

SIS Summer Abroad 2012:

Engaging Global Themes in a Unique Mexican Context

Oaxaca, Mexico
June 9—August 4

SIS Study Abroad: Discover More. Enrich your Experience.



SCHOOL of INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

SIS Summer Abroad 2012:
Engaging Global Themes in a Unique
Mexican Context

June 9—August 4

Seminar & Internship Guide

School of International Service
American University

Apply Now!

Applications must be received by

February 27

for priority consideration.

See page 9 for more information.

Updated December 16, 2011

Engaging Global Themes in a Unique Mexican Context

June 9—August 4

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Introduction

Spanning thousands of years of rich history, Mexico has witnessed an awe-inspiring range of complex civilizations, independence movements and military conflicts, and the social and political upheaval of the Mexican Revolution. Today, the country is marked by deep contradictions. On one hand, Mexico is a global leader in finance and telecommunications and home to the richest person in the world. As one of two Latin American members of the OECD and the world's 11th largest economy, Mexico also receives international attention for its leadership in free trade.

At the same time, Mexico is fighting a devastating and violent drug war, ironically fought most viciously in the same northern part of the country which was once touted as the model for industrial development and boasted the highest economic indicators. It is a country marred by severe income inequality, with 47% of its population officially living below the poverty line, only alleviated by a thriving informal economy and large-scale migration of its citizens to the United States, now home to about 9% of the Mexican-born population. Even further complicating the picture are the huge regional differences and idiosyncrasies, and a large indigenous population in the southern part of the country that has been struggling against the exploitation of resources located in their territories, made famous by the 1994 Zapatista uprising.

It is in this setting that Oaxaca will be presented as a case study. Oaxaca is a state in southern Mexico. It has been described in a myriad of often contradictory ways: as an indigenous state, as one of Mexico's biggest tourist attractions, as one of the most underdeveloped places in Mexico, as a haven for alternative collective practices, and since 2006, as home to Mexico's 'next revolution.' With these peculiarities in mind, this course takes a geographic approach to studying Oaxaca. That is, this course will provide an in-depth view of a state whose complexity merits in depth study, and at the same consider how this uniqueness is connected to wider global processes.

Program Description

Students interested in urbanization, indigenous peoples, human geography, elections, development, and neoliberalism will find Oaxaca a fascinating and rewarding opportunity for overseas study. The Program will consist of three components:

- (a) **A pre-departure workshop** that will address the academics, logistics, policies, and guidelines for all participants.
- (b) **A seminar in Oaxaca** that will include lectures and discussions on key issues surrounding development policies and political organization, hands-on site visits, and noncredit Spanish language instruction.
- (c) **A methods course on qualitative human subjects research** during which students will engage in hands-on learning in the field, focused on different research designs and methods for conducting qualitative research involving human subjects. Students enrolled in the workshop will also have the opportunity to develop **an independent research project** conducted under the supervision of the Faculty Director.

The topics covered in the seminar may include:

- Mexico's urbanization (juxtaposed with Oaxaca remaining predominantly rural) and how its patterns of urbanization and the global forces behind it mimic those in the rest of the world
- The strong indigenous character of Oaxaca and issues faced by its indigenous peoples
- The significance of 2012 as the year of Mexico's next presidential election in the context of Mexico's rich political history
- How making Oaxaca the target of domestic and international development projects has led to the

idea of development being widely discredited there, and exploring alternatives to the conventional practice of development

- The theory and practice of neoliberalism and its particular effects on Mexico and Oaxaca

Seminar, 3 credits, June 11—July 14

To help students prepare for the seminar, students will discuss development theories and paradigms as part of a pre-departure workshop at American University (April/May, date TBA).

This seminar is designed to provide students a window into key issues including economic and cultural dislocation, migration, and survival/resistance in the face of change. Mexico and the state of Oaxaca will serve as a case study. Students will also receive 2 hours daily of Spanish instruction. The learning objectives for the seminar include: gaining background information on geography, history, culture, and socioeconomic aspects of Oaxaca and Mexico; gaining cultural competency; and learning how traditional development policies and globalization construct Mexico and Oaxaca. Learning objectives will be met through a combination of lectures, classroom discussion, visits from guest speakers, site visits, and a week-long field trip.

Students enrolled in the seminar may enjoy site visits to places such as Teotitlán del Valle, Monte Albán, and Capulalpam, where students will engage with the diverse local communities of the Oaxacan state. The seminar will culminate in a week-long trip in the Sierra Madre and coastal regions. Students will also spend several nights in indigenous communities and meet with indigenous activists and NGOs in the state. Field trip plans may change based on events on the ground.

