

**HIST 480/580, Winter 2019**  
**A HISTORY OF MEXICO:**  
**THE CHALLENGE OF NATIONHOOD**  
**Professor Robert Haskett**  
**T-Th 4:00-5:20, 255 Lillis**  
**CRN 27402/27403**

In 2010 Mexicans celebrated two significant national anniversaries, the 200th anniversary of national independence and the 100th anniversary of the Revolution of 1910. These anniversaries arrive with a post-revolutionary “single party democracy” controlled by the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) seemingly at an end (though as of this writing the PRI once again controls the presidency). The first change came in 2000, when Vicente Fox, from the conservative PAN (*Partido Acción Nacional*), pledged to alter the way Mexico was governed and to restructure its economy. He promised to do away with what many Mexicans regard as a fundamental problem, a most vexing legacy of the long years of official party rule, the corruption which is found at all levels of government, politics, and business. This proved to be a tall order, for Fox not only had to deal with the legacy of the recent past, but of a much longer stretch of time going back beyond the very roots of Mexican nationhood. Since the end of Fox's presidency, Mexico has endured (and is still enduring) a high-profile war against drugs and crime waged by successive national governments, and has also had to deal with continued issues in its relationship with the United States, particularly connected to immigration issues. Mexico's outgoing president, the *Priista* Enrique Peña Nieto, pursued Neoliberal policies for the most part, but was unable to solve Mexico's perplexing economic, political, and social issues, the continuing war on drugs, and in general has had a difficult time of it; from what I heard from Mexican contacts, he has not been widely popular. What will happen under the new "opposition" (i.e. non-PRI) presidency of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (aka Amló) remains to be seen, but there are high expectations that he will work for real change.

How can we understand twenty-first-century Mexico? Why should citizens of the United States and, more particularly, students of the University of Oregon, care? Thousands of migrants cross into our nation on a daily basis, something that has been emphasized by President Donald Trump. While Trump wants to halt this immigration for good, in Oregon, as elsewhere, their (often underpaid) labor helps our agricultural, forestry, and service industries survive. Moreover, the political and economic health of Mexico and the United States are more closely linked than ever thanks to the recently renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). On a more "cultural" level, many of us eat regularly at Mexican restaurants, buy prints and other items decorated with the art of Frida Kahlo, and celebrate Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican national holiday, with margaritas and partying. Yet few in the U.S. are aware of the historical processes that brought Mexico to its current situation; gringos often think of Cinco de Mayo as "Mexican Independence Day," though this is incorrect. There is little understanding in our country about the complexities of the Mexican cultural heritage, nor of the processes of invasion, colonialism, neocolonialism, and migration that have shaped Mexico for centuries; Donald Trump's insulting statements about Mexico and Mexicans, eagerly consumed by too many of our fellow citizens, are an exaggerated illustration of this situation. At the best of times, what passes for analysis in the U.S. media generally highlights the fragility of the Mexican economy, the poverty of its people, the corruption of its political system, and the crises facing its leadership.

History 480/580 begins with a very brief background look at the society and culture of early Mexican history, the course moves through a consideration of the importance of the independence struggles, the nineteenth century, the Mexican Revolution, and on to the issues of Mexican life in the present day. As much as possible, emphasis will be given to the historical experiences of the majority, especially people of indigenous and mixed ancestry, as they have struggled to come to terms with (or overturn) systems imposed on them by domestic and foreign elites.

To sum up, what you are expected to take away from the course is as follows:

- To understand the complex realities of Mexican society, particularly as it has evolved from the era of independence to the present, and in so doing recognize the difference between stereotype/myth and more nuanced readings of history;
- To let what might be called the voices of the supposedly voiceless be heard, and to learn how to listen to them – or, other words, to learn how to recognize all kinds of people (men and women, etc.) as agents in their own lives, without, however, sugar-coating the historical realities that challenged them;

- To understand how and why Mexico has had such an apparently conflicted political history, why so many of its citizens remain in poverty (and therefore might be prone to immigrate to "El Norte"), and the ways in which the United States has influenced Mexico;
- To understand that, despite these "negatives," Mexico remains a vibrant, diverse place, or in other words to look beyond crisis and negativity to grasp the textures and strengths of Mexicans and their nation;
- And to hone your skills in terms of reading analytically and writing persuasively in relation to the interpretation and analysis of evidence and opinion, skills that will serve you well in many aspects of your lives after you leave the UO.

