



“After all that who are we the people but a nation of emigrated immigrants?”
-Everett Hoagland

The Program

Program Dates: May 9-24, 2014

The Latino Factor in the United States has taken center stage as people of Latin American and Caribbean descent increasingly play vital roles in national elections, consumer society, and popular entertainment. But the growing political, economic, and cultural power of Latinos in the United States is only one side of the story. Why did Latinos come to the United States in the first place? How did they get here? Where are they from? The **UConn Migration Studies Seminar in Oaxaca, Mexico** explores these questions through collaboration and interaction with migrants themselves in their home country. The program provides a broad, interdisciplinary and historical perspective on migrant labor and experiences with a focus on Latin American and Caribbean origin migrants. Themes examined in the seminar include human rights, children migrants, border enforcement, immigration law, “illegals” and illegality, labor, health, education and cultural production. In addition to course work, field trips, and intensive Spanish language classes, UConn students work at the Migrant Orientation Center of Oaxaca, an organization established to support Central American migrants in transit through Mexico on their journey to the United States.

Situated in a mountain valley in southern central Mexico, Oaxaca City is the capital city of one of the most culturally diverse states in Mexico and is a fascinating intersection of contemporary urban culture as well as both colonial and pre-Hispanic traditions. Oaxaca City, declared Humanity's Cultural Patrimony by UNESCO, owes its fame to the beauty and harmony of its architecture, the richness of its cultural traditions, the wide variety of its unique foods, and its temperate climate, spring-like throughout the year. A safe and welcoming location, Oaxaca is a small city located 300 miles southeast of Mexico City surrounded by villages where Zapoteco, Mixe, and Mixteco are spoken. Pre-Columbian sites as well as colonial and contemporary architecture offer students many opportunities to learn from archeological remains, contemporary indigenous cultures and modern Mexican culture.

The Academics



You will earn four UConn graded credits in the Migration Studies Seminar (Honors credits available), taking both a three-credit course (CA 1, CA 4), taught by UConn Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, and a one-credit Linkage Through Language (LTL) Spanish immersion class (<http://languages.uconn.edu/programs/ltl/index.html>) taught at the Becari Language School (<http://www.becari.com.mx/>). Both classes make full use of the city, markets and day trips to pre-Columbian sites, migrant sending communities, indigenous artisan villages, and natural hot springs. Prior to departure, students will take part in a week's worth of pre-trip orientation and historical and cultural immersion.

The Experience



The program is located at the Becari Language School. You will find Becari a warm and welcoming place, with an expert and accessible staff that always has time to answer a question or to help with a problem. The school will provide a comfortable home during the program with classroom space, computers with internet connections, a library, and a patio for recreation and casual conversation. Students will be housed with Mexican middle-class families, an experience which offers a great opportunity for immersion in the language and culture of Mexico. Families provide full room and board in houses in the city's center, always an easy walking distance to the zócalo, a large plaza where public festivals are held and people meet, often lingering at a sidewalk café sipping a steaming cup of rich hot chocolate, and watching the pedestrian parade.

The Instructor



Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez grew up as a landed immigrant in Canada to Mexican and United States born parents. Never really “at home” in any of those three countries –but a legal citizen of each– he has always sought to understand the history of immigration from a variety of cross-border perspectives. Overmyer-Velázquez is an Associate Professor of History and Director of El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean and Latin American Studies. His latest book is *Beyond la Frontera: The History of Mexico-U.S. Migration* (Oxford 2011). In his spare time he plays jazz piano and a mean game of soccer.