Qualitative Human Subjects Research, 3 credits, July 16—August 3

This methods course is designed to teach graduate students how to do qualitative research involving human subjects with a focus on practicing different research designs and methods. This course takes place in Oaxaca, which will serve as the primary field site for learning about human subjects research. The class will begin with a discussion of the history and epistemological basis for qualitative research. Students will then learn how to develop a research design centered around the collection of data on, about, and from human subjects. In particular, the class will focus on three methods and a set of accompanying skills: participation observation, interview techniques, and oral history.

Students who have a research question in mind may use this course as a basis from which to complete a research project.

N.B.: This course is approved by the SIS Comparative and Regional Studies (CRS) Program as fulfilling the second methods requirement for CRS students.

N.B. Human Subjects Research

If any portion of a student's research involves human subjects as defined by AU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects, that research must receive prior approval by the IRB or its designee. To determine whether a research project qualifies or how to apply for review, students should consult the IRB website at: <http://www.american.edu/irb/index.cfm>

Program Schedule and Registration Options

April/May:	Dates for pre-academic meeting and pre-departure meetings TBA
June 9/10:	Seminar students arrive in Oaxaca
June 11 - July 14:	Seminar, site visits, and noncredit Spanish language instruction
July 16:	Departure for seminar-only participants
July 16 - August 3:	Methods course
August 4:	Methods students depart from Oaxaca

Students can participate in the program in one of two ways:

1. Seminar only (3 credits)
2. Seminar and Methods/Research (6 credits)

About Mexico

Mexico is a federation with a democratic and representative government. The country is comprised of thirty-one states and a Federal District, Mexico City. It is a rapidly developing, ethnically diverse country with an estimated population of 111 million people (the Mexican census has not tracked race since the early 20th century, but a government report issue in 2004 found that 80% of the population is mestizo). Although Spanish is the main language, 62 indigenous Amerindian languages are also represented among the population. The Mexican population is predominantly Catholic, with 87.9% of the population identifying themselves as Catholic in the 2000 census.

About Oaxaca

The Free and Sovereign State of Oaxaca is located in the southern part of the country on Mexico's Pacific coast. Oaxaca is the historic home of the Zapotec and Mixtec peoples as well as 14 other formally registered indigenous communities, and contains more speakers of indigenous languages than any other Mexican state. With its wonderful ancient archaeological treasures, colonial architecture, beaches, and traditional arts and crafts, Oaxaca is also a popular tourist destination.

Program Personnel

Faculty Director

Dr. Carolyn Gallaher is Associate Professor in the School of International Service. Her work blends insights from political economy and cultural studies and is focused on two substantive areas of inquiry—the role of paramilitaries in irregular warfare and the influence of the religious right in US foreign policy. Professor Gallaher's most recent book [After the Peace: Loyalist Paramilitaries in Post-Accord Northern Ireland](#) (Cornell University Press 2007) tracks the dynamics of Loyalist paramilitary violence since the 1998 peace agreement. Her work has appeared in top Geography journals, including *Space and Polity*, *Antipode*, *Society and Space*, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*.

Professor Gallaher teaches graduate and undergraduate courses at AU. Her graduate courses include *Conduct of Inquiry*, a qualitative methods course for PhD students and *Political Violence*, and a seminar for masters' level students. Professor Gallaher is also committed to experiential learning. In 1999 and 2000 she led field courses in Oaxaca, Mexico and in the spring of 2003 and 2004 she was the faculty sponsor for AU's alternative spring break trip to Chiapas, Mexico.

Program Instructor

Oliver Fröhling is a geographer by academic training. He lives in Oaxaca, where he has participated in a number of NGOs, currently working in *Servicios Universitarios y Redes de Conocimientos en Oaxaca* (SURCO), an organization he co-founded. The activities of this organization are focused on food sovereignty and urban sustainability, popular communications, international cooperation, and the transition to a post-capitalist world. His research interests, which are integrated into his practical activities, include NGOs and neoliberal policy, geopolitics, and alternatives to economics. He is currently a faculty member in the *Beyond Globalization* program of the International Honors Program, part of World Learning, and involved in a number of study abroad programs in Oaxaca.

Who Should Attend

This multi-disciplinary Program is designed for graduate students from any U.S. university. Graduate students with interests in grassroots organization, development policy, globalization, culture, free trade, migration, and politics in Mexico are invited to apply. Advanced undergraduates who have completed at least 60 credits toward the completion of their degrees are also encouraged to apply.

