THE FUTURE OF US-MEXICO RELATIONS: WALLS OR BRIDGES IN AN ERA OF POPULISMS AND NATIONALISMS

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Course Description

Will the US build a wall and will Mexico pay for it? What is the future of trade relations, border security and anti-narcotics cooperation between the United States and Mexico in an era of growing nationalism and populism in the Americas?

The relationship between the United States and Mexico is exceedingly important to both countries. While there are many shared interests and joint initiatives regarding economic, immigration, and security policies, there are also different perspectives and sometimes misunderstandings on these and other issues, and divisions within and between the two countries. Examples include: the possibility of building a wall along the whole US-Mexico border, a new trade agreement (after what was known as the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA), a plausible migration agreement, border-security cooperation and anti-narcotics cooperation in times of nationalism, populism, and an opioid crisis that is provoking thousands of deaths on both sides of the border.

This study abroad program presents an ideal opportunity for undergraduate/graduate students to explore some of the most consequential policy problems facing Mexico and the U.S. today. Indeed, Mexico offers one of the richest international experiences for students to explore public policy and government problems, regardless of their specific areas of interest and expertise.

Course Goals

Upon completing this course, students will be familiar with a range of contemporary policy-making challenges to U.S. – Mexico relations, including their origins, implications, and possible future trajectories. They will acquire the knowledge and understanding to place these challenges within a broader historical, political, social, and economic context. The goal is to acquire the ability to think strategically, beyond the day-to-day challenges of a bureaucracy, so as to govern more effectively over time.

Theoretical lessons will be paired with specific applications crucial to the professional development of effective leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sector. Through lectures, in-country discussions, and writing assignments, students will learn to analyze and begin to formulate specific policy responses to those governance challenges.

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize historical trajectories in modern Mexican society ad culture
2. Describe and compare U.S. and Mexico policies towards economic, migration, and security issues
3. Analyze a current policy issue and its cross-border implications
4. Propose a policy action or solution to a current policy problem
5. Evaluate and critique select U.S. and Mexico policy approaches to economic, migration, and security issues

Course Requirements

**Book Review: 25%**
Prepare a combined review of the books of Payan and Selee as preparation for the trip. The review should focus on trade, immigration, and border security, and summarize the authors’ main arguments. The paper should be no less than two, and no more than three pages long (see Guidelines below for formatting.) Review due by March 7, 2019, at 5:00 pm.

**Policy Memo: 25%**
Provide a policy memo about one or more of the lectures or site visits of your choice as if you were to brief a U.S. Government official (State, Commerce, DHS, etc.) about the topic and discussion. The paper should be no more than two pages long and conclude with a recommendation on policy action. Memo due by April 3, 2019, at 5:00pm.

**Participation in Lectures, Seminars, and Attendance of Orientation Session: 10%**
Contribute to discussions and engage in a productive exchange of knowledge and viewpoints.

**Research Paper: 40%**
Conduct a scholarly analysis of a public policy issue related to the study abroad curriculum. The paper should be between 10 and 12 pages (not including citations, footnotes/endnotes, charts, tables, appendices, etc.) and be prefaced by a one-page executive summary.
Outline due by April 3, 2019 at 5:00 pm.
Paper due by May 3, 2019 at 5:00pm.

**Readings**

**Required Books**

**Required Articles**
Mexico Institute’s article (TBA).
Mexico Center’s article (TBA).
Other Sources
Office of the United States Trade Representative https://ustr.gov.
The Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/mexico-institute.
The Mexico Center at the Baker Institute, Rice University https://www.bakerinstitute.org/mexico-center/.
U.S.-Mexico Border Issues: A Selected Bibliography from the Smithsonian Institution Libraries' Collections: (Compiled by Celia C. Perez; Smithsonian Institution Libraries Intern; University of South Florida; School of Library and Information Science; Summer 2000 http://www.sil.si.edu/silpublications/us-mexico-border-issues.htm

Policies

Written Assignments
All written assignments must be submitted in MS Word via email to the instructor. They must be double-spaced, in 11-point font, letter-size paper, with 1-inch margins, and the word count indicated on the cover sheet.

Papers that have been submitted for academic credit in other courses or produced for any purpose other than this course may not be submitted for credit in this course.

Writing research papers is a fundamental part of graduate study. The quality of a paper is determined by a number of factors, including presentation of facts, development of argumentation, clarity of analysis, acknowledgment of sources, and accuracy of format and style.

For the scholarly research and analysis paper, you should use the concepts and ideas from this course, as well as any others that you find useful. You must cite a minimum of twelve different sources used (not counting the required texts if you choose to cite those.) Do not confine your research to internet sources or the popular press (newspapers, magazines, etc.), although you may find them helpful as starting points to gain ideas. Interviews, where appropriate, are strongly encouraged. Be sure to properly and completely cite all the sources you use, including websites, using a generally accepted citation style (e.g., APA or Chicago.)

Grading
All written and oral assignments will be judged using the GMU system for grading graduate courses as laid out in the university catalog. Grades earned for each assignment will be added numerically, and the average will be used to determine the final grade, which allows for the grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, as well as C, F, and IN. Assignments that are submitted late will lead to a grade reduction, up to being marked as missed entirely. Unacceptably frequent periods of absence (missing more than three classes) will result in grade reduction as well.

Plagiarism
The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.
Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero-tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Honor Code

George Mason University shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia since 1842. The Honor Code is an integral part of university life. In the spirit of the code, a student’s word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations.

This course is subject to all policies of the George Mason University Honor Code as laid out in the university catalog. As stated above, the provisions regarding plagiarism are particularly relevant. The best way of avoiding plagiarism charges is rigorous and meticulous documentation and, to the extent possible, retention, of all sources that are used for preparing papers and presentations. While it is not necessary to cite a source for every single statement, it is expected that students reference major sources in a way that allows fellow students and other readers to identify them. This means e.g. when citing an author in the text, the cited work needs to be referenced in full in the bibliography, and the bibliographic citations need to be complete and verifiable.

Students with Special Needs

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you need to: 1) make sure the documentation is on file with the Office for Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 2500; 993-2474; http://ods.gmu.edu) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs before the start of classes.