

MEXICO IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

HIST and LLAS (LAMS) 3635



Mexican Revolutionary Leader Emiliano Zapata

(North) Americans have been obliged to rediscover Mexico since the late 1970s, in the wake of dramatic oil strikes, an increased influx of drugs and undocumented migrants, and more recently, the advent of “free trade,” the peso’s “meltdown”, peasant rebellion in Chiapas, and Vicente Fox’s stunning victory over the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party in the 2000 presidential election. Nevertheless, few Americans really appreciate their neighbors’ historical struggles to achieve political stability and economic prosperity, or the complex role the United States has played in that process. No doubt part of the problem is North Americans’ penchant to generalize easily about “Mexico” and “Mexicans,” thereby eliding the important political, regional, class, ethnic, race, gender, and generational differences that have always figured prominently in the shaping of Mexican affairs. Since Mexico’s current problems and prospects have important transnational dimensions and are in great measure the product of the past, North Americans have a stake in learning more about the history of their “distant neighbor.”

Building upon the legacies of the colonial era, this course concentrates on Mexico’s history since the nineteenth century, from the wars of independence in the early nineteenth century to the globalization of the present. Rather than focusing on the confusing surface flurry of events and leaders, stress is placed on broader trends of economic, political, social, and cultural development, and on the patterns of conflict and negotiation that conditioned them. Throughout the course, we will consider the long history of Mexican emigration to the United States as an alternative narrative –at times parallel, at times convergent– to the traditional rendition of the Republic’s past.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

- Define and explain the diverse and interconnected histories of Mexico’s many regions and their inhabitants.
- Examine the enduring legacy of the Revolution and its multiple influences and incarnations.
- Identify key geographic and political features of the Mexican landscape.
- Examine the history of Mexico as a fundamental aspect of the transnational histories of the United States and Latin America.
- Explain how the initial colonial encounter of peoples has endured to shape the country’s complex racial and ethnic identities.
- Characterize the dynamic, historical relationship between U.S. labor and Mexican migration to the United States.

Class Format

The course will combine a lecture and discussion format; student participation in class discussion will be expected and weighed in determining the final grade. In addition to standard historical texts, oral testimonies, works of literature and a collection of audio and visual materials –slides, photos, political cartoons, revolutionary songs, and a series of short films and discussions– will be used to explore popular attitudes, values, and lifestyles.

Assignments

I. Participation

Consistent and thoughtful participation will determine a substantial part of your final grade. If discussion comes readily to you, look for ways to encourage others to participate. Absence from class precludes participation and has, therefore, an adverse effect on your grade. If you do miss a class meeting you will be responsible for finding out what was missed and for making up any assignments. Attendance will be taken during each class session.

II. Map Quiz

An in-class map quiz will ask you to identify key states, cities, and geographic features of Mexico. Identifiers can be found on the final page of this syllabus.

III. Newspaper Journal

In this assignment you will explore the ways in which media sources report on and interpret contemporary issues events (within last 5 years) in Mexico and the Mexican-origin community in the United States. Each week you will read two articles on Mexico and Mexicans and craft a brief (3-4 sentence) written summary of them in your own words. One of the articles must explore the relationship between Mexico and the United States (e.g. through politics, economics, migration); the other article can report any aspect of current life in Mexico. Please note the title, date and source of your newspaper articles (no need to include the url/web address). ****Read and review a maximum of two articles related to drugs and the drug trade.**

The articles and summaries will be kept in an on-going journal and collected three times (every 5th week) during the semester. At the end of the semester students will have collected and penned thirty (two per week) articles and summaries. Please submit written or electronic version of journal to course TA.

Examples of newspapers to peruse include but are not limited to the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and the Wall Street Journal. Their coverage is usually more complete (if not always more perceptive) than that of newspapers that simply subscribe to the wire-services. For those of you who read Spanish, there are also several good periodicals available; please see me if you are interested. Many of these publications are available free of charge on the internet. Bring your journals to each class. We will begin each meeting with a brief news update.

IV. Midterm Group Project and Presentation

In small groups students will collaborate on the research, writing, revision, and presentation of one of the following topics from Mexico's cultural history. The final product will be a five page written essay examining the topic in historical perspective and a ten minute presentation in front of your fellow students. While the five page essay must follow a "traditional" format (e.g., a thoroughly edited and revised paper including: introduction, thesis, exploration and examination of thesis, conclusion, and citations), the ten minute presentation format must be "non-traditional" (e.g., musical or theatrical performance, interactive presentation, video, etc). Groups will meet with me in advance to review appropriate formats. Group members will need to equitably divide the tasks of the assignment and will receive one collective grade. Individual efforts will be reflected in the participation grade.

