POLS/MASC 4333 US-Mexico Border Relations
Fall 2019

Class Meetings: 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm MW Music, Science & Learning Ctr 1.111
UTRGV (ASSIST) Catalog Description: [POLS 4333 is] an analysis of the politics at the U.S.-Mexican border. Focus on the political economy and the administration of the borderlands. Prerequisites: POLS 2305 (or POLS 2385).

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

At 1,954 miles long, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands stretch across coastal, desert, and tropical climatic terrains of varying altitudes. The lengthy U.S.-Mexico border is a region of multiple contrasts. Enormous demographic, socioeconomic, political, and cultural differences can be found across the nearly 2,000 mile-long border. There are also multiple issues to resolve along this extremely diverse and unequal region. These issues slide along the scale of the legal and the illegal in a fluid border constantly moving to a hardened state and populated by actors with specific interests. The U.S.-Mexico borderlands have been in constant change for decades, and particularly since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. The events of September 11, 2001 in the USA also reconfigured the conceptualizations of the U.S.-Mexico border, its management and related public policies.

This course examines the political dynamics and the main policy issues in the Mexico-U.S. border region today. For this purpose, we will first review the cultural, economic, social and political dimensions of the Mexico-U.S. border region. We will particularly assess the economic conditions, institutions, governance structures, social policy issues, and binational relations in the border region. Then, we will analyze border politics and policy in the following 6 areas: (1) economic development, (2) labor, (3) migration, (4) public health, (5) the environment, and (6) security. There is also a comparative border section to enable further reflection and knowledge concerning other border regions around the world. Special attention will be given to the subjects of border wall construction, migration policy and particularly to border security issues and policies.

Through the readings and discussion in the course, students will understand that the relationship between the United States and Mexico should not be treated as monolithic throughout the borderlands. A multiple-borders perspective is crucial to understanding the U.S.-Mexico border and border relations in this area, as well as related economic, social and political dynamics.
### Student Learning Outcomes

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<th>Program Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Major Course Requirement/Major Assignment/Examination</th>
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<td><strong>SLO 1: Research Methods</strong></td>
<td>(1.1) Students will apply research methods appropriate for the social sciences.</td>
<td>Strong research question tied to scholarly interest. The literature is clearly identified, connected to the research question, and properly cited and formatted. Variables/topics are clearly identified and are used in accurate analysis of the research question. All references are properly cited and formatted.</td>
<td>13 Weekly Assignment Papers/1 Research Paper</td>
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<td><strong>SLO 2: Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>(2.1) Students will acquire analytical and critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>Question is critically evaluated and comprehensively understood in a broader context. Views of experts are questioned thoroughly. Limits of one’s own position is acknowledged.</td>
<td>13 Weekly Assignment Papers/1 Research Paper</td>
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<td><strong>SLO 3: Effective Writing</strong></td>
<td>(3.1) Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively.</td>
<td>Grammar, punctuation usage and spelling enhance paper quality; well written.</td>
<td>13 Weekly Assignment Papers/1 Research Paper</td>
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Course Requirements

Weekly assignments – Class discussion board (13%) (1 point per week)

Students will participate in class discussions in class and online by identifying at least one theme for the assigned class readings and posting on the blackboard discussion board for the week (before the class meets on Monday). Students will also respond to at least two other course postings in a civil/collegial manner using UTRGV COLTT “Netiquette” guidelines.

Weekly assignments – written presentations (52%) (4 points per week)

Students each week will pick up one social, economic or political problem in the assigned weekly readings and write a brief paper. Students will present their work to their colleagues and submit a written report to the instructor with all of the assigned readings taken into consideration. Papers should be 500-800 words (approx. 2-3 pages double spaced). Presentations will be graded taking into account: a) clarity and content; b) critical remarks; and c) originality of the exposition, using the “weekly assignments” rubric. These weekly assignments are due at the beginning of class on Wednesday for that week. The weekly assignments will be written in APA format with a title page, double-spaced, and with cited references. (This also has the effect of the student getting used to the APA format for your final course paper). Occasionally, there will be additional readings in Blackboard other than what may be listed in this syllabus. Students will still be held responsible for those readings.

Final paper (35%)

A semester-long research project will be required of each student. This project should examine one border policy initiative in the area of your choice (security, the border wall, the environment, public health, etc). The final essay should be approximately 12-15 pages long (4000-6000 words), in the APA format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and references. This paper is due for submission on Wednesday, December 4, 2019. Students are required to submit an initial outline and references page at week 5 “Weekly Assignment #5” during the semester before the paper is due.

Papers will be evaluated according to their insight, clarity, and the effectiveness with which they answer the specific question. Writing style matters. Be clear and concise.

