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Office Hours –Monday and Wednesday 11:00 to 12:30 (or by appointment)

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Drug Use, Abuse and Trafficking: A Course on the Violence of Drugs and Drug Policy

Course Description:

Since 2006 Mexico has been experiencing an unprecedented conflict that has resulted in more than 200,000 deaths. The public outcry has drawn attention to mass graves, brutal torture, corruption and the uniquely public nature of the violence that frequently uses YouTube and other websites to publicly display killings and torture. This conflict, frequently dubbed the “war on drugs,” has sparked numerous debates and controversies surrounding the legalization of drugs, arms trafficking, U.S. involvement in Mexico’s political and military affairs. In addition to these public debates there are academic questions related to the geographies of drug violence such as the social, economic and political mechanisms that created the conditions of poverty and exploitation that support participation in the drug industry. This includes discussions of the structural factors that directly create a system where violence and death becomes part of everyday life, such as: political corruption, undocumented migration, international aid in the form of Plan Mérida and other factors such as free trade that drive social inequality.

The course will focus on the specific characteristics of the conflict in Mexico by learning about President Felipe Calderón’s approach to combating organized crime and the transition back to the PRI with Enrique Peña Nieto, the involvement of the ATF and DEA in Mexico, and the important Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), such as the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, The Gulf Cartel and their leaders Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzmán, “El Lazca”, Osiel Cardenas, Miguel Felix Gallardo, the Beltran Leyva brothers to name a few. We will also follow current events as the president elect, brings a decidedly different approach to the crisis. We will also discuss the Peace Movement in Mexico and the work that is being done to change the course of the conflict. Despite the focus on Mexico, we will compare literature from the United States and across Latin America to put the political economy of drugs into a global perspective. As the semester advances we will discuss more broadly the social issues imbedded in this conflict and provide opportunities for students to arrive at complex understandings of the role of drugs and violence in contemporary society.

Goals:

- You will be able to list the key figures (Mexican Politicians, Cartel leaders), organizations (Cartels and Government Organizations), events and regional characteristics of the drug violence in Mexico.
- You will describe recent trends in pop-culture (movies, television and music) as it relates to public perceptions of and reactions to drug violence
- You will analyze the different historical factors that led to the current violence
- You will critique the different interpretations of why this conflict is happening and the various proposed solutions from policy makers, politicians, academics and journalists

Requirements:

- Attendance is Mandatory! There will be an in-class quiz or group exercise every class that represents a significant portion of your grade
- Familiarity with Spanish is not required although it will be **highly advantageous** when searching for additional materials
- This is a reading and writing intensive course designed to challenge pre-conceived ideas and understandings
- The subject matter for this course will **include adult themes**. This is a blanket trigger warning for anyone worried about exposure to images, stories and Students are required to be respectful and mature while dealing with this sensitive topic. If, for any reason, anyone becomes uncomfortable in the class, please see me immediately.

Grading:

50 points - In class exercises, reading quizzes and participation

30 points - Mid term

40 points – Group Presentation

30 points - Short papers

50 points - Final Essay

200 points total

***Note* There are more possible points available in the class**

*All assignments may be written **in Spanish or English***

In class exercises and participation will include a professional development component, i.e. how does one present an argument? How to make a “good” power point. What are valid sources for an academic paper and how do you cite for direct quotes and paraphrases. These are universal skills that will be expected of each student.

Reading Quizzes – Every class period there will be an exercise or reading quiz to turn in this. The total for all reading quizzes and exercises is greater than 50 possible points.

The Mid-Term will test understandings of the who, what and where of the drug violence and how it has formed over time. It will also cover your knowledge of concepts that we discuss in class.

3 Short Papers: Students will write three short papers throughout the semester. These will serve to begin your research on your final papers and presentations. These papers will represent a survey of literature and data available on selected topics. The goal is to expand your understanding of a topic beyond what we discuss in class (i.e. more information on opiate production, arms trafficking, or journalism in a time of violence).