Project topics, suggestions

- Colonial era proto-feminist poet Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz
- U.S. guns and Mexican Drugs: The Narco War in Song
- Photographing Mexico: Tina Mondotti, Nacho López, Agustín Casasola or Enrique Metinides
- Life and times of a Mexican author/poet, past or present
- Marketing Mexico: Cinco de Mayo, Coronas, and Gringos on the Beach
- Soldaderas: Women Revolutionaries
- Mexican Cinema: a view on the history of the Republic
- Chicano expressive culture: music, tattoos, and low riders
- La Virgen Guadalupe: The Aztec Goddess and the Christian Saint
- Rudos y técnicos: The History of Lucha Libre (wrestling)
- Hot tamales: Mexican food as state formation
- Cross-dresser, border crosser Guillermo Gomez Peña
- Sarapes, pottery, and masks: Mexican regional crafts
- Your own selection!

V. Final Exam

Exam covering topics from entire course. In the role of professor you will develop a mini course on Modern Mexican History with three lectures. Your task is to compose an outline for each lecture, write a justification for the outlines, and to write out one of the *historically based* lectures in complete prose. Therefore, you must decide what the most important events, individuals, and long-term trends have been in Mexico, as well as how you would interpret these events, individuals, and trends. The course readings and assignments will prepare you for the exam; no extra reading or research is required.

VI. Bonus Assignments

You may receive optional bonus grades for attendance at and brief (1 page) review of relevant campus or off-campus events, films, readings, etc (2 maximum). Please check with me in advance to review appropriate topics.

Grade Breakdown

Participation	15%
Map quiz	10%
Newspaper journal	20%
Midterm group project & presentation	25%
Final exam	30%
Bonus grades	+ ??

A's (90-100%) signify outstanding work, above and beyond course expectations. B's (80-89%) are for good work (demonstrating special effort, insight, creativity, thoroughness, clarity, etc.) C's (70-79%) are for satisfactory completion of course requirements. In order to receive full credit for your course work, you must turn them in by their specified due date. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade (C+ to C, A- to B+) for every day late and an entire grade (B to C) if more than a week late. Time extensions and incompletes will be given only under exceptional circumstances.

Collaboration and Academic Honesty

There are great educational advantages to collaborative learning. I encourage you to work together on the assignments for this course, many of which are appropriate for study groups. It is certainly advantageous to exchange drafts of your papers for constructive criticism before you submit them to me. Such collaboration is quite

consistent with academic honesty; indeed, the two go together. Having said that, academic dishonesty, whether cheating or plagiarism, is a serious offense and will result in automatic failure of the assignment and perhaps further action. Please see the section on “Academic Integrity” in The Student Code. For a discussion of plagiarism at UConn, see the following site: http://irc.uconn.edu/PlagiarismModule/intro_m.htm

Readings

The texts are at the UConn Coop and available on independent book seller powells.com and amazon.com. Individual articles and chapters (listed below after “CP”) are on the class HuskyCT under “Course Materials”. For those who read Spanish, there are also materials on the subject from Mexico; please see me if you are interested.

Texts

- Joseph and Henderson, eds., *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (MR)
- Hernández Chávez, *Mexico: A Brief History* (MBH)

Course Pack (CP)

- Assorted articles
- Overmyer-Velázquez, ed., *Beyond la Frontera: The History of Mexico-US Migration* (BF)

Optional Texts: An effort has been made in the syllabus to provide short background readings for each period of Mexican history. Nevertheless, students who have no background on Mexico and would feel more comfortable supplementing class readings with a text book might consult either Michael Meyer and William Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, or Colin MacLachlan and William Beezley, *El Gran Pueblo: A History of Greater Mexico*. The former is a bit more straightforward and readable; the latter pays more attention to the most recent scholarship and the history of Mexico's northern frontier/border with the United States. These titles have been placed on 3 hour Reserve at Homer Library.

