Mexican-ness is not an essence but a history.

-- Octavio Paz

Mexico, regardless of its geographical proximity, political relevance, and economic importance to the United States, remains something of an unknown quantity to many (North) Americans. While issues such as narcotrafficking, undocumented migrants, NAFTA, and the Chiapas rebellion have put Mexico firmly back into the limelight, many North Americans appear to have little appreciation for their neighbors’ history. Given the prominent role the United States has played in much of Mexico’s modern history, and vice versa, such a lack of knowledge is startling. This course provides a general, critical introduction to the history of Mexico since its independence from Spanish rule in the early nineteenth century. Rather than a chronological summation of events and great leaders, emphasis will be placed upon certain themes and trends with respect to economic, social and cultural development and change. We will be particularly interested in the patterns of conflict and negotiation that shaped Mexico’s history and emphasis will be given throughout the course to the ways in which “common people” participated in and influenced the political events of their times. In addition we will be attentive to the important regional, class, ethnic, and gender differences that have figured prominently in Mexico’s history as well as to the history of Mexico in the wider world, including the dynamic and important history of Mexicans in the U.S. Finally, we will be concerned with the historiography, not just the history, of Mexico: that is, the ways in which the history of Mexico has been written and the political dimensions of writing those histories.

Assignments and grading:
There are 4 major assignments for the course. Each of these will be discussed further at the first class session:

1. A map exam [10% of final grade]
2. Two papers, 1500 words (c. 5 double-spaced pages) each [20% of final grade each]
3. A final, take-home exam [25% of final grade] The exam will be a comprehensive (covering the breadth of the semester) essay.
4. The final portion of your grade will be based on participation in class discussions and in the “Whither Mexico?” class debate. [25% of final grade] Participation means reading the assigned readings for the week; thinking about them prior to coming to class, and engaging in lively discussion. Simply showing up will not suffice!

Required Readings:
The following texts, or a substantial portion of them, are required reading for the course. They are available—tax-free—at Buffalo St. Books, a local book cooperative at 215 N. Cayuga St. in Dewitt Mall in downtown Ithaca (an easy and relaxing walk down Buffalo St. from campus and
Buffalo Street Books is a community-owned cooperative bookstore, with over seven hundred owners. Buying from them will help support the only independent bookstore in the greater Ithaca area (a good thing for a community of readers and thinkers and for small presses and local authors) and the only bookstore collectively owned (to the best of my knowledge) in the state of New York. A recent study has shown that for every $100 spent at local bookstores, $45 remains in the local economy; by comparison, only $13 out of every $100 spent in chain bookstores remains in the local economy and $0 (nothing! nada! zip!) remains in the local economy if you order on-line . Regardless of how you choose to acquire the books, please ensure you have access to the readings by the dates required and please ensure that you read the correct edition of the text. In addition, all books are available on 3-hour reserve in Uris Library.

Carlos Fuentes, *The Death of Artemio Cruz*
Judith Hellman, *Mexican Lives*
Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy Henderson, eds., *The Mexico Reader*
Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, ed., *Beyond La Frontera: The History of Mexico-U.S. Migration*
Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan*

In addition to excellent readings, we will view a number of films over the course of the semester. Each of these is required viewing. There will be a public screening for each film or you can choose to view the films at your convenience independently.

**Films:**

*Viva Zapata* (dir. Elia Kazan)
*Frida* (dir. Julie Taymor)
*Mexico: The Frozen Revolution* (dir. Raimundo Glazier)
*Amores perros* (dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu)

**THE NOT-SO-FUN STUFF: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING!!**

The Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity states:

“Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others.

A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student’s own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student’s academic position truthfully reported at all times.

Students are encouraged to discuss the content of a course among themselves and to help each other to master it, but no student should receive help in doing a course assignment that is meant to test what he or she can do without help from others. Representing another’s work as one’s own is plagiarism and a violation of this Code. If materials are taken from published sources the student must clearly and completely cite the source of such materials. Work submitted by a student and used by a faculty member in the determination of a grade in a course...
may not be submitted by that student in a second course, unless such submission is approved in advance by the faculty member in the second course.”