## REQUIRED READING

The following books are available at the University of Oregon bookstore:

William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club* (2004).

William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan, *Mexicans in Revolution, 1910-1946: An Introduction* (2009).

Jeffrey Pilcher, ed., *The Human Tradition in Mexico* (2003).

Mark Wasserman, *Everyday Life and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Men, Women, and War* (2000).

There are also a number of book excerpts, documents, and web links that contain other required materials for the course that you will find in the Modules section of our Canvas site. I have put copies of the required books on reserve in the Knight Library. There are also a number of "recommended" books about Mexican history and culture on reserve, too. You can see a list of these reserve items in the Course Bibliography found as the first item in the Pages section of this Canvas site. The Bibliography also has a larger roster of works about Mexico that may be of use in your written projects. I have keyed a good, standard textbook, *The Course of Mexican History*, into the course calendar as recommended reading. Other recommended reserve books are listed with the appropriate days and weeks of the term in the "Reading Calendar," the second item in the Pages section of the Canvas site.

## PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to participate actively in all phases of the course. You will see in the calendar below that several formal discussion sessions have been included, but it is hoped that there will be a significant amount of discussion during other class meetings, as well. Everyone should come to each class ready to participate; roll will be taken. All of you are expected to keep up with reading assignments, and to show evidence that you are doing so in class. Participation is worth **5%** of your total course grade.

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There are no exams in this course. Instead, students will write three analytical essays. In the first one you will be asked to explain why you think it was so difficult for Mexico to achieve political stability during its first decades of nationhood. You will be asked to consider how and why Mexico came to be led by Antonio López de Santa Anna, why he led the nation to war against Texas, why Mexico lost its war with the United States, and what all of this meant for Mexicans of various kinds. Your lecture notes, *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, Wasserman's *Everyday Life and Politics*, lectures, and relevant materials from Modules will be important sources for this assignment. This essay is due in class on **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7**, and will be worth **30%** of the course grade.

The second assignment will take the form of an analytical essay in which you are to grapple with issues related to the root causes (especially during the rule of Porfirio Díaz) and early effects of the Mexican Revolution. The essay will be centered around an analysis of *Judas at the Jockey Club*, pertinent sections of *Everyday Life and Politics*, *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, *Mexicans in Revolution*, Modules materials, and what you've learned from in-class lectures and discussions. A more detailed description of this assignment will be distributed at the

appropriate time. The essay will be due in class on **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28**. The essay will be worth **30%** of your course grade.

The third assignment is a paper focusing on "Revolutionary" Mexico in the later twentieth century. You will be asked to center your discussion around appropriate sections of *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, Modules resources, and lectures. You will also be asked to do a certain amount of library and web-based research. Exact topics to be explored in the paper will vary with individual student interest. Once again, more detailed instructions will be circulated at the appropriate time. This paper, which stands in place of a final exam, represents **35%** of your course grade. It is due by 5:00 P.M. on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20**.

## **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Graduate students enrolled in HIST 580 must complete all of the assignments described in this syllabus. Their final research paper project must be of greater length, weight, and depth than the undergraduate version of this assignment. In addition, graduate students must read the "recommended" textbook, *The Course of Mexican History*, which is to be found on reserve for our course in the Knight Library; specific assignments are keyed into the course calendar, below, and may also be found in the "Reading Calendar" section of our Blackboard site. Graduate students will complete one further, brief written assignment: an analytical book review of a work of their choice dealing in some way with Mexico history, culture, etc. This book must be selected from the "recommended" list of works held on reserve for our course. The due date for this review will depend on the specific topic of the work selected (for instance, a review of a book dealing with the nineteenth-century in some way would be due on **Thursday, February 14**; graduate students should clear their choice of book with me early in the quarter, ideally no later than **Tuesday, January 23**). Finally, graduate students are expected to attend my office hours regularly to discuss issues raised in the class and in the assigned reading.

