts) may not fit this format precisely.

SUGGESTED NOTE-TAKING FORMAT:

- **Type of document:** Is this a research monograph written by a scholar? An autobiography? A report written by a journalist? A primary document written by a government agency, a neutral observer, etc.?
- **Title/Author:** Is there any significance in the title chosen for the work? Who is the author? What do you know about him/her? Field? Discipline? Institutional affiliation? Peers/colleagues? For books, was it first a dissertation? What else has the author written?
- **Publisher:** Who is the publisher? What do you know about the press? Is it academic or otherwise? What is the publisher known for? What other types of works has the publisher produced? Is the book part of a series? What is the nature of the series? Who is the series editor? What do you know about him/her?
- **Thesis:** What is the author's main argument (as opposed to the subject of the book)?
- **Evidence:** How does the author support his/her main argument?
- **Research/sources:** Look at the notes and bibliography. What primary and secondary sources did the author consult? Which libraries, collections, archives, etc. were involved?
- **Methodology:** How did the author approach his/her sources? What questions were asked? Are any theoretical frameworks involved? Are there any inherent challenges to the sources and/or approach? How has the author attempted to contend with those challenges?
- **Body of Scholarship:** Who else has written on the topic? Who else has used similar sources and/or theoretical models? Where does the work fit within the existing body of literature? It is responding to a previous study? Was it a seminal work? What have other scholars said about it?
- **Critique/analysis:** What is your overall critique of the work? Is the thesis solid? Has the author defended it well? What is your opinion of the use of sources and methodology? How can you use the information presented? How can you use the methodological model?

Class Participation: This is a graduate readings seminar and all students are expected to participate in class discussions over readings and other relevant material. Discussions should be respectful and constructive. I strongly recommend that you use the weekly notes as a guide to your in-class commentary. When preparing for class discussions, consider how YOU would teach that book/material if you were leading the class. How would you organize the material? How would you summarize the arguments, strengths, weaknesses, etc. Please remember that quality is more important than quantity and that constructive/analytical does not necessarily mean loud. I encourage all of you to meet with me no later than 4 weeks into the semester to discuss your participation grade.

Final Project: For the final project in this course, you have the option of writing a scholarly research paper or producing a creative project. Your topic and the nature of your project must be approved by me in advance. All students will give a brief presentation of their final project on the last day of class.

LIBRARY RESOURCES:

Library Webpage: www.utdallas.edu/library

JSTOR: an electronic archive of core scholarly journals from the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. The journals have been digitized, starting with their very first issues, often dating back to the 1800s. It does not contain current issues. Everything in JSTOR is full-text. Full-length journals articles and book reviews can be downloaded on or off campus through the library's webpage.

Project Muse: a collection of the full text of over 300 high quality humanities, arts, and social sciences journals from 60 scholarly publishers. Coverage for most journals began around 1995. Full-length journals articles and book reviews can be downloaded on or off campus through the library's webpage.

Other Resources:

H-LATAM: Web-based, scholarly discussion network of Latin American historians and other scholars. This is a good forum for keeping up on current literary debates and also to query experts in the field for advice on literature, methodology, archives, etc.

<http://www.h-net.org/>

ACADEMIC CALENDAR:

The following schedule outlines the topics and reading assignments for each class. This schedule is subject to change. Any changes made to the schedule and/or any other course requirements will be announced in class and will be posted on the course website: www.utdallas.edu/~mrankin.

August 24	INTRODUCTION
August 31	DRUG HISTORY AS HISTORY Smith
September 7	THEMES TO CONSIDER Reserve Readings 1-6
September 14	COLONIAL HISTORY OF DRUG USE Gootenberg Reserve Reading 7
September 21	DRUGS IN MEXICAN HISTORY Campos
September 28	PROHIBITION IN THE U.S. Film: Reefer Madness Reserve Readings 8-9
October 5	JOURNALISTS AS SOURCES Select Journalistic Account
October 12	JOURNALISM AND VIOLENCE Corchado

	Reserve Reading 10
October 19	SCHOLARLY ACCOUNTS Select Carey or Campbell
October 26	PROJECT WORKSHOP Present final project topic
November 2	INTRODUCTION TO NARCO CULTURE Polit Film: NarcoCultura
November 9	NARCOCORRIDOS Wald Reserve Reading 11 Film: NarcoCultura
November 16	LA REINA DEL SUR – A PHENOMENON Perez-Reverte Reserve Readings 12-13
November 30	POPULAR CULTURE Benavides (Part 2) Reserve Readings 14-16
December 7	FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
December 10	FINAL PROJECT DUE BY 7:00 PM

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

General policies and procedures for the University of Texas at Dallas can be found at:
<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>