

POLI 248 Special Topics: Energy Politics in Brazil and Mexico
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Tue 6:00-8:50, SSB 104

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Economic, Social, Environmental and Political issues all come together in the rapidly growing energy markets of Latin America. There have been truly dramatic developments in the region over the last 20+ years: Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina began serious privatization efforts in the 1990s and have renationalized many of those assets, while Colombia and Peru continue to be friendly to private investors. Bolivia, Argentina and Peru discovered large gas deposits but the first two have had trouble monetizing them; Chile bet big on regional energy integration in the 1990s and is paying the cost today. But Brazil and Mexico are perhaps the most interesting cases because both have large and diversified economies and, despite a history of nationalism, have pursued significantly distinct energy policies over the past two decades. Brazil, a large oil and natural gas importer in the 1970s, is projected to be a major oil exporter in partnership with foreign private and state oil companies. Mexico, a major oil exporter, is becoming an energy importer, largely due to lack of investment yet remains immensely nationalist when it comes to any outside investment, whether by public or private companies.

This is a research-oriented seminar designed to generate insights into the distinct oil and gas politics of these two countries. The seminar begins with theoretical and general readings on energy markets and resource nationalism, then focuses on major issues in each country. Although some readings will be in Spanish, there will be sufficient readings in English for non-Spanish speakers to participate.

Grading: 25+ page paper 50%, class presentations 25%, class participation 25%

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