

# Fairhaven 365: Issues in Contemporary Mexican Society

## Syllabus - Spring 2006

### Dr. Larry Estrada

Prerequisite: ACS-203/Fairhaven 218 or Mexican history or applicable anthropology course

### Course Description

Since the inception of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the political overthrow of the PRI (Institutionalized Revolutionary Party) significant social, political and economic events have affected the Republic of Mexico. Indigenous revolts, worker and student strikes, riots and the fluctuation of the peso have created a society which seeks to throw off the mantle of wide scale corruption, while infusing democracy and accountability within the political process. Once hailed as the burgeoning super and economic power of Latin America in the 80's and early 90's, Mexico now seeks to define its role and place within the trinational context of North America in the present millennium.

This course will examine the economic, political and educational issues presently confronting the Republic of Mexico. Emphasis will be placed on examining the role of indigenous movements, such as the Zapatistas, within Mexico and the ongoing negotiation between Mexico and the United States over border policy and immigration. The course will also examine the final stages and challenges of Vicente Fox's sexenio and the recent rise and success of opposition parties and partisan alliances between the PAN, PRD, PT, PVE and PRI. Attention will be placed on this year's presidential election and the competing candidates. The course will additionally examine the roles of women in Mexican society and their relationship to the present Mexican economic, social and political processes.

### Texts

*The Annexation of Mexico*, John Ross; *The Zapatista Reader*, Tom Hayden; *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora*, Norma Iglesias Prieto; *True Tales From Another Mexico*, Sam Quiñones; *Mexico In Transition*, Gerardo Otero and *The History of Mexico*, Burton Kirkwood. Other handouts On the Internet "Revolutionary Women: From Soldaderas to Comandantes," Diane Goetze; "Chiapas and the Women," Rosa Rojas.

### Credit/Evaluation

Participation in classroom discussions, two perspective papers, a group project and oral presentation. Students will also be assigned as discussion leaders and discussants on various topics throughout the quarter.

### Class Schedule

#### Week 1

Class viewing of "El Crimen del Padre Amaro". Handing out of Class syllabus, film questions and readings for next class session.

#### Week 2

Introduction, objectives of the course, review of course syllabi, assigned readings and course expectations. Group Exercise/Review last week's film.

Mexico post 1848—La Reforma and the Rise of Benito Juarez/The French Intervention Film: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Read: Ross pp. 1-47; Kirkwood pp. 1-112

#### Week 3

Aftermath of the Porfiriato and the Revolution of 1910  
Rise of the PRI/Rebirth of the Indigenous Myth and the Construction of a Socialist Political Infrastructure. Video-Life and Times of Pancho Villa

Read: Ross pp. 49-101; Kirkwood pp. 113-173

#### **Week 4**

Post World War II Mexico--The Expanded Economy of the 50's and 60's--Student Resistance and Discontent/The Mexican Olympics of 1968, The Boom and Bust cycle of the 60's 80's and 90's. Time for Group Project Work (first perspective paper due on the 19th)

Read: Ross pp. 104-196; Kirkwood pp. 172-214

#### **Week 5**

The Mexican Political Dissonance of the 90's. The breaking of PRI hegemony and Mexican Political Corruption. NAFTA and the turning once again toward an American paradigm. Video: Corruption and the Salinas de Gortari years

Read: Quiñones pp. Intro./pp.1-78; Quiñones pp. 79-172

#### **Week 6**

U.S. Mexican Relations. The 1994 Economic bailout/Surprise in Chiapas/The Indigenous Revolt and labor uprisings throughout the central Republic. The impact of Mexican Immigration upon the U.S. urban sector. Time for Group Project Work. Guest Speaker, Professor Adam Resnik

Read: Ross pp. 218-274; Hayden 1-30, 78-103

#### **Week 7**

U.S. Mexico Border--The Mexican Labor Pool--Return of the Bracero Program and trans-cultural images of a border economy and the usage of the maquiladora system. "Rise of the Minutemen" And HR 4437. Videos: Mexican Immigration and the Border Economy/ Maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez, Guest speaker, Professor James Loucky, Ms. Rosalinda Guillen

Read: Otero pp. 1-17, 37-51; Iglesias Prieto pp. 1-36; Iglesias Prieto 37-100

#### **Week 8**

Open Day for library and Group Project Presentation work( on the 15th)  
Border Culture and Society/Transformation of La Frontera con "El Norte"  
**(2nd perspective paper due on the 17th)**

Read: Otero pp. 169-235

#### **Week 9**

Contemporary Indigenous Resistance—The Zapatista Movement and its origins within the Mexican Political Psyche. The Mexican Government's attempt to draft an indigenous Bill of Rights and the Symbolism of Subcomandante Marcos. Guest Speaker, Professor Shirley Osterhaus; Video on the Zapatistas

