



KIIS Maya Mexico Program, Winter 2022

PS 460 Topics: Mexican Politics

Instructor: Dr. Brittany Wood

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: Mexico offers a fascinating case study in development and democratization. This course will examine the challenges facing Mexico as a young democracy. Students will study Mexican political institutions, political culture, Mexican-American relations, and current political issues such as the drug war and migration to develop an understanding of state development.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify and define major concepts within the field of political science
- Relate topics in Mexican politics to current events
- Understand the evolution of different political and economic characteristics of Mexico

- Assess the state of economic development and political democratization of Mexico
- Critically analyze current issues of Mexico such as US-Mexican relations, migration, drug war, etc. and derive policy implications

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Students will learn about Mexican political history and the political regime from both government and academic perspectives. Other topics include democratization, social movements, political culture, the role of ethnic identities in Mexican politics, political economy, Mexican-American relations, and current political issues in Mexico such as the drug war and migration. Mexico offers a rich international experience for students interested in politics of developing countries

5. Required Readings and Materials:

Book: Preston, J., & Dillon, S. (2005). *Opening Mexico: The making of a democracy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Film: *Roma* (2018, Director Alfonso Cuarón). Available on Netflix.

Supplemental readings provided by the instructor.

6. Graded Assignments:

A. Participation (10%)

Students will be assessed on level of engagement in class discussions, as well as during lectures, tours, excursions, and class presentations.

B. Pre-Departure Writing Assignment (20%)

Prior to Thanksgiving, students will be provided two questions, one on the *Opening Mexico* common reading (see below) and one on the *Roma* common film. Each student will write a 1-page response to each question (meaning, two 1-page responses) and submit them by email by December 24 at noon.

C. Op-Ed (20%)

Students will write an op-ed (750 words) linking topics addressed in the class with current political debates regarding Mexico. A good op-ed should make a single point, describe the issue, and provide specific recommendations.

D. Current Event Assignments (20%)

Students will be tasked with reading news from Mexican media sources to stay up to date on current events. Students will submit 2 response papers (2-3 paragraphs) summarizing the articles and connecting them to course material.

E. Oral Presentation (30%)

Using the course materials combined with news articles, personal observations while abroad, and supplemental readings from the instructor, groups of 2 will present to the class on one of the following topics:

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| 1. US-Mexico Relations | 3. Economic Inequality |
| 2. Authoritarianism; Single-party rule | 4. Indigenous Movements |

5. Democratization
6. Drug war
7. Emigration/Migration

8. Corruption
9. USMCA
10. Nationalism

7. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

9. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / andrea.anderson@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.