

Codex Mendoza, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

**HIST 530 History of Mexico: "Mexico in Four Revolutions"**  
**This course meets Tuesday/Thursday in Caldwell 105, 9:30-10:45 AM.**

This course is designed for students who like to discuss ideas concerning national identity, revolution, and modernity in mixed societies whose roots run deep in layered experiences of colonialism and mobility. The course focuses on the rich history of the regions that have become the modern nation-state of Mexico, and its major themes are relevant for many areas of the Americas and beyond. The course satisfies two requirements in the general curriculum: Beyond the Atlantic world, and Historical Analysis. The course will meet twice a week, with short lectures and in-class discussion; attendance and participation are the key to students' success in the course. Student assessment will be based on participation/attendance, short written responses to the readings, and the midterm and final exams.

Four principal moments define the structure of this course, and the intervening periods will be covered sufficiently to give necessary context: 1) **Cycles of conquest** and their consequences: the rise of the Mexica tributary empire in central Mexico and the Spanish conquest of the Mexica and other Mesoamerican city-states and chiefdoms (1428-1540). Mexico's long colonial history will be covered selectively through the main features of colonial society, institutions, economy, art and science. 2) **Independence**: from popular insurgency to a conservative republic (1810-1840). In this transition from colonial New Spain to republican Mexico, the course will emphasize the major issues, debates, and conflicts that arose over citizenship in a multi-ethnic society, church and state, and national territory. 3) **La Reforma** and the many faces of liberalism (1854-1880). Class readings and discussion will focus on the juridical and economic reforms established in Mexico through the political revolution of La Reforma, preceded by the U.S. invasion of Mexico (1846-1848) and punctuated by the French invasion and imposed monarchy (1862-1867). 4) **Revolution of 1910**: social upheaval and new paths to modernity. This final section of the course will consider the social classes that joined the diverse political movements which are known in Mexican history as the Revolution of 1910-1920. Students will be encouraged to question whether this was a unified movement and, in larger terms, what this period of Mexican history teaches us about the global concept of revolution.

**Textbooks:** Michael C. Meyer, William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History* 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford University Press, 2007); Stuart M. Schwartz, ed., *Victors and Vanquished* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000); José Tomás de Cuéllar, *The Magic Lantern* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

**Our goals for this course are:**

- To work together to improve our discussion and writing skills
- To analyze Mexican history along themes of geography, economy, culture, and revolutionary movements within Mexico and in relation to global history
- To develop research techniques and critical reading skills

To reach these goals, our first objective is to create a community in which students feel comfortable sharing their ideas with mutual respect and constructive criticism. Our second objective is to assess different sources of information on Mexico, from sixteenth-century conquests to the twentieth-century revolutions. Three required textbooks will provide the core readings, supplemented by articles posted in UNC Library e-reserves or on Blackboard.

**Honor code:** All written work, including exams, must bear either the full honor code pledge (“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this examination or written assignment”) or the word “Pledge” followed by your signature to indicate your adherence to the UNC Honor Code. **No grade will be recorded without the pledge.** In signing it, you affirm that the work that bears your name is indeed yours. Academic dishonesty and other offenses against the ethical standards of the university are defined at: <http://honor.unc.edu/honor/index.html> and <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

**Assistance:** Students with registered disabilities are encouraged to inform me of their needs. I will make every effort to accommodate your learning styles and requirements. Please work with me and through the Academic Success Program at the Learning Center.

**Grades:** Student assessments are based on the following distribution: attendance and participation 25%; written responses to the assigned readings 25%; midterm 20%; final exam 30%. Response papers should extend 3-4 pages, explain the main arguments of the required readings, and express your responses to them. Failure to turn in any written assignment will result in the student’s ineligibility to take the final exam and thus to pass the course. Students are required to attend ALL classes; absences will be excused only with written medical affidavits. Three unexcused absences will result in a one-step lowered grade.

**Professor Radding’s office hours:** Tuesday, 11:30-12:30; Wednesday, 1:00-3:00, and by appointment in Hamilton Hall 513, Telephone 962-5057. Email [radding@email.unc.edu](mailto:radding@email.unc.edu).