Citation and Documentation of Sources:

For the weekly assignments and research paper, when referencing all sources used in your essays, you will use the American Psychological Association (APA) style standard for forms of citation and you must be consistent throughout the paper. (See APA style powerpoint in Blackboard for this course). Also, if you are using an updated version of Microsoft Word, you may set up the correct format by using the “References” feature by clicking on the “Citations” app and scrolling up on “Citation style” to “APA.”
Please note that you can miss deadlines for final papers and weekly assignments only for medically certified incapacity or for the gravest adequately documented, or crisis in your immediate family. No make-ups will be scheduled for any other reason.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (See UTRGV’s Rules and Regulations).

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Please contact me in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations. Two unexcused absences are permitted without consequence. Points will be deducted for each absence beyond the second. For a third unexcused absence, your overall grade will drop by 3 points. For a fourth unexcused absence, you overall grade will drop by 6 point. For a fifth unexecused absence, your grade will drop by 9 points, and 3 points continually thereafter for any other unexcused absence, etc.

Special note: For students in POLS/MASC 4333, if you leave before class ends, then you will be counted absent that day. If you arrive late or leave early, you will be counted absent.

READING MATERIALS

The required readings listed below each class are essential to understand the course. The recommended readings list provides supplementary materials to pursue topics in greater depth for your final papers, oral presentations and independent study. The online links represent additional sources of information.

Books can be ordered directly from the publishers, or from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, etc. There is a book order (of required texts) for this specific course at the UTRGV (Follett) bookstore.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


**ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL:**

In addition to the required and recommended texts, there are a number of articles available on-line. Further readings will be posted on Blackboard so be sure to check regularly.

**Weekly Assignment #1**

- USA Today: The Border Wall, link: [https://www.usatoday.com/border-wall/](https://www.usatoday.com/border-wall/)

**Weekly Assignment #2**

*Theorizing Borders to Understand the U.S.-Mexico Border*


**Weekly Assignment #3**

*U.S.-Mexico Border History*


**Weekly Assignment #4**

*The U.S.-Mexico Border Economy 1 – A Comparative Perspective*


**Weekly Assignment #5**

*Course Paper Proposals Due*

- Paper topics will be presented and discussed in class. The proposal will be 500-600 words with an additional five scholarly sources. The paper proposal will count as part of the student’s weekly assignment.

**Weekly Assignment #6**

*The U.S.-Mexico Border Economy 2: Economic Development and Social Policy on the Border*

Weekly Assignment #7


- *El Muro (the Wall)* 2017 (produced and directed by Ramon and Rosalva Resendiz) Video link: [https://vimeo.com/261423435](https://vimeo.com/261423435)

Weekly Assignment #8

Immigration Policy


Weekly Assignment #9

Border Issues and Public Health

Weekly Assignment #10

Environmental and Social Policies on the Mexico-U.S. Border


Weekly Assignment #11

Border Security I


Weekly Assignment #12

Border Security II


Weekly Assignment #13

Border Security III and Course Conclusion

- Terence M. Garrett. “Where there’s a wall there’s a way: The end (?) of democratic discourse regarding immigration and border security policy” accepted for publication in the University of Maryland Journal of International Law, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law for the Fall 2017 Symposium, Baltimore,
Maryland, Friday, October 20, 2017, The U.S. Mexico Relationship in International Law and Politics.


**FINAL PAPER DUE – at classtime Wednesday, December 4, 2019**

*** The professor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this syllabus and on Blackboard as needed ***

**Academic Calendar for Fall 2019 Term (August 26 – December 12)**

- Apr. 1 (Mon.) Registration Begins
- Aug. 21 (Wed.) Payment Due Last day to join a waitlist
- Aug. 23 (Fri.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive a 100% refund
- Aug. 26 (Mon.) Fall classes begin
- Aug. 29 (Thurs.) Last day to add a class or register for Fall classes
- Aug. 30 (Fri.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive an 80% refund
- Sep. 2 (Mon.) Labor Day Holiday. No classes.
- Sep. 9 (Mon.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive a 70% refund
- Sep. 11 (Wed.) Census Day (last day to drop without it appearing on the transcript)
- Sep. 16 (Mon.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive a 50% refund
- Sep. 23 (Mon.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive a 25% refund
- Nov. 13 (Wed.) Last day to drop a class (grade of DR) or withdraw (grade of W)
- Nov. 28-29 (Thurs.-Fri.) Thanksgiving Holiday. No classes.
- Dec. 5 (Thurs.) Study Day. No classes.
- Dec. 6-12 (Fri.-Thurs.) Final Exams
- Dec. 12 (Thurs.) Fall classes end; Official last day of the term
- Dec. 13-14 (Fri.-Sat.) Commencement Exercises
- Dec. 16 (Mon.) Grades Due at 3 p.m.

(Link: [https://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/admissions/utrgv-academic-calendar.pdf](https://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/admissions/utrgv-academic-calendar.pdf))