The Mexican Revolution: Background, Development, and Consequences

Course Description

The literature on modern Mexico has been influenced, explicitly or implicitly, by the need to explain, and come to terms with, the Mexican Revolution—a violent upheaval which lasted ten years and cost perhaps a million lives. This course examines some of the enduring themes and trends in nineteenth and twentieth century Mexico: regionalism, social conflict, and the emergence of a modern state; agrarian unrest and the land question; the nature and consequences of capitalist development; Mexico's unique political system; and Mexico's relationship with the United States. The Revolution is the centerpiece around which these themes are developed, both as they led up to, and emerged from, the revolutionary process itself.

Course Assignments

1) Papers: for undergraduates, one 3-5 page review of one of the first three assigned readings and one 5-8 page summary and analysis of an in-class debate on the nature of the Mexican Revolution; for graduate students, a 12-15 page review of the literature on a specific topic in 19th or 20th century Mexican history.

2) A mid-term examination and a final, for graduates and undergraduates.

3) Active participation in discussions. Please note that 15% of the grade is for discussion section.

4) Grading system: Book review, 15%; Debate paper, 20%; mid-term, 20%; final, 30%; Discussion section, 15%.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURES

UNIT I: Background to Revolution

Week 1
Sept. 6- Introduction
Sept. 8- Mexico's Present Crisis

Week 2
Sept. 13-Independence
Sept. 15- Aftermath: Monopoