AntH 3312 – 33637/ SOCI 3312/33638/ Online Course
Drug Use, Abuse, and Trafficking: A Course on the Violence of
Drugs and Drug Policy/ University of Texas at El Paso/ Sociology
and Anthropology Department Maymester 2024.

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Sociology and Anthropology Department / Class Schedule: Online
mode Email: vmvazquezro@utep.edu
Maymester 2024
Calendar: 05/13 – 05/24

Course Description:

Since 2006, Mexico has been experiencing an unprecedented
conflict that has resulted in more than 150,000 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, and
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 become 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 PAN approach to combating organized crime and the transition back to the
PRI with Enrique Pena Nieto and the new approach by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador
(AMLO) from MORENA. 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 Cárdenas, Miguel Felix Gallardo,
the Beltran Leyva brothers to name a few. 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 embedded in
this conflict and provide opportunities for students to arrive at complex understandings of the role of drugs
and violence in contemporary society.

Class Goals:

• General knowledge of Ethnographic Research and discussion of fieldwork conducted in El Paso
Border, Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, México, and Latin America.
• You will be able to understand Latin America’s main structural problems (inequality, corruption,
political instability, and challenges faced by the population).
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- 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 México.
- 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 analyze the different interpretations of why this conflict is happening and the various proposed solutions from policymakers, politicians, academics, and journalists.

Requirements:
This class will be delivered Online mode. Students are responsible for reading all assignments and class lessons in the time frame indicated and for completing all activities (discussions, debates, papers) within the announced period. Each lesson will expire one week after its activation date and cannot be accessed after that. Exceptions will be made only for documented medical emergencies. There will be debates, discussions, and written papers that represent a significant portion of your grade.

Familiarity with Spanish is not required although it will be highly advantageous when searching for additional materials.

Field trip information

There is a voluntary academic field trip to Downtown El Paso on Saturday, May 18 from 9:00 am – 12 pm. The field trip’s objective is to gather the information for the Final Paper. It is not mandatory! However, I encourage all of you to make the arrangements and to participate if able. The field trip will be in charge of Dr. Max Grossman from the History Department at UTEP who is going to explain all the main topics for the final paper. We are going to meet at 400 W Overland Ave. at 8:45 am. Make the arrangements and see you on the field trip. Bring sports clothing, sun protection, sports shoes, a hat, water, and snacks. We are going to walk from Duranguito to Segundo Barrio.

Field trip requirement

Fill out the consent form and submit it on Blackboard on Wednesday May 15.

Important

For all the students who live outside El Paso, there is a special Final Paper rubric on Blackboard. If you cannot attend the field trip on Saturday, May 18, you can do the visit by yourself.

This is a reading, audiovisual, and writing intensive course designed to challenge pre-conceived ideas and understandings.

The subjects for this course will include adult themes. Students are required to be respectful and mature while dealing with these sensitive topics. If, for any reason, anyone becomes uncomfortable with the topics. I recommend communicating with the professor through email vmvazquezro@utep.edu
Grading by course content:
150 points - (Assignments and debates)
50 points – Midterm essay
50 points - Final Written Paper An anthropological analysis of the Gentrification threat to the historical communities of Duranguito and Seguno Barrio. How these poor communities are vulnerable to drug trafficking problems in the borderland?

Grade Breakdown
A – 250 pts. -225 pts.
B- 224 pts. – 200 pts.
C- 199 pts. -177 pts.
D- 176 pts. -149 pts.
F- 148 pts. -0 pts.

250 points totals.
*Note* There are more possible points available in the class

All assignments may be written in English or Spanish

Course Work
Course activities will consist of reading, written discussions posted on discussion boards, and written assignments. The goal of each lesson is to give you a guideline for close detailed reading of the book chapters, articles, assignments, and documentaries analysis. Not every question can be answered directly in the reading; some are there to make you think or to point out implications rather than direct statements. This is a critical thinking course designed to provide you with cultural awareness and to give you a general understanding based on the works of academic researchers who analyze the impact on society of the world of drug trafficking in the Borderland. Therefore, I encourage all of you to read every class lesson, to make the readings, to watch the documentaries, and to apply your academic and anthropological approach for a better understanding and to make your reflections to address this historical problem in the borderland. Your academic reflections and engagement in class are very important for your academic development and the best outcomes in this class.

Courses Penalties
For late submission or grammar error – (-5 points for late submissions) ( -5 points for grammatical error).
For improper language (-5 points for improper language in the assignments or debates).
For plagiarism (you will be referred to The University of Texas Disciplinary Committee).
For photos taken from the web ( -5 points).
For using information obtained from AI / ChatGPT (-25 you will be referred to The University of Texas Disciplinary Committee).

**The Midterm** - The midterm essay focuses on the Anthropological analysis of drug violence in culture.

**Debates** - Elaborate a short opinion focused on concepts and topics discussed in class. This is a critical thinking exercise.

**Final reflection:** The final essay will require you to elaborate an anthropological analysis of the Gentrification impact in the historical communities of Duranguito and Segundo Barrio and how these poor communities are vulnerable to drug trafficking problems in the borderland. The Final paper is based on your experiences and information observed and gathered in the field trip.

**All the written papers, debates, assignments, etc.** must be written in APA Format 1.5-2.0 Times New Roman font and include ACADEMIC references.

**Academic Integrity**
Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited and will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Students must do their own work on all the class papers and exams. Work submitted formally (i.e., Papers) will be evaluated for content and standard grammar and style. Contributions to discussions will be permitted somewhat greater deviation from standard practice for formal submission.

Standard practices of academic integrity are required in the course. All material submitted must be the student's own work. Ideas and expressions cited from the work of others must be credited appropriately. The course will follow the University of Texas at El Paso's policies on academic honesty. These policies can be found on the Student Affairs webpage.

**Usage of Artificial Intelligence:**
Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted in this course must be your own and completed in accordance with the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures Chapter 1 Section 1.2.3. AI-generated submissions that use ChatGPT, Grammarly, Chegg, or other AI composition software are prohibited, will be treated as cheating, and reported to the Dean of Students.
Copyright Notice
Many of the materials that are posted within this course are protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in this course and only for this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

Technical Requirements
You will be taking this entire course, and possibly other courses, on your computer. You must have the minimum hardware and software to successfully complete this course. If you are in the market for a new system, please consider spending a bit more to upgrade to a more optimal system. Please refer to the Getting Started off the course for more information on technical requirements.

Technical Support
The University of Texas at El Paso provides free 24/7 Helpdesk support to academic students and faculty members teaching online. The Helpdesk can provide answers to questions about using technology and services, as well as, technical support. Please visit the Technical Support Page for more information.

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.

Books and readings


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“Ciudad Juárez es número uno Ciudad Juárez es the number one
Y la frontera más fabulosa y bella del mundo. Juárez es el numero uno” By Juan Gabriel (1984). Photos by Dr. Vázquez: Welcome to Ciudad Juárez the Bridge of the Americas/ Mercado Juárez. Through an ethnographic approach, we are going to discuss the main impact of drug war in the Borderland.
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Articles/ Readings


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 acquire it.

COURSE CALENDAR MAYMESTER 2024 (Calendar is subject to change) Remember, to review the class lessons for instructions, assignments, and debate due dates.

Class lesson 1 – Introduction, course approach, General Concepts of ethnographic research.

Weeks

5/13 – Introduction to the course, discussion of goals.
- Intro, goals, and syllabus discussion
- The main concept of Ethnography Research and the recent contributions.
  - Reading Ethnography and Culture by James P. Spradley (2024)
  - Fieldwork experiences in Mexico
  - Fieldwork experiences in The Caribbean
  - Fieldwork experiences in Puerto Rico
  - Introduction to Latin America and Mexico studies.