## **WHERE TO FIND THINGS ON THE HIST 480/580 CANVAS SITE**

You will not only find the course bibliography and reading calendar in the Pages section of our Canvas site, but also suggestions about how to read and write critically, and my contact information. In the Modules section you'll find week-by-week links to required documents, webpages, film clips, and shortened versions of the Powerpoints presented in class during lectures. Obviously, in the Assignment menu item you'll find instructions for your written work, which will be made available in a timely manner, again as the quarter unfolds. Finally, I'll use the Announcements feature to send you information, reminders about assignments, etc., so keep an eye out for these things.

## **GRADING SCALE**

Grading is carried out on a 100-point scale: 100-93 = A, 92-90 = A-, 89-87 = B+, 86-83 = B, 82-80 = B-, 79-77 = C+, 76-73 = C, 72-70 = C-, 69-67 = D+, 66-63 = D, 62-60 = D-, 59 and lower = F. Note that this is not quite the same scale as you'll find on Canvas, but for HIST 480 we're using the scale printed here, not the Canvas one.

**Warning:** Assignments received on the due date but after our class meeting has ended will be fined 3 points. A fine of 5 additional points per day will be slapped on all late work! No written comments will be made on late papers. Students who do not complete all work for the quarter will be given a grade of "F" unless arrangements for an incomplete have been made in advance.

## **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

1. Please turn off your cell phones and put them away in your backpacks, bags, etc., during class meetings.
2. Laptops may only be used by permission. Those who use laptops must sit in the first row of the classroom. It is assumed that you will use your laptops for note taking, only. Otherwise, we will rarely if ever have occasion to go online for anything related to the course during class meetings. Students found to be surfing the web, doing email, or similar things on their computers unrelated to the course will be asked

to leave the classroom for the rest of that day's meeting, and will be barred from bringing laptops into the classroom for the balance of the quarter.

3. Let me know if you need to leave class early for any reason. Otherwise, please do not leave and the classroom during our sessions, as this is disruptive.

## **COURSE CALENDAR**

### **JANUARY**

#### **WEEK 1**

##### **T 8 Introduction: Many Mexicos. Required Reading:**

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, xiii-xxvi.

##### **Th 10 Mexico in the Late Eighteenth Century. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 3-14;

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 1-21;

Modules, Week 1: Society, Culture, and Politics in Late-Colonial New Spain; Tabloid Tales from Late Colonial Mexico.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Parts I-III (Chapters 1-12).

#### **WEEK 2**

##### **T 15 The Independence Struggle(s). Required Reading:**

Begin *Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 23-56;

Modules, Week 2, Part 1: The Virgin of Guadalupe; Tlaxcalan Support for Fernando VII.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part IV, Chapters 13 & 14.

##### **Th 17 The Independence Struggle(s), continued. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 23-56.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part IV, Chapter 15.

#### **WEEK 3**

##### **T 22 Nationhood and the Apostle of Instability. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

Modules, Week 3, Part 1: Views of Mexico's Early National Period; Celebrating Independence in 1840; Santa Anna's Leg: A Poem; The Revolution of 1844.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part IV, Chapter 16, Part V, Chapter 17; Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico*.

**Th 24 Bad Neighbors: Texas and the United States. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

Modules, Week 3, Part 2: The Alamo and the Texas Rebellion.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part V, Chapter 18; Peña, *With Santa Anna in Texas*.

#### WEEK 4

**T 29 The United States Invades Mexico. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

Modules, Week 4, Part 1: The US Invades Mexico.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part V, Chapter 18 (cont.).

**Th 31 Life Amidst the Ruins. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 17-90;

Begin *Judas at the Jockey Club*;

Modules, Week 4, Part 2: Daily Life in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part V, Chapter 19; Lipsett Rivera, *Gender and the Negotiation of Daily Life in Mexico, 1750-1856*.

#### **FEBRUARY**

#### WEEK 5

**T 5 Discussion: The Rocky Road to Nationhood. Required Reading:**

Continue *Judas at the Jockey Club*;

Begin *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 57-89.

**Th 7 From Empire to Liberal Dictatorship. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics*, 93-157;

Continue *Judas at the Jockey Club*;

*Complete The Human Tradition in Mexico, 57-89;*

Modules, Week 5: Maximilian and Carlota; Princess Salm-Salm and Benito Juárez; Maximilian's Execution.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part VI, Chapters 20-22.

