

Professor Efrain Barradas
Section number: 8297/1449
Schedule: Tuesdays, 4:05-7:05
Room: Grinter, 376
Office hours: Tuesday 9-11 AM, Thursday 11 AM-12 PM, and by appointment
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Course description:

A study of Mexican cultural history as seen through some of the most representative icons created by the Mexican people from pre-Hispanic times to the present. Figures from history (Zapata, La Malinche...), literature (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Octavio Paz...), cinema (María Félix, Cantinflas...), religion (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Quetzalcoatl...), the arts (Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera...) and popular culture (Death, the “macho”...), among others, will be studied in a broad chronological order that follows, as close as possible, the sequence of Mexican history. These icons will be examined as social signs or cultural constructs that allow us to understand the development of a Mexican “ethos” or the creation of a national identity. Different theoretical perspectives – art history, Jungian concepts, semiotics – will be used to study these cultural icons.

Books:

- Brian Hamnett, A Concise History of Mexico.
 - Carlos Monsiváis, Mexican postcards.
- These texts are available at Goerings Book Store [1717 NW 1st Avenue].

Other course readings are in packet of photocopies.

Schedules and assignments:

January

7: General introduction to the course.

14: Myths and Icons: Some theoretical points.

Readings:

- Edwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology...” (Chapter 1 of Meaning in the Visual Arts).
- G.S. Kirk, “Tales, Myths, Symbols...” (Chapter 6 of Myths...).
- Roland Barthes, “Myth Today” (From Mythologies).

21: Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli.

Readings:

- Hamnett, chapters 1 and 2.
- John Bierhorst, “Gods and the Ordering of Space” (Part III, Chapter 2, of The Mythology of Mexico and Central

America.

- Richard F. Townsend, "The Aztec Symbolic World" (Chapter 7 of The Aztecs).
- Michael D. Coe, "The Aztecs in 1519" (Part of chapter 8 of Mexico).

Oral presentation: Olmec Art (V. Spark)

28: The Conquistador.

- Hamnett, chapter 3.
- Bernal Díaz del Castillo, "Preliminary Note," and "The Entrance into Mexico" (The Conquest of New Spain).
- Miguel León Portilla (ed.) The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico, pp. 83-90.

Oral presentation: The Spanish "Reconquista." (V. Lorenzo)

February

4: La Malinche.

Readings:

- Bernal Díaz del Castillo, "Doña Marina's Story" (The Conquest of New Spain).
- Octavio Paz, "The Sons of La Malinche" [In Castillo].
- Jean Franco, "On the Impossibility of Antigone and the Inevitability of La Malinche" (Chapter 6 of Plotting

Women. Gender and Representation in Mexico.

Oral presentation: Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and other Spanish missionaries. (C. Mullin)

Oral presentation: "Mestizaje" (C. Robles)

11: Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Readings:

- Hamnett, chapter 4.
- Carla Trujillo, "La Virgen de Guadalupe and Her Reconstruction in Chicana Lesbian Desire."
- Sandra Cisneros, "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess."
- Carlos Monsiváis, "Tradition Hour" [In Monsiváis].

Oral presentation: The Virgin Mary in Catholic tradition. (M.D. Mauldin)

Questions for the first exam are distributed in class.

18: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Readings:

- Hamnett, chapter 5.
- Alicia Gaspar de Alba, "The Politics of Location of the Tenth Muse of America: An Interview with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz."
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "The Poet's Answer to the Most Illustrious Sor Filotea de la Cruz."
- Octavio Paz, "A Unique Society" (Chapter 1 of Sor Juana or, the Traps of Faith).

Oral presentation: Women in colonial Spanish America. (K.M. Tennyson)

First exam due.

25: Juárez, Maximilian and Porfirio Díaz.

Readings:

- Hamnett, chapter 6.
- Jonathan Kandell, "Juárez and Maximilian" (Chapter 13 of La Capital. The Biography of Mexico City).
- Charles A. Weeks, "Mexicans and Their Juárez" (Chapter 1 of The Juárez Myth in Mexico).
- Justo Sierra, "The Present Era."
- Gabino Barreda, "A Civic Oration."

Oral presentation: The United States and Mexico in the 19th century. (M. Seery)

Oral presentation: France and Mexico in the 19th century. (C. Carrillo)

March

4: Zapata and Pancho Villa.

- Carlos Monsiváis, "Mexico, 1890-1976" [In Monsiváis].
- Martín Luis Guzmán, Memoirs of Pancho Villa (Book 1, chapters 1, 2; Book 5, chapters 2, 3 and 4).
- Sandra Cisneros, "Eyes of Zapata."
- Luz Jiménez, From Life and Death in Milpa Alta.

Oral presentation: The Mexican "corrido" and the Revolution. (H. Hutchinson)

Oral presentation: Women in the Mexican Revolution. (A. Zúñiga)

11: Spring break.

18: Death.

Readings:

- Anita Brenner, "Mexican Messiah" (Chapter 1 of Idols Behind Altars).
- Bertram D. Wolfe, "Death and Laughter" (Chapter 4 of Portrait of Mexico).
- Octavio Paz, Poems ("Last Dawn," "Coming and Going," "Oracle," and "Certainty").
- Carlos Monsiváis, "Millenarianisms in Mexico" [In Monsiváis].

Oral presentation: The day of the dead. (J. Montano)

25: Mexican cooking: Chocolate, chiles, moles and tamales.