Debate 1 – Ethnographic approach. 5/13
Assignment 1- Understanding Latin American complexities (inequality, politics, and corruption) Reading Latin American politics and society. Review class lessons for the rubric. Due date 5/13

Class lesson 2 – History and politics, understanding Latin America context.

5/14
- Policing the Narco State
  - What is a “narco” and how did this get started?
Podcast analysis Stuff you should know (2009) How Narcostates Work
Debate 2 - Explain what narco state means.
Review the class lesson instructions. Due date 5/14
- The main problems of democracy in Latin America
- Impact of neoliberalism in Latin America
- Corruption, historical structural problems
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Conservative vs progressive
Introduction to Mexico war on drugs
Mexico political spectrum
U.S. Drug Policy
Assignment Explain the role of the United States. Due date 5/14.

Class lesson 3 – Addressing the problem of Violence. Mexico and U.S. attitudes /Ethnographic research discussion. 5/15
- The new violence, Homicides, Drugs and the State
- Who are the killers?
- Drug cartels impact Mexico
- The drug trade and Mexican Cartels
- The Ambiguous Role of the United States
- The Strategy of Felipe Calderon (PAN) to Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI)
Debate 3 Introduction H. Campbell Downtown Juarez / Drug War Zone 5/15
Assignment Background on Ciudad Juarez Violence 5/15

Class lesson 4 – How drugs move: From the fields to your doorstep! / Ethnographic research discussion. 5/16
Mexico War on Drugs Documentaries analysis
Drug war in Ciudad Juarez 2008 – 2012
Howard Campbell – Intro/ Drug War Zone / Downtown Juarez
Howard Campbell – Selected Chapters/ Downtown Juarez
Debate 4 The normalization of violence in Ciudad Juarez.
Documentary Cartel Land (2015) midterm movie
Midterm essay due date Sunday 19th
The midterm grade report will be available by Monday 20th.

Class lesson 5 – Thinking about violence/ Popular Culture/ Hollywood’s obsession with cartels. 5/17
Violence: Theoretical and Historical Understandings
Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois 2004, Violence in War and Peace. Chap 1
(Documentaries analysis)
The naroculture analysis
Adoration of narco characters
Telenovelas and Narcos series popularity
Mainstream vs followers from Bad Bunny to Peso pluma
Music, Narcocorridos, / corridos tumbados/ Reggaeton
Living with Drug Violence: Faith, Followers and Revelers
Price, On Sinners and Saints: Malverde
Michalik, Santa Muerte
Villalobos et. al, Narco-corridos
Field trip Saturday 18

Class lessons 6 and 7 – How do drugs and violence interact with the rest of the world? Impacts of Drugs and Violence Other problems observed in the border. Vulnerable Population.
5/20 - 21
How do we study the impacts of drugs and violence on the rest of life?
– Migration and Kidnapping (J. Slack, 2014)
-Migrants Caravans, Human Trafficking and Sexual Work (Vazquez, 2021,22)
-Fieldwork conducted in Ciudad Juarez (Vazquez,2021)
-Fieldwork conducted in Tijuana (Vazquez 2022)
Assignment 5/21
Debate 5/21

Class lessons 8 and 9 – Implication of Drug Violence and how can we stop it?
5/22 - 23
-Causes and Policies of Drug Violence
-AMLO and MORENA policy approach
-Journalism in Mexico – (documentary film pending)
– Causes and Policies Continued
– Plan Colombia the impact of Pablo Escobar
Assignment 5/2
Debate 5/2
Causes and Impacts continued / The Peace Movement
H Campbell Downtown Juarez final reflection
Debate 5/22 -23
Assignment 5/23

Class lesson 10 – Recovering from Violence: Where do we go from here? 5/24
-How to get involved – The role of nonprofits, migrant shelters work, Mexico’s political future.
- The challenge of a new policy to address the fentanyl crisis and addictions.
Final recap
Final debate 5/24
Final written paper due date Saturday 25

Upload on Blackboard your final paper due date 5/25

Welcome to the extraordinary world of ethnographic studies on Drug Use, Abuse, and Trafficking. Your worldview will never be the same.