**\*\*\*FIRST ESSAY DUE IN CLASS\*\*\***

## **WEEK 6**

**T 12 The Age of Porfirio Díaz. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics, 161-223;*

*Begin The Human Tradition in Mexico, 91-135;*

*Continue Judas at the Jockey Club;*

Modules, Week 6, Part 1: The Porfiriato; Having a Ball.

**Recommended Reading:** Begin Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part VII, Chapters 23-25; Johns, *The City of Mexico in the Age of Diaz*.

**Th 14 The Age of Porfirio Diaz, continued. Required Reading:**

*Complete The Human Tradition in Mexico, 91-135;*

*Complete Judas at the Jockey Club;*

Modules, Week 6, Part 2: Porfiriato Article Links (many interesting things, but you can sample this, though it would be great if everyone read the Díaz obituary from 1915, the last link in the document); The Creelman Interview; All is Well in Mexico.

**Recommended Reading:** Complete Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part VII, Chapters 23-25; Johns, *The City of Mexico in the Age of Diaz*.

## **WEEK 7**

**T 19 The Mexican Revolution. Required Reading:**

*Everyday Life and Politics, 223-232;*

*The Human Tradition in Mexico, 137-148;*

*Mexicans in Revolution, 1-45;*

Modules, Week 6, Part 2: The Plan de San Luis Potosí.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part VIII, Chapters 26-28; Reed, *Insurgent Mexico; Modules, Week 7, Part 1: Memorias de un Mexicano*.

**Th 21 The Mexican Revolution, cont. Required Reading:**

*Mexicans in Revolution*, 47-77;

Modules, Week 7, Part 1: The Revolution of 1910: Texts; La Cucarracha.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part VIII, Chapters 29-30; Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*.

**WEEK 8**

**T 26 Discussion: The Empire, the Porfiriato, and the Military Revolution of 1910. Recommended Reading:**

Schaefer, *Liberalism as Utopia*.

**Th 28 "Revolutionary" Mexico from 1920-1940. Required Reading:**

*Mexicans in Revolution*, 79-171;

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 149-163;

Modules, Week 7, Part 2: Artemio Cruz 1919; Artemio Cruz 1941; Looking for Mexico: Cinema and Celebrities; Mexico 1920-40; Carlos Chávez at the Museum of Modern Art, NYC, 1940; Mexican Calendar Art.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part IX, Chapters 31-34; Porter, *From Angel to Office Worker*.

**\*\*\*SECOND ESSAY DUE IN CLASS\*\*\***

**MARCH**

**WEEK 9**

**T 5 The Dream and Reality of the Post-WW II Boom Years. Required Reading:**

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 165-209;

Modules, Week 8: The Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968; The Tlatelolco Massacre: A Documentary.

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part X, Chapters 35-36; Poniatowska, *Nothing, Nobody*; Smith, *The Mexican Press and Civil Society*.

**Th 7 Life Amidst the Ruins, Part II. Required Reading:**

*The Human Tradition in Mexico*, 211-233;

Modules, Week 9: True Tales: Introduction; True Tales: San Quintín; True Tales, Tepito; Victims of the Mexican Miracle; Do You Smell Gas?

**Recommended Reading:** Meyer, et al, *The Course of Mexican History*, Part X, Chapter 37; Zolov, *Refried Elvis*.

## WEEK 10

### **T 12 A New Age for Mexico? Required Reading:**

Modules, Week 10, Part 1: True Tales: Popsicle Kings; True Tales: Telenovela; Mexico City Reader: Earthquake; Mexico City Reader: Garbage.

### **Th 14 Mexico in the 21st Century. Required Reading:**

Modules, Week 10, Part 2: Dead in the Middle of the River; True Tales: Chalino; True Tales, Jesús Malverde; Border Texts; Two Countries, No Home; and complete all other reading assignments.

**Recommended Reading:** Alanís Enciso, *They Should Stay There*; Martínez, *The Beast*.

## FINALS WEEK

**W 20 FINAL PAPERS DUE IN 355 MCKENZIE HALL BY 5:00 P.M. NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED. EARLY SUBMISSIONS CHEERFULLY RECEIVED.**