Contact Information

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Office Hours: email for appointment

Other Numbers

Counseling and Mental Health Services 860-486-4705 www.cmhs.uconn.edu

Alcohol and Other Drug Services 860-486-9431 www.aod.uconn.edu

Week 6

A **Winners and Losers in the Revolution**

Reading: MR, 333-343; MBH, 203-220

B **Singing Resistance: Corridos and the Mexican Revolutions**

Reading: MR, 357-402; MBH, 220-233

Music: Corrido Songs and the Memory of the Revolution

Week 7

A **Calles, Cárdenas, and the Forging of the PRI**

Reading: MR, 421-427, 445-455; MBH, 234-263; BF, Alanis Enciso, "The Repatriation of Mexicans from the United States and Mexican Nationalism, 1929-1940"

B **The Anatomy of the PRI**

Reading: MR, 461-510; MBH 264-294

Week 8

A **Migrant Workers and the Bracero Period**

Reading: BF, FitzGerald, "Mexican Migration and the Law"

B **La Onda: Youth Culture, Protests, and Tlateloco**

Reading: MR, 553-569; CP, "Introduction: The Unknown Mexican Dirty War" in *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico*, 7-27

Week 9

A **Mexican History from Without: Chicanos/as and Mexican Americans**

Film/Discussion: Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement

Reading: CP, Gutiérrez, "Globalization, Labor Migration, and the Demographic Revolution: Ethnic Mexicans in the Late Twentieth Century."; CP, Gonzalez and Hernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*

B **Group Project Presentations – Review with MOV**

Week 10

A **Midterm Group Project Presentations – Part I**

B **Midterm Group Project Presentations – Part II**

Week 11

A **Film/Discussion/Debate: The Other Side of Immigration (55 min)**

B **Drugs and Guns: Mexico and the US's Crossborder Narco War**

Reading: Excerpts from Ioan Grillo's "El Narco" (Parts 1 & 2)
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/reportero/book-excerpt-el-narco-ioan-grillo.php>; "Inside Mexico's Drug War", Tomas Kellner,
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/wpj/summary/v027/27.1.kellner.html>
Video: "War Without Borders",
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2009/05/30/us/1194840597846/war-without-borders.html>

Week 12

A

Al Norte del Norte: Migrants and the New England Border

Reading: MR, 717-756; BF, Overmyer-Velázquez, "Histories and Historiographies of Greater Mexico", Massey, "The Past and Future of Mexico-U.S. Migration", "Chronology of Mexican Migration"; CP Gabany-Guerrero, "Connecticut"

Music: Los Tigres del Norte, "La Frontera"; Maná, "Pobre Juan"

B

The Second Coming of Zapata: Chiapas and the Rise of Civil Society

Reading: MR, pp. 638-654; CP, Preston and Dillon, *Opening Mexico*, 229-256; CP Subcomandante Marcos, "Why We are Fighting: The Fourth World War Has Begun"; BF, Fox, "Indigenous Mexican Migrants"

Week 13

A

How Much for your Corona?: Labor and Business in 21st Century Mexico

Reading: "Carlos Slim's Embarrassment of Riches"

<http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1642286,00.html?artId=1642286?contType=article?chn=business>; "Control of State-Run Pemex"

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/29/AR2008042902566.html)

[dyn/content/article/2008/04/29/AR2008042902566.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/29/AR2008042902566.html); "World's Richest Man Status?"

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/doliaestevez/2013/03/11/will-mexicos-proposed-new-telecom-law-affect-slims-worlds-richest-man-status/>

B

Families and Rituals

Film/Discussion: La Ofrenda: the Days of the Dead" (50 min)

Día de los Muertos (Nov 1 and 2)

****Newspaper Journal – 2nd Installment****

Week 14

A

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS

B

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 15

A

Whither Mexico? The Return of the PRI

Reading: CP, Berman, "Mexico's Third Way"; CP, Preston and Dillon, *Opening Mexico*, 477-516; MR, 687-756; BF, Saragoza, "Cultural Representation and Mexican Immigration"

B

Workshop: Class Summary and Final Exam Review

****Newspaper Journal - 3rd Installment****

Map Quiz Identifiers

Districts and States

Modern boundaries of:

Veracruz (state)

México DF

Chihuahua

Yucatán (state)

Oaxaca

Guerrero

Guanajuato

Michoacán

Sinaloa

Guanajuato (state)

Jalisco

Zacatecas

Nayarit

Coahuila

Morelos

Chiapas

The extent of Mexico in 1824

Cities

Mexico City

Guadalajara

Mérida

Veracruz

Oaxaca City

San Cristóbal de las Casas

San Luís Potosí

Nogales

Tijuana

Ciudad Juárez/El Paso, TX

Monterrey

Acapulco

Hartford, CT

Chicago, Ill

New York, NY

Los Angeles, CA

Geographic features

Yucatán Peninsula

Baja California

Sierra Madre Oriental

Sierra Madre Occidental

Isthmus of Tehuantepec

Río Bravo/Grande

Chihuahua Desert

