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HILA 132: THE HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICO, 1920-PRESENT

COMMON COURTESY POLICY: I find recent technology changes and student customs force me to add this note. Please put down all newspapers, e-books, and items you are reading. Turn off all phones and other electronic devices. If you know you will need to leave the class, please notify me ahead of time. I will be here for the entire class period, so should you. I am not always entertaining but I still expect of modicum of respect -- for my age if not my skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This is an interpretation of Mexico's evolution from the Revolution until the present. It outlines changes in politics, social structures and economics and deals with such issues as the demographic explosion, urbanization, business cycles, and immigration to the United States. Most of the lectures will focus on political developments, social changes, and efforts at becoming "modern." I will try, however, to bring in observations on Mexico's many cultural achievements and complexities. While Mexico still has many problems, its many types of people are not problematic but exemplify a cultural richness that is in danger of being homogenized. One of the several themes in the course will be the "costs of a modernity" engineered by the nation's leaders.

I offer no solution but rather an exploration of themes and approaches. In the examinations and presentations, you will be asked your impressions of what Mexico was, is, might have been, and might still become. The course will have three parts. After a brief discussion of the present, it will move back into the Porfirian Era and proceed chronologically.

GRADE: Your evaluation will be as follows: take-home mid-term exam 30 per cent, take-home final 50 per cent; discussion counts for 20 per cent. The mid-term and final will be take-home exams: the mid-term will be 5 pages typed or printed and the final, 10 pages. You should list a bibliography at the end of each; failure to do so will reduce your grade on any paper. The mid-term should list three titles; the final, five. Participation may take two forms: asking questions and participating in class or doing a class-room presentation (of 10-12 minutes). The system used to evaluate your participation and other information about your grade will be posted on the class web site. The final paper counts for the 10-page writing requirement in Roosevelt College.

READINGS: All the books are required and in paperback and on sale at the Bookstore. All are also available on class reserve in the central library, that is, Geisel.

1. Piccato, Pablo. City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931 (Duke, 2001) ISBN 9780271023908
2. Gonzales, Michael J. The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940 (New Mexico, 2002) ISBN 082632780X
3. Padilla, Tánalis. Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata (Duke, 2008) ISBN 9780822343196
4. Centeno, Miguel A., Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico (Penn State, 1997) 2nd Ed. ISBN 9780271023908
5. Quinones, Sam. True Tales from Another Mexico: The Lynch Mob, the Popsicle Kings, Chalino, and the Bronx (New Mexico, 2001) ISBN 0826322956. A portrait of Mexicans who see something in their future.

LECTURES AND READING

Part 1: The Present as Consequence

- I. Introduction: The Media and Reality
 - A. What do you know or care about Mexico?
 - B. Is This Democracy?
Read: Piccato, City of Suspects, over the next three weeks.

Part 1: How did the System Begin?

- II. Porfirio Díaz: The Past and Future Agenda of Liberalism
 - A. The Porfiriato
 - B. The Revolution and the Revolutionary Family
Read: Gonzalez, The Mexican Revolution, over the next two weeks.
- III. The System of Government
 - A. The Official Party and its Rules, 1929-1950
 - B. Workers and Peasants and the Radical Moment
- IV. World Wars and the United States
 - A. US Interests in Mexico, 1920-1950
 - B. Cultural Nationalism: A National Culture?
Read: Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata, first half before mid-term
MID-TERM HANDED OUT ON THURSDAY IS DUE NEXT THURSDAY AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS FINISH READING ASSIGNMENTS

Part 2: The Mexican Miracle

- V. The Mexican Miracle
 - A. Peasants move, children are born, 1940-1970.
 - B. Was there a Miracle?
 Read: Padilla, Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata, second half finished by week six.

- VI. The Dilemmas of Modernization
 - A. 1968 and the End of the Miracle
 - B. Review Questions for the mid-term

- VII. Many Mexicos and Many Crises
 - A. Political Autocracy and Political Recruitment, 1968-2000
 - B. The Oil Boom
 Read: Centeno, Democracy Within Reason, finish over next two weeks.

Part 3: What is New under the Sun?

- VIII. The Culture of Disillusionment, 1980-2010
 - A. Who could attack “the system?”
 - B. The Development of Neo-Liberalism

- IX. Men, Women, and New Modes of Life
 - A. The Informal Economy
 - B. The Change of Cultural Themes
 Read: Quinones, True Tales from Another Mexico, read over next two weeks.

- X. Mexico’s Future
 - A. Elected and Democratic Regimes
 - B. The unfinished agenda