

ANTH 3312 – 14603/ SOCI 3312/14443/ LABS 4301/ 13084
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 Fall 2023.

Dr. Víctor Vázquez

Assoc. Professor of Instruction

vmvazquezro@utep.edu

Class Schedule: Hybrid mode

W -12 – 1:20 pm

Class room: Old Main 205

Office: Old Main 207

Office Hours: M - 12 pm – 1:00 pm

T- R-12 pm – 1:00 pm

Fall Semester 2023

08/28/2023-12/06/2023.



Cable car in Santa Marta, Iztapalapa México City (2023) is home to 1.8 million people, 35% of whom live in poverty in what is the most populous municipality of México City. By. Dr. Vázquez

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, 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 Peña 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 Cardenas, 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 imbedded in this conflict and provide opportunities for students to arrive at complex understandings of the role of drugs and violence in contemporary society.

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Class Goals:

- General knowledge of Ethnographic Research and discussion of fieldworks 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 population).
- 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 critique the different interpretations of why this conflict is happening and the various proposed solutions from policy makers, politicians, academics and journalists.

Requirements:

This class will be delivered Hybrid -Online mode and the attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for reading all assignments in the time frame indicated and for completing all activities (discussions, debates, papers) within the announced time span. 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, discussion and written paper 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, audiovisual and writing intensive course designed to challenge pre-conceived ideas and understandings.

The subjects matter 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 to communicate with the professor through email vmvazquezro@utep.edu

Grading:

150 points - In class exercises (assignments and debates)

50 points – Midterm essay

50 points - Final Written Paper “Anthropological reflection on Drug violence”

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**

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

Classroom behavior norms

- No laptop or tablet are allowed in the classroom.
- It's prohibited to use your cellphone in the classroom.
- It's prohibited to use headset or headphones in the classroom.
- It's prohibited to record, take photos on presentations or film the class content.
- It's prohibited any kind of interruption. If you need to use the restroom you can go before the class begins.
- It's prohibited any kind of talking with peers during the class discussion.
- It's prohibited any kind of foul, violent or derogatory language during the class discussion.
- Every lateness or tardiness in class you will miss (-3) points from your final grade report. (After 3 lateness or tardiness you will be referred to the UTEP Disciplinary committee to process your drop out).
- Every absence without justification you will miss 3 points from the final grade. After 3 absences you will be referred to the UTEP Disciplinary committee to process your drop out.
- Take note with your notebook.
- During the documentaries and movies projection no interruptions are allowed.
- Be respectful with your peers and with the professor.
- Remember, this is a critical thinking class and your engagement to the class is important to keep an academic ambient.
- No tolerance toward persons who come to class to interrupt the class content. If you can't behave according to the classroom behavior norms you will be referred to the UTEP Disciplinary committee to process your drop out.

Course Work

Course activities will consist of reading, written discussions posted on discussion boards, and long written assignments. In general, it is expected that the course will require approximately nine hours each week, including reading, exercises, discussions, and all other activities. Using the Lessons/Reading Guide. The goal of each lesson is to give you a guideline for close, detailed reading of the books; this takes the place of lecture from the professor. Take advantage of it! It will make a big difference in discussion and on your papers, as this level of detail and understanding is what I am looking for. Please note: you do not need to write out answers to the questions (unless that would help you personally) and you do not need to submit

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the answers to the professor. Instead, you should review the questions before you read each set of pages indicated in the book, and have the questions by your side as you read. 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.

The Midterm - It will also cover your knowledge of concepts that we discuss in class.

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 critique the different social problems (social, economic, political). You will also be required to provide your own interpretation and solutions. I expect you to write a critical account of the different perspectives advanced by the authors we have read and discuss on class.

All the written paper (assignments and final paper) 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 class papers and exams.

Work submitted formally (i.e., Papers) will be evaluated for content and for 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 at 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 is prohibited, will be treated as cheating, and reported to the Dean of Students.

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COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu. so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

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 the purpose of 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 on-line. 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.

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Books and readings

Andreas, P. 2009. *Border games: policing the U.S.-Mexico divide*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Bourgois, Phillippe Bourgois (1998) *In Search of Respect Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge University Press.

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

Campbell, H. (2021) *Downtown Juarez. Underworlds of Violence and Abuse*. University of Texas Press.