Read: Hayden pp. 178-204; Internet Readings by Goethe and Rojas Website to be given in class

Changing Political Climate of Mexico. From the Tapado to Primaries and political challenges from the right and the left. The End of the Fox Sexennio/Prognosis for Mexico's Future

Read: Ross pp. 274-314

#### **Week 10**

Group Term Oral Presentation Reports/Course Evaluations and Submittal of Group Term Project Papers

#### **Explanation of assignments:**

1. This is a seminar, not a lecture class. Consequently, the quality of education each of you receives will be dependent not only on your own level of preparation/participation but on others' informed participation as well. In other words, each of us has a responsibility to the entire group. **This is a reading intensive course which will be conducted along the lines of a graduate seminar.** It is assumed that all participants will have a basic background in Mexican history. The course is not intended to be an introductory course to

Mexican culture and society.

2. Questions will be distributed in connection with many of the readings. These questions will be given to you prior to the readings or at the beginning of class sessions and will provide the basis for our discussions.
3. Perspective Paper assignments will be explained and a format will be given out in class
4. Working in groups of 3-4, you will be required to write a group project paper on some aspect of Mexican Contemporary Society (1900-2006) which addresses social, political, educational, philosophical or artistic issues. These papers will be due on May 31, 2006 without exception. On May 31st each group will give an oral report to the class taken from their group project paper. Reports will be no longer than 35 minutes.

**Some suggestions for group topics include but are not limited to:**

- A. The Zapatista Movement in Mexico: Roots and Causes
- B. Education decentralization in the Republic of Mexico: progress or chaos
- C. Evolution of the PRD and PAN political parties: full democracy or merely a reaction to oligarchy
- D. The role of Liberation Theology within 20thC Mexican social resistance
- E. The future of the PRI: oblivion or reformation
- F. Feminist formation in modern Mexico--myth or reality?
- G. The survival--co-optation and appropriation of indigenous lands and labor within 20thC Mexico
- H. The Aftermath of NAFTA: true partnership or hegemonic control of the Northamerican economy and labor force
- I. U.S./Mexican Border--Outlook for a multicultural and symbiotic community
- J. US/Mexican Border--Eco disaster in the making or new sustainable Partnerships
- K. The role of the maquiladora within the border economy. An economic boon or 20th C serfdom
- L. The Fox Sexennio—A bust or the beginning of democratic reform
- M. HR: 4437—Implications for future U.S./Mexico Relations

**The process for the Group Project will be as follows:**

- A. Choose a group of no more than 4 individuals who wish to develop the oral presentation & group project paper on a mutually agreed upon topic.
- B. Define the Problem or Question - hand in names of Group members and the title or idea or problem to be explored. (By April 19)
- C. Establish main points & arguments to be projected to the class.
- D. Delegate individual or group responsibility.
- E. Develop a group presentation approach (e.g. slides, charts, video excerpts, role play situations, etc.) I encourage you to involve the rest of the class in at least part of your presentation.  
Turn in Group Project Paper May and deliver Oral Presentations: May 31 and June 5 if necessary.

Other guidelines: Try to draw specifically on some part of our readings and make clear how your topic represents a concrete example of theoretical/analytical/historical material we've read (or seen in videos). Reports should include history of the situation studied; resolution, if any, of the issues involved; how your topic is related to contemporary Mexican Society as well as your group's conclusions, insights or critique of the problems or issues researched. Group project papers should use formal citation methods. Either MLA, APA or Chicago citation methods should be used in all papers.

Oral presentations will be evaluated on style of presentation, organization, visual effects and visual aids, ability to draw class into the material, clarity of ideas and subject matter, quality of research and documentation, and relationship to material and content of this class.

Papers may (and probably will) include materials (research, bibliographic, etc.) that are not included in the oral presentation. They will be evaluated on the above plus style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Papers will be written by three to four people but must be cohesive, not three to four separate papers joined by one title. Sloppy and otherwise unacceptable papers must be done over before credit will be given.

Papers must be no less than 15 - 25 pages, typewritten, double spaced with one-inch margins.

**NOTE REGARDING ATTENDANCE:** Credit for this class is largely dependent on your informed participation in class discussions. This is one of your primary responsibilities as a student at Fairhaven. If you are not present, you cannot participate. Furthermore, the quality of our evaluation of you is partially dependent on your ability to understand and interpret the readings, some of which may be difficult. For most of you, that understanding will be considerably enhanced through the class discussions.

**As a result, anyone absent more than three times during the quarter will probably not**

**receive credit. Exceptions will be made in emergencies, of course.**