As many of the scholars, activists, and other people students will meet during the seminar and methods course communicate only in Spanish and/or indigenous languages, students should be familiar with the Spanish language prior to their arrival in Oaxaca.

Program Orientation

Students will be required to attend a pre-departure workshop at American University and will be provided with background readings before leaving for Mexico. This workshop will address the logistics, policies, and guidelines for all participants. Students enrolled in the seminar will also be required to attend a pre-departure academic workshop which will discuss development theories and paradigms as a foundation for the seminar. Both workshops will take place in April or May (date TBA). **All meetings are mandatory.**

In the Fall 2012 semester, SIS will host post-program events for all students who participated in SIS Study Abroad programs, including the student research panels during International Education Week (in November). Students will also be asked to participate in a de-briefing session in order to assess the Program's impact on professional and career objectives.

Program Fees

Students enrolled in the Program will pay **tuition** for each component (seminar, internship or independent research) for which they are registered at the prevailing American University tuition rate. For graduate students, this will be \$1,272 per credit hour (or \$3,816 per component); for advanced undergraduates, this will be \$1,114 per credit hour (or \$3,342 per component).

Students enrolled in the seminar will also pay a **program fee** of \$2050. This fee will cover the orientation program, shared home-stay accommodations for the duration of the program, program-related group site visits and field trips, ground transportation to and from academic sites, mandatory international health insurance, most meals, guest lectures, non-credit Spanish language instruction, and faculty supervision.

Students enrolled in the methods course will also pay a **program fee** of \$550 to cover the expenses of their extended stay.

All Program participants will be responsible for their own travel to and from Oaxaca, some meals, any and all immunization and/or immigration documents, and all personal expenses. A suggested amount of \$1,000 is recommended for students' personal use and spending while on the Program.

N.B. Students must arrange their arrival to and departure from Oaxaca via air travel only.

Visa Information

Students are solely responsible for obtaining any and all visas or other immigration documents to enter Mexico. SIS supports students in this endeavor and assists with necessary letters or other documents as needed. For more information on entry requirements, consult the following website:

<http://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/washington/index.php/en/matricula-consular>

As of November 14, 2011, citizens of the United States traveling to Mexico must pay a fee to obtain a

tourist card, available from Mexican consulates, Mexican border crossing points, airports within the border zone and most airlines serving Mexico. The Dept. of State advises that travelers not in possession of this card at the point of exit from Mexico may face a fine from immigration authorities. More information from the Dept. of State can be found at the following website:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html

Medical Information

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that travelers consult a health care provider 4-6 weeks prior to traveling abroad. It also recommends that travelers make sure their routine vaccinations are up-to-date. The CDC further recommends that travelers to Mexico are vaccinated against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, and rabies. The CDC further recommends that visitors to rural areas discuss with their doctor the best ways to avoid getting sick with malaria. No special vaccinations are required for entry to Mexico as of November 8, 2011. For more information on vaccinations and travelers' health issues, consult the CDC website at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/mexico.aspx>

Nuts and Bolts of Enrollment

Application

Students must complete and return all parts of the application, which can be found on the Program website. **No incomplete applications will be accepted.** Completed applications should be **e-mailed** to SIS Study Abroad Programs (sisabroad@american.edu) **by February 27, 2012** for priority consideration.

Components of the application are as follows:

- Participant Application and Information Form
- Internship Interest and Application Form (if applicable)
- Independent Study Application Form and supporting documents (if applicable)
- Personal Statement
- Résumé/C.V.
- Unofficial Transcript
- Academic Advisor Approval Form (AU students only)
- Non-Degree/Visiting Student Information Form (if applicable)

Admission and Acceptance

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, but must be **received by February 27, 2012**, for priority consideration. As part of the review process, the Faculty Director and/or the SIS Director of International Programs may invite students to meet with them to discuss the submitted application. Enrollment may be limited to approximately 10 students. Once admitted to the Program by SIS, students will receive notification via e-mail. At that time, students will be required to submit a non-refundable deposit of \$250 to SIS, through a check or money order made payable to American University, to secure their place in the Program.

Registration

Once the non-refundable deposit of \$250 is received, students will be registered for the appropriate Program components by SIS and will receive e-mail confirmation from SIS. Once registered, students will be billed through the AU Office of Student Accounts for the program fee (if applicable) and tuition for Summer 2012.

Financial Aid

AU students will be able to use AU financial aid, including loans, to cover tuition for the program. Some awards may not apply to summer registration, so students will need to consult their financial aid advisors for specific information. Students should also remember that in order to be considered full-time students in the summer semester, they will need to be registered for 6 credits or receive *in lieu* certification from their academic advisor. Students should consult their academic advisors to discuss their eligibility.

Payments

Students will be required to pay the program fee and tuition in full a minimum of seven days before the start of the Program. Students will be dropped from the course by the Office of the Registrar if payment is not received by that time. If this happens, a reinstatement fee of \$100 will be added to the outstanding balance, all of which must be paid in advance for re-registration. To avoid complications, students should be prepared to alert SIS about any financial aid that they have pending for the summer.

Withdrawal Policy

Once students have accepted their place in the Program and paid the deposit, they are committing to participating in the program. **Students may NOT drop the Program courses online or through their academic advisor.** Students seeking special permission to withdraw must contact the SIS Director of International Programs, in writing (rbellinger@american.edu).

Students who are granted special permission to withdraw from the Program will be responsible for

Students needing to withdraw from the Program after having accepted an offer of admission must contact the SIS Director of International Programs *in writing* at rbellinger@american.edu.

the full program fee. Tuition refunds in this Program do not follow the standard refund policy as outlined in the American University Schedule of Classes. No tuition refunds are guaranteed after the Program start date and depend upon the terms of any/all contracts between American University and affiliates of this Program.

Program Cancellation Policy

In the event that SIS has to cancel the Program prior to the start date, enrolled students will be notified in writing and will receive full refunds for tuition, program fee, and deposit.

Additional Information

Visiting Students

Degree-seeking students from other educational institutions are welcome to apply to the Program. They must complete the Non-Degree/Visiting Student Information Form included in the application. Under D.C. law, students under age 26 must also complete an immunization form. This form needs to be returned with the application materials and can be found on-line at:

<http://www.american.edu/ocl/healthcenter/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=39852>.

International Students

Students who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States may be required to obtain immigration documents from AU to enter or re-enter the United States as a function of their participation in the Program. For information regarding visa status, benefits and limitations, international students should consult with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, or the appropriate office on their home campus. More information for AU international students is also available online at

<http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss>.

Alumni Audit

Alumni Audit

The alumni audit option is not available for SIS Summer Study Abroad Programs.

Tuition Remission

Current staff members at American University who are also enrolled as degree-seeking AU students may apply their tuition remission benefits to the seminar portion of this Program only. Staff members who wish to apply the benefit to the Program will need to seek the approval of their supervisor first and submit written authorization as part of their application. For additional information, staff members may contact the SIS Director of International Programs (rbellinger@american.edu).

Deadlines

Due to the logistics involved in planning this Program, the application process begins immediately. Applications are reviewed in the order they are received. Applications received after the program is full will be put on a waitlist in the order they are received. Applications should be received by **February 27, 2012** for priority consideration.

Contact Information

Return completed applications to:

SIS Study Abroad Programs

E-mail: sisabroad@american.edu

Mailbox: SIS 116, Main Office (Advisor Approval Form only)

American University

4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20016

Fax: 202-885-2494

Questions? Please contact SIS Study Abroad Programs at sisabroad@american.edu

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Application Instructions and Checklist

Instructions:

1. Download and read thoroughly the Program Guide, available from the SIS Summer Abroad website, <http://www.american.edu/sis/sisabroad>.
2. Meet with your academic advisor to gain approval for your participation in the Program and complete the Academic Advisor Approval Form. Bring a completed copy of your application with you for your advisor to review, including your Personal Essay.
3. E-mail complete application materials (see checklist below) in a single e-mail with attachments to sisabroad@american.edu, with *Mexico Summer Program, (your name)* in the subject line. **N.B.** You must fill out and save the application form on a Windows operating system using Adobe Reader.
4. Submit an original hard copy of your Advisor Approval Form only to:

SIS Study Abroad Programs
(Mailbox in SIS 116, Main Office)
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
Fax: 202.885.2494

Please note that incomplete applications will NOT be accepted.

Checklist:

- Participant Application and Information Form (Submitted by E-mail)
- Internship Interest and Application Form (if applicable) (Submitted by E-mail)
- Independent Study Application Form and supporting documents (if applicable) (Submitted by E-mail)
- Personal Essay (Submitted by E-mail)

Instructions for Personal Essay:

Provide a concise overview (500 words) of your research interests as related to your participation in the Program. Include any relevant information from your background and explain how you think the Program will complement your academic/professional pursuits.

- Unofficial Transcript (Submitted by E-mail)
- Résumé/C.V. (Submitted by E-mail)
- Academic Advisor Approval Form – for AU students only (Submitted to Mailbox in SIS 116)
- Non-Degree/Visiting Student Information Form – for non-AU students only (Submitted by E-mail)

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