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

Munk Gerardo L. /Luna Juan Pablo (2022). *Latin American Politics and Society. A comparative Historical Analysis*. Cambridge University Press.

Peoples/ Baily (2017) *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Eleven Edition. Cengage Learning.

Willis, Graham Denyer. (2015) *The killing consensus: police, organized crime, and the regulation of life and death in urban Brazil*: University of California Press.

Articles/ Readings

Vazquez, V. M. & Morales, S. A. (2021). *Surviving “La Lucha” in Ciudad Juárez.: An anthropological reflection on the Cuban community in Ciudad Juárez, México*. DECUMANUS, 6 (6), 59-73.
<https://doi.org/10.20983/decumanus.2021.1.4>

Vazquez, V.M. & Gutiérrez Mariana (2022) “A walk-through Tijuana: An ethnographic reflection on the daily life and the migrants caravans impact in Tijuana, Baja California, México.”
<https://erevistas.uacj.mx/ojs/index.php/decumanus/article/view/4860/6817>

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.



“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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COURSE CALENDAR FALL 2023 (Calendar is subject to change)

Face to face class

Wednesday, August 30 /Wednesday, September 6/
Wednesday, September 27/ Wednesday, October
11/ Wednesday, October 25 / Wednesday,
November 1 / Wednesday, November 15 /
Wednesday, November 29.

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

Weeks

8/30 – 9/6 – Introduction to the course, discussion of goals.

08/30 – Intro, goals and syllabus discussion

Wednesday 09/06 – *The main concept of Ethnography Research and the recently contributions.*

Chapter 6 Methods of Investigation / Chapter 1 Doing Cultural anthropology

- 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. 9/3/2023

Assignment 1- Understanding Latin American complexities (inequality, politics and corruption) Reading Latin American politics and society. Review class lesson for the rubric. Due date 9/10/2023

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

9/11-9/24

Policing the Narcostate

– *What is a “narco” and how did this get started?*

Podcast analysis Stuff you should know (2009) How Narcostates Work

Debate 2 -Explain what does narcostate means?

Review class lesson for the rubric. Due date 9/15/2023

-The main problems of democracy in Latin America

-Impact of neoliberalism in Latin America

-Corruption, historical structural problems

-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 9/17/2023

Review class lesson for the rubric

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Class lesson 3 – Addressing the problem of Violence. Mexico and U.S. attitudes /Ethnographic research discussion.

9/18 – 9/24

- 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 9/27/2023
Assignment Background on Ciudad Juarez Violence 9/24/2023

Class lesson 4 – How drugs move: From the fields to your doorstep! / Ethnographic research discussion.

9/27 – 10/4

- 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
Dealing – Philippe Bourgois, 1989, Crack in Spanish Harlem.
 Debate 4 The normalization of violence in Ciudad Juarez.
 Documentary Cartel land (2015) midterm movie
 Midterm essay due date 10/8
 Movie discussion 10/ 11

Class lesson 5 – Thinking about violence/ Popular Culture/ Hollywood’s obsession with cartels.

10/16 – 10/29

- Violence: Theoretical and Historical Understandings*
 Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois 2004, Violence in War and Peace. Chap 1
 Philippe Bourgois 2004 (1998) In search of Respect. Chap 1.
 (Documentaries analysis)
The narcoculture analysis
Adoration of narcos characters
Telenovelas and Narcos series popularity
Mainstream vs followers from Peso pluma to Bad Bunny
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*

Debate in class 10/25

Assignment 10/22

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Class lesson 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.

10/30 – 11/15

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)

Documentary analysis: *Who is Dayani Cristal?* (2014) Documentary

Assignment 11/5

Debate in Class 11 / 15

Class lesson 8 and 9 – Implication of Drug Violence and how can we stop it?

11/ 19 – 11 /26

– *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 11/26

Debate in class 11 /29

Causes and Impacts continued / The Peace Movement

H Campbell Downtown Juarez final reflection

Class lesson 10 – Recovering from Violence: Where do we go from here?

– *How to get involved – The role of nonprofit, migrants shelter work, Mexico's political future.*

– *The challenge of a new policy to address the fentanyl crisis and addictions.*

Final recap

Final written paper due date 12/6

Welcome to the extraordinary world of ethnographic studies. Your worldview will never be the same.