Readings:

- Alan Davidson, "European's Wary Encounter with Tomatoes, Potatoes, and Other New World Foods" (Chapter 1 of Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell (eds.), Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americans Gave the World).
- Bernal Díaz del Castillo, From "The Stay in Mexico" (The Conquest of New Spain).
- Diana Kennedy, From The Cuisines of Mexico.

Oral presentation: Other New World foods. (D. Núñez)

April

1: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

Readings:

- Claudia Schaefer, "Frida Kahlo's Cult of the Body" (Chapter 1 of Textured Live: Women, Art, and

Representation in Modern Mexico.

- Diego Rivera, From My Art. My Life: An Autobiography.
- Bertram D. Wolfe, "The Painter and the Machine" (Chapter 25 of The Fabulous Life of Diego Rivera).

Oral presentation: The influence of Mexican art in the United States. (J. Day)

8: Mexican Cinema: The good mother, the bad woman and the macho.

Readings:

- Charles Ramirez Berg, "The Cinematic Invention of Mexico" (The Mexican Cinema Project)
- Carl J. Mora, "War and Growth of a Major Film Industry, 1940-1946" (Mexican Cinema).
- Carlos Monsiváis, "Dolores del Río: The Face as Institution," "Cantinflas: That's the Point!" and "Tin Tan: The Pachuco" [In Monsiváis].
- Sergei Eisenstein, "¡Viva México!"
- Emilio Fernández, "Río Escondido."

(Films will be on reserve and have to be viewed before class.)

Oral presentation: Melodrama. (C.A. Leid)

Oral presentation: Televisa and "telenovelas". (M. Sotomayor)

15: Macho and Machismo.

Readings:

- Matthew C. Gutmann, "Machismo" (Chapter 9 of The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City).
- Carlos Monsiváis, "Red News: The Crime Pages in Mexico," and "Bolero: A History" [In Monsiváis].
- Joselito Rodríguez, "Ay, Jalisco, no te rajés."

(Film will be on reserve and has to be viewed before class.)

Oral presentation: Feminist and Gay movements in Mexico. (L. Gambarino)

*** Questions for the second exam are distributed.***

22: Sub-comandante Marcos

- Hamnett, chapter 7.
- Sub-Comandante Marcos, "Subcomandante Marcos introduces himself," "Letter to Bill Clinton and the people of the USA," "The Zapatista Women's Uprising," and "The Sup Writes a Letter to a Ten-Year-Old Girl Who lives in Mexico City."
- Carlos Fuentes, "Indian Mexico."
- Elena Poniatowska, "Women, Mexico, and Chiapas."

Oral presentation: NAFTA and its effects on contemporary Mexico. (N. Rubio)

Oral presentation: Political Parties in Mexico today. (M. Ferreiro)

April 29: Second exam and final papers due at 1 PM.

Course requirements and grades:

Undergraduate students.

The final grade for this course will be made up of the following components:

1. Oral presentation (20%).

All students must give a twenty-minutes oral presentation in class. The topics for these are related to the subjects discussed at each meeting and will be presented on that day.

2. Two partial exams (60%: 30% each)).

Both of these will be take-home exams. The questions for the first one will cover the pre-Hispanic and Colonial periods and will be distributed in class (February 11); this exam is due in a week (February 18) in class. The questions for the second exam will cover the 19th and 20th centuries and will be distributed in class (April 15); the exam is due Friday, April 29 before 1PM in the professor's mailbox at CLAS. Further instructions for the exams will be provided with the questions. Answers for the exam should be between five and seven pages long. The written work can be done in English or Spanish.

3. Attendance and participation (20%).

Students are required to attend all classes. One un-excused absence is allowed, after which students are required to provide a written justification or suffer a grade penalty.

Graduate students.

The final grade for this course will be made up of the following components:

1. An oral presentation (30%).

All students must give a twenty-minutes oral presentation in class. The topics for these are related to the subjects discussed at each meeting and will be presented on that day. At the end of the first session students will give the professor a list of the three topics that they prefer for the oral presentation. Graduate students must present a detailed bibliography for their oral presentation.

2. Attendance and participation (20%).

Students are required to attend all classes. One un-excused absence is allowed, after which students are required to provide a written justification or suffer a grade penalty.

3. A final research paper (50%).

This paper should be on a topic related to the course. By March 18 students should have submitted the topic for this paper for the professor's approval. The professor will notify the students on their topic selection by March 25. The topic for the final paper can only be changed with the professor's approval. However, students are not encouraged to change their topic once it has been selected and approved. By April 8 students should submit a preliminary bibliography and a half-page abstract for their work. The final paper should be between 12 and 15 pages, and it is due on April 29, by 1 PM (professor's mailbox at CLAS).

All written work for this course may be done either in English or Spanish.

Academic Honesty Guidelines University of Florida

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines include but are not limited to:

Cheating. The improper taking or tendering of any information or material which shall be used to determine academic credit. Taking of information includes copying graded homework assignments from another student; working with another individual(s) on graded assignments or homework; looking or attempting to look at notes, a text, or another student's paper during an exam.

Plagiarism. The attempt to represent the work of another as the product of one's own thought, whether the other's work is oral or written (including electronic), published or unpublished. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting oral or written materials without citation on written materials or in oral presentations; submitting work produced by an on-line translation service or the translation feature of an on-line dictionary as your own.

Misrepresentation. Any act or omission with intent to deceive a teacher for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes lying to a teacher to increase your grade; lying or misrepresenting facts when confronted with an allegation of academic honesty.

Bribery, Conspiracy, Fabrication. For details see website below.

The UF Honor Code states: AWe, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.@

On all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

AOn my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.@

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action according to the judicial process.

For more details go to: <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm>