Freshman Seminar 30v  Mondays 2-4PM  
Mexico: Revolution, Authoritarianism, and Democracy: 100 Years  
Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/27313  

Jorge I. Domínguez, Professor  CGIS Knafel Building, 1737 Cambridge St., #K216  
Jorge_Dominguez@harvard.edu, telephone 5-5982  

Office hours: Monday and Tuesdays, 11-12  

Rationale  
Mexico, a U.S. neighbor, over the past century experienced a prolonged violent revolutionary war and subsequent transformation, established one of the world’s longest-lived authoritarian regimes, and in this century has been building a democratic political system. The combination of these three dramatic moments is rare worldwide. Most countries in the past century have had only one or two such moments, not all three. Why did Mexicans kill each other so relentlessly for so long? Why did they build, from the rulers’ perspective, perhaps the world’s most effective authoritarian regime? Why was the democratic transition so slow moving and what forms did it take? What has been the role of statesmen and scoundrels, business executives and indigenous movements, political parties and the binational communities on the U.S.-Mexico border? Examine why Mexico had no Lenin and no Mandela. Ponder why some Bishops in the 1920s ordered priests to refuse the sacraments, and why such an ethnically heterogeneous country lacks ethnic-based political parties. Examine the collective wisdom of democratic politics, steering a successful transition since the late 1990s.  

Structure  
The course has three parts: revolution, authoritarian politics, and democratic politics. Part I relies on *The Cambridge History of Latin America* as its textbook, reading eminent historians, supplemented by readings with regard to ethnicity, gender, religion, labor unions, and the U.S. border issues. Part I also examines the rise of authoritarian rule. Carlos Fuentes’ best novel closes Part I, a critical retrospective view on the revolution and its aftermath. Part II considers economic growth, the authoritarian presidency, repression and rebellion, the mass media, and political parties. Part III focuses on the democratic regime since 2000, looking at the transition, the functioning and malfunctioning of the democratic regime, changes in society and economy, and relations with the United States.  

Requirements:  
- Three 300-500 response papers  
- One 750 paper  
- One 2000-2500 paper  

Students write a response paper (300-500 words) in each of the three Parts of the course. The response paper is due before the start of the discussion of the readings on which the paper is based.  

By September 25, students write a paper (750 words) on one of the following topics:  
1. Impersonate Carlos Fuentes. Rewrite the script for the first film documentary.
2. Impersonate a Roman Catholic Bishop. Argue in favor, and then argue against, prohibiting public mass at all churches in your dioceses.

3. Impersonate President Lázaro Cárdenas. What are the pros and cons of amending the Constitution to enable him to run for reelection?

Write a paper (2000-2500 words) due on December 9, the first day of final examination period. Consult with the instructor.

Part I: The Mexican Revolution

1. Revolution I: Breakdown, War, and the Start of a New Order, August 30


Read these two texts in this four-part sequence:

Hernández Chávez, Alicia, Mexico: A Brief History, tr. Andy Klatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 204-213


Hernández Chávez, 218-233

The Cambridge History, Womack, 105-112, 118-119, 122-123, 126-131, 149-153

2. Revolution II: Who Are the Mexicans? September 11


Focus on two of the following three:

Heath, Shirley Brice, Telling Tongues: Language Policy in Mexico (Teachers College Press, 1972), 81-98


Bailey, David C., ¡Viva Cristo Rey!: The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State Conflict in Mexico (University of Texas Press, 1974), 46-50, 54-55, 61, 69, 76-79, 81-83, 94-100, 107-111, 137, 142-143, 217, 299-312
3. Revolution III: Revolutionary Rule — and Its Demise, September 18


Lorey, David, The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 69-75 (migration)

Huntington, Samuel, Political Order in Changing Societies (Yale University Press, 1968), 315-324

4. Interpreting the Mexican Revolution and Its Aftermath, September 25

[Purchase at The Coop or view at Lamont Library Reserves] Fuentes, Carlos, The Death of Artemio Cruz (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1964)

[Paper due by October 2]

Part II: The “Perfect Dictatorship”

5. Economic Growth and Protectionism, October 2

“Mexico: From Boom to Bust, #102” Frontline, WGBH TV Educational Foundation, Record Date 11/8/88, Jorge I. Domínguez, chief editorial adviser.

Haber, Stephen, and H. Klein, N. Maurer, and K. Middlebrook, Mexico since 1980 (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20-65 (“Mexico before 1982”)

Lorey, The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century, 93-114

Business International Corp., Nationalism in Latin America (1970), 42 (Bendix International case)

6. The Authoritarian Presidency, October 16

Krauze, Enrique, Mexico: Biography of Power (HarperCollins, 1997), 538-600 (Miguel Alemán presidency)


7. **Repression, Rebellion, Intimidation, and Killings, October 23**


8. **Parties, Voters, Mass Media, and Politics of the “Perfect Dictatorship,” October 30**


Mizrahi, Yemile, *From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 17-27, 51-60, 64-65


**Part III: Democratizing Mexico**

9. **Enacting the Democratic Transition, November 6**

Dominguez, Jorge I., and James McCann, *Democratizing Mexico* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1-2, 17-22


Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power*, 67-88

Bruhn, *Taking on Goliath*, 165-177, 180-184, 190, 194-199, 202-203

Greene, *Why Dominant Parties Lose*, 210-244, 252-254
10. Democratic Politics and Prosperity, November 13


Blancarte, Roberto, “Churches, Believers, and Democracy,” in Mexico’s Democratic Challenges, ed. A. Selee and J. Peschard (Stanford University Press, 2010), 281-295

http://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Mexico%20A%20Middle%20Class%20Society.pdf

11. Indigenous Peoples and Crime and Violence, November 20


Stavenhagen, Rodolfo, “Struggle and Resistance: The Nation’s Indians in Transition,” in Mexico’s Democratic Challenges, 251-266

Institute for Economics and Peace, Mexico Peace Index 2016, 4, 21-24, 109-110


**12. Mexico and the United States: Contemporary Topics, November 27**


Wilson, Christopher, *Growing Together: Economic Ties between the United States and Mexico* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Mexico Institute, 2017), 7-11 (joint production)  
[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/growing_together-economic_ties_between_the_united_states_and_mexico.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/growing_together-economic_ties_between_the_united_states_and_mexico.pdf)

Selee, Andrew, “A New Migration Agenda between the United States and Mexico,” in *Charting a New Course: Policy Options for the Next Stage in U.S.-Mexico Relations*, ed. Duncan Wood (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Mexico Institute, 2017), 67-79  
[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/charting_a_new_course.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/charting_a_new_course.pdf)

[Final paper due, December 9]