## Topics and Weekly Readings

August 25 Introduction to the Course and explanation of goals and assignments.  
Mexico History Timeline

(1) *Antiquity: Many Mexicos in Geography and Culture*  
August 27 The Development of Mesoamerican Cultures and Frontiers  
*Course of Mexican History* 3-49.

September 1 Mexica and Iberian Empires  
*Course of Mexican History*, 50-83; *Victors & Vanquished*, v-x, 1-28.  
Class discussion will center on the similarities and contrasts between the Mesoamerican and Iberian civilizations

(2) *Spanish Invasions of Mexico*  
September 3 Encounters: Cortés and the Court of Moctezuma  
*Course of Mexican History*, 87-117; *Victors & Vanquished*, 79-126.  
Class discussion will emphasize the nature of the documents excerpted in this book, with examples from the *Florentine Codex*, Cortés's letters, and Bernal Díaz's *True History of the Conquest*.

September 8 Violence and Diplomacy: language and alliances  
*Victors & Vanquished*, 127-181

September 10 Destruction of Tenochtitlan  
*Victors & Vanquished*, 182-244

(3) *New Spain: Mexican Foundations and Colonial Expansion*  
September 15 Early Years of Spanish Rule in Mexico  
*Course of Mexican History*, 118-144.

**First response paper due in class on *Victors and Vanquished*. (9 points)**

September 17 Economy and Livelihood in the Colony  
*Course of Mexican History*, 145-159.

September 22 Church, Families, Communities, and Identities in New Spain  
*Course of Mexican History*, 160-193; e-reserve chapter by Susan Deeds, "Subverting the Social Order: Gender, Power, and Magic in Nueva Vizcaya," *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion* (2005)

September 24 Architecture, Art, Music, Science: Baroque Culture in New Spain  
*Course of Mexican History*, 194-217; e-reserve chapter by Jane Landers, "Social Control on Spain's Contested Florida Frontier," *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion* (2005)

September 29 Colonial Conflicts and Institutions in Northern New Spain  
e-reserve chapter by Cynthia Radding, "The Común, Local Governance, and Defiance in Colonial Sonora," *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion*

October 1 Visit to Wilson Library Rare Book Room.

October 6 From Colonial Reforms to Independence  
*Course of Mexican History*, 221-250.

**Second response paper due on e-reserve readings. (8 points)**

In-class review of the revolutions of imperial conquest and colonial borderlands

October 8 **Midterm Exam in class. (20 points)**

(4) *Independence: Popular Insurgency and Counterrevolution*

October 13 Independence and the Fragility of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mexican State  
*Course of Mexican History*, 251-273.

October 15 Nationalism and Foreign Invasions  
*Course of Mexican History*, 277-325

(5) *Reforms and Civil Wars*

October 20 La Reforma: Goals and Contradictions  
*Course of Mexican History*, 329-373

October 22 FALL BREAK

October 27 Pax Porfiriana and Social Revolution  
*Course of Mexican History*, 377-442

October 29 Porfirian Society and Modernization  
*Magic Lantern*, xi-xxxv, 3-44.

November 3 Porfirian Society and the Corruption of Money  
*Magic Lantern*, 45-118.

(6) *Revolution*

November 5 Themes and Timeline for the Revolution of 1910-1920  
**Third response paper due in class on *The Magic Lantern*. (8 points)**

November 10 Peasants and City Folk: *Zapatistas, Villistas, and Constitucionalistas*  
*Course of Mexican History*, 443-481

November 12 Agrarian and Political Objectives  
*Course of Mexican History*, 482-495; 499-524.

November 17 and 19            The Mexican Revolution in History and Memory  
In-class films and discussion

November 24            Summary and Review: Revolutions in Perspective  
*Course of Mexican History, "1,500 Years of Mexican Art History"*

November 26            THANKSGIVING

December 1            (7) *Culture, Memory, and Landscape*  
Literature and Art in 20th-Century Mexico  
Juan Rulfo, e-reserves for *Burning Plain*, Introduction, "They Gave us the Land," and  
"Burning Plain" (pp. vii-xii; 9-14; 65-81).

December 3            Frida Kahlo and the Voices of Mexican Women

December 8            Course Review

**FINAL EXAM THURSDAY DECEMBER 17 AT 8:00 AM IN CALDWELL 105  
(30 points)**