For more information, see http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html

If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit the following site: http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm

Please note: if you plagiarize in this class, you will receive a grade of ‘F’ in the class.

This class has not been, is not now, and will not be a MOOC. Taping of lectures is prohibited without the professor’s express, written consent. Sale or distribution of any materials provided by the professor—lecture outlines, hand-outs, exams, and/or study guides—is prohibited. This includes uploading any such material to sites like Coursehero.

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Course Schedule and Readings

BF = Beyond La Frontera
MR = Mexico Reader

8/23-8/25  Many Mexico
Joel Poinsett, “The Mexican Character” (MR)
José Vasconcelos, “The Cosmic Race” (MR)
Octavio Paz, “The Sons of La Malinche” (MR)
Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, “The Problem of National Culture” (MR)

8/30-9/1  From colony to nation-state (1790-1824)
José María Morelos, “Sentiments of the Nation” (MR)
Agustín de Iturbide, “Plan of Iguala” (MR)
Begin: Sullivan, Xuxub Must Die

9/6-9/8  Caste Wars and Land Reforms (1825-1870)
Juan Mora-Torres, “Los de casa se van, los de fuera no vienen” (BF)
Luis González y González, “Liberals and the Land” (MR)
Raymond Craib, “Standard Plots and Rural Resistance” (MR)
Continue: Sullivan, Xuxub Must Die

9/13-9/15  The Porfiriato (1870-1900)
Finish: Sullivan, Xuxub Must Die

9/20-9/22  The Porfiriato (1900-1910)
Gilbert González, “Mexican Labor Migration” (BF)
**Paper 1 due in class 9/22

9/27-9/29  Revolution (1910-1920)
Ricardo Flores Magón, “Land and Liberty” (MR)
Emiliano Zapata and others, “Plan of Ayala” (MR)
Oscar Lewis, “Pedro Martínez” (MR)
Ricardo Pozas, “Juan the Chamula” (MR)
Film: !Viva Zapata!

10/4-10/6  Revolutionary Nationalism (1920-1940)
Alanís Enciso, “The Repatriation of Mexicans from the United States and Mexican Nationalism, 1929-1940” (BF)
Alan Knight, “Racism, Revolution and Indigenismo in Mexico, 1910-1940”
Start Fuentes, The Death of Artemio Cruz
Film: Frida

10/13  Anatomy of the PRI (1934-1940)
Fall break: No class on Tuesday the 11th.
Continue Fuentes, The Death of Artemio Cruz
10/18-10/20   Anatomy of the PRI (1940-1960)
Finish Fuentes, *The Death of Artemio Cruz*
**Paper 2 due in class 10/20

10/25-10/27   La Onda and a frozen revolution (1950-1975)
Film in class: *Mexico: The Frozen Revolution*
Michael Snodgrass, “The Bracero Program, 1942-1964” (BF)
Andrew Sackett, “The Two Faces of Acapulco During the Golden Age” (MR)
Elena Poniatowska, “The Student Movement of 1968” (MR)

Joel Simon, “The Sinking City” (MR)
Roberto Villarino, “Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: Souls on the Run” (MR)
Victims’ Coordinating Council, “After the Earthquake” (MR)
Rubén Martínez, “Corazón del Rocanrol” (MR)
Film: *Amores Perros*

11/8-11/10   Integration (1960-2000)
Hellman, *Mexican Lives* [chaps. 4-7]
Heather Williams, “Debtor’s Revenge” (MR)

Rudolfo Acuña, “The Mexican Connection” (MR)
William Langewiesche, “The Maquiladoras” (MR)
Guillermo Gómez-Peña, “New World Border” (MR)

11/22   Narco-trafficking and geo-piracy
Alan Weisman, “The Deadly Harvest of the Sierra Madre” (MR)

11/24   Thanksgiving break

11/29-12/1   Whither Mexico?
Review session, course evals and hand-out of final exam
12/1: Class debate: Whither Mexico? Voices from the PAN, the PRI, the PRD, and the Zapatistas.
**Participation in the debate is required in order to pass this class**