Group Presentation In groups, you will explore one particular topic in depth. You will be required to find primary and secondary sources to analyze and draw conclusions. Topics may include legalization of drugs, U.S. intervention in Mexico, Free Trade, gun policies etc.). Attendance is **MANDATORY!**

Final Essay: The final essay will require you to critique the different approaches to dealing with drugs and violence. You will also be required to provide your own interpretation of why things are the way they are in Mexico, and what should or could be done. I expect you to write a critical account of the different perspectives advanced by the authors we have read and choose (or invent) a perspective/approach to understanding what is happening as well as the different calls to action from within the U.S. and Mexico (legalize drugs or send the U.S. Military to Mexico for example). You will work in groups to comment and give feedback to each other's papers on the second to the last week in class. **It will be ten to fifteen pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with standard margins and include ACADEMIC references.**

Classroom Ethics:

In addition to University of Texas El Paso guidelines, the class requires a level of maturity and sensitivity beyond what is normally expected. This is a difficult, personal and extremely sensitive topic, which requires the greatest level of respect both to the subject and to fellow classmates. I require that we avoid at all cost value laden judgments such as “good guys” and “bad guys.” The purpose of this class is to display the complicated, interwoven nature of violence regardless of how difficult it is to understand. Critical dialogue and debate are essential for us to develop a complex understanding that acknowledges all perspectives. All classmates must be shown the utmost respect. I encourage any student that feels they have been disrespected, or if they are simply having problems with the subject matter, to please see me at once.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Jeremy Slack. 2019. **Deported to Death: How Drug Violence is Changing Migration in Mexico.** University of California Press.

Benjamin Lessing. 2018. **Making Peace in Drug Wars: Crackdowns and Cartels in Latin America.** Cambridge University Press.

Thomas Grisaff. 2018. **Coca, Yes. Cocaine No: How Bolivia's Coca Growers Reshaped Democracy.** Duke University Press.

All other readings will be provided on Blackboard in PDF format, or, you will be asked to download the texts from Google Scholar or the UTEP library. However, it is also recommended that you purchase the following texts.

Campbell, H. (2009). *Drug war zone: frontline dispatches from the streets of El Paso and Juárez.* University of Texas Press.

Gibler, J. (2011). *To die in Mexico: dispatches from inside the drug war.* San Francisco, CA, City Lights Books.

Student responsibilities and obligations:

Regular class attendance is expected of all university students. Attendance is excused, however, on religious holidays for students affiliated with that religion.

Reasonable behavior is also expected of all students. "Reasonable behavior" includes:

No cell phone use. Please turn them off before you enter class.

No email or internet use in class.

No talking over the instructor or other classroom activity.

No reading the Wilcat or other materials during class.

Being polite and civil in the classroom.

If you fail to abide by such basic behavioral guidelines you may be asked to leave the classroom. Students found using their cell phones or laptops for nonacademic purposes will have a private meeting with a member of the teaching team. Students who commit a second violation will have their participation grade reduced.

Academic Honesty Statement

The course will follow the University of Texas at El Paso's policies on academic honesty. These policies can be found at <http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386>

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. **EVERYTHING YOU HAND IN WILL BE RUN THROUGH PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE WHICH TELLS ME EXACTLY WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR PAPER IS NOT ORIGINAL.** *I will be forced to take action against anyone who fails to cite sources adequately.*

All material submitted must be the student's own work. Ideas and expressions cited from the work of others must be credited appropriately. Avoid plagiarism by giving credit where credit is due, using quotation marks when using words directly from another source, and preferably putting things in your own words. I prefer your own phrasing, even if it is imperfect, to a beautifully phrased statement that is borrowed from some other source. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic Assistance and Disability Statement

In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Center for Accommodations and Support Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Center for Accommodations and Support Services. You may call (915) 747-5148 for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability. You also can visit the CASS website at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> or the CASS office in Room 106 East Union Building. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Tentative Schedule:

MODULE 1 – INTRODUCTION

Week 1 – Introduction to the course, discussion of goals

Monday 08/26 – Intro, goals and syllabus discussion

Wednesday 08/28 – John Gibler, 2011, *To Die in Mexico*

Friday 08/30 – Peter Andreas, *Border Games* - Chap 1 and 2

MODULE2 – HISTORY AND POLITICS

Week 2 – *History and Policy*

Monday 09/02 – Labor day – No classes

Wednesday 09/04 – Carlos Gil, *Hope and Frustration*, pg. 1 – 48

Friday 09/6- Kurt Hollander – in class discussion

MODULE3 – Policing the Narcostate

Week 3 – *History and Policy 2*

Monday 09/09 – Carlos Gil, *Hope and Frustration*, pg 48 – 96

Wednesday 09/11 – The Bad Neighbor Policy

Friday 09/13 – Film TBA

Week 4 – *Drugs and Migration*

Monday 09/16 – Slack – *Deported to Death* – Chapter 1 - 4

Wednesday 09/18 – Slack - Chapters 5-9

Friday 09/20 – ***Mid-Term 1***

Week 5 – *How drugs move: From the fields to your doorstep!*

Monday 09/23 – *Dealing Drugs* – Philippe Bourgois, 1989, Crack in Spanish Harlem

Wednesday 09/25 – Quinones – *Dreamland*

Friday 09/27 –. Grisaff – *Bolivia Cocaine*

Week 6 – *Drug Production and History*

Monday 09/30 – *Cocaine Chronicles*

Wednesday 10/02 – Grisaff – *Bolivia Cocaine*

Friday 10/04 – Grisaff – *Bolivia Cocaine*

MODULE5 – POPULAR CULTURE AND EL NARCO

Week 7 – *Living with Drug Violence: Faith, Followers and Revelers*

Monday 10/07 – Price, *On Sinners and Saints: Malverde*

Wednesday 10/09 – Michalik, *Santa Muerte*

Friday 10/11 – Film TBA

MODULE6 – HOW DO DRUGS AND VIOLENCE INTERACT WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD?

Week 8 – *How do we study the impacts of drugs and violence on the rest of life?*

Monday 10/14 – Zilberg – Spaces of Detention

Wednesday 10/16 – Wolf - MS-13

Friday 10/18 – ***Turn in Essay #1***

Week 9 – *Impacts of Drugs and Violence continued...*

Monday 10/21 – Magaloni – Justice system in Mexico

Wednesday 10/23 – Presunto Culpable - Film

Friday – 10/25 – Presunto Culpable - Film

MODULE8 – WHAT CAUSES DRUG VIOLENCE AND HOW CAN WE STOP IT?

Week 10 – *Alternative Approaches*

Monday – 10/28 – Lessing – Part 1

Wednesday – 10/30 – Lessing – Part 2

Friday – 11/01 – Lessing - Part 3

Week 11 – *Causes and Policies of Drug Violence*

Monday – 11/04 – Gilmore - Golden Gulag

Wednesday – 11/06 – Shane Bauer Prison Guard

Friday – 11/08 – Gun Control Report – WOLA

Week 12 – Causes and Policies Continued

Monday 11/11 – Gendered Violence – Howard Campbell, *Female Drug*, Agnew
– Femicides and Cartel Violence

Wednesday 11/13 – Zizumbo - *Auto-Defensas*

Friday 11/15 – **Turn in Essay #3**

Week 13 – Causes and Impacts continued

Monday 11/18 – Group work – no class

Wednesday 11/20 – Cartel Land

Friday 11/22 – *Cartel Land part 2*

MODULE 9 – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Week 14 – Recovering from Violence: Where do we go from here?

Monday 11/25 – Perspectives on Violence – Bourgois and Scheper Hughes

Wednesday 11/27 – *Thanksgiving - No Class*

Friday 11/29 – *Thanksgiving - No Class*

Week 15 - Recovering continued

Monday 12/02 – Final Presentations

Wednesday 12/04 – **Draft of Final Paper** - Discuss in Group and Recap

FINAL EXAM – Date - TBA