

The University of Texas at Tyler  
US–Mexico Diplomatic Priorities and Bilateral  
Developments  
POLS 4199.061

**Credit Hours:** 1

**Professor:** Dr. Robert Sterken

**Email:** rsterken@uttyler.edu

**Term:** Spring 2026

**Meeting Time:** Online asynchronous modules.

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## Course Description

This one-credit hour course is a focused independent study that explores the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Mexico. Students will examine historical and contemporary priorities, mechanisms of cooperation, areas of friction, and key developments shaping bilateral diplomacy. Topics discussed include trade, migration, security, border governance, and multilateral engagement. The course emphasizes critical reading, discussion, and a culminating analytical assignment.

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe key historical milestones in U.S.–Mexico diplomatic relations.
  2. Analyze contemporary diplomatic priorities for each country.
  3. Evaluate bilateral policy developments on trade, migration, security, and regional cooperation.
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## Required Reading

***Contemporary Mexican Politics*** by Emily Edmonds-Poll and David A Shirk. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Bloomsbury Academic.

***Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity***, by David G. Gutiérrez.

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## Weekly Topics and Assignments

Week	Topic	Activities & Readings
1-2	Introduction to U.S.–Mexico Diplomatic Relations	Overview; mapping key institutions; student introductions
3-4	Historical Context: From 19th-Century Treaties to NAFTA	Read: Edmonds-Poll, Chs. 1–3
5-6	Trade and Economics: NAFTA to USMCA	Discussion; policy briefs
7-8	Migration Policy and Enforcement	Read: Edmonds-Poll, Chs. 4–5;
9-10	Security Cooperation & Border Governance	Discussion; case study analysis
11	Energy, Environment, and Climate Diplomacy	Readings on energy agreements; group discussion
12	Multilateralism & Regional Organizations	Explore OAS, UN, and trilateral formats
13	Student Presentations / Paper Workshop	Class feedback on draft paper outlines
14	Final Reflections and Synthesis	Course wrap-up; discussion of future challenges.

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## Assignments & Grading

### Participation and Weekly Engagement – 30%

- Online discussions.
- Respond to biweekly prompts based on readings.

### Discussion Post or Short Reflection – 20%

- One short (500–800 word) reflection on a key U.S.–Mexico policy decision.

### Final Paper – 50%

#### 1000-Word Analytical Essay

Students will write a focused analytical paper (approx. 1000 words) on a topic related to U.S.–Mexico diplomatic priorities. Prompts may include:

- *Evaluate the evolution of U.S.–Mexico cooperation on migration policy in the 21st century.*
- *Analyze how trade agreements have shaped economic diplomacy between the United States and Mexico.*
- *Assess the role of security cooperation in bilateral relations.*

**Paper Requirements:**

- Clear thesis and argument.
- Evidence from the textbook and at least three additional scholarly or policy sources.
- Proper citations (APA or Chicago style).

**Due:** May 1, 2026.

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## **Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to adhere to the institution's academic honesty policy.

**Accommodations:**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented needs. Contact the instructor early in the term.

**Late Work:**

Late submissions will be accepted up to three days past the deadline with a grade penalty, unless prior arrangements have been made.