



## FACULTY | CHAPPELL LAWSON

**Chappell Lawson** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at MIT and Director of the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI). Professor Lawson's recent work has focused on Mexican politics, the effect of candidates' physical appearance on their electoral success, political leadership, and homeland security policy.

From September 2009 through February 2011, Professor Lawson was on leave from MIT as a political appointee in the Obama Administration, serving as Executive Director and Senior Advisor to the Commissioner at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Before joining the MIT faculty, he served briefly as a Director of Inter-American Affairs on the National Security Council staff during the Clinton Administration.

Professor Lawson was a National Fellow at The Hoover Institution, Stanford University (2002-2003) and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies at the

University of California, San Diego (1998-99). He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1999 and his AB from Princeton (the Woodrow Wilson School) in 1989.

## Research

Professor Lawson led three large-scale electoral panel studies in Mexico, covering the 1997 Mexico City mayoral election and the 2000 ([panel data](#), [postelection data](#)) and 2006 presidential races. He is currently involved in organizing a similar panel study for Mexico's 2012 elections, which will focus on the role of political clientelism.

Professor Lawson is completing a series of articles (co-authored with Professor Gabriel Lenz) on the effect of candidate appearance on electoral outcomes. This research documents the impact of Professor Lawson's current major product is a cross-country analysis of why democratic political systems survive (or collapse).

## Recent Publications

"Looking the Part: Television Leads Less Informed Citizens to Vote Based on Candidates' Appearance", *American Journal of Political Science* (with Gabriel S. Lenz) 55 (3): 574-589. July 2011. ([pdf](#))

Consolidating Mexico's Democracy: The 2006 Presidential Campaign in Comparative Perspective (Johns Hopkins University Press, Forthcoming)

Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and Media Opening in Mexico (University of California Press). 2002.

Mexico's Pivotal Democratic Election (Stanford University Press), co-edited with Jorge Domínguez. 2003.

"Looking Like a Winner: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New Democracies" World Politics, (with Gabriel S. Lenz, Andy Baker and Michael Myers) 62 (4): 560-593. 2010. ([pdf](#))

"Effects of Interviewer Gender in In-Person Interviews", International Journal of Public Opinion Research (with Francisco Flores-Macías), 20 (100-110). 2008. ([pdf](#))

## Subjects

17.33 Building a Better World  
17.508/507 Regime Change - The Rise and Fall of Democracy  
17.55 (formerly 17.541) Introduction to Latin American Studies  
17.554 The Political Economy of Latin America  
17.50 (formerly 17.500) Introduction to Comparative Politics  
17.53 (formerly 17.577) Politics in the Third World  
17.588 Field Seminar in Comparative Politics  
17.900 Foundations of Political Science  
17.S953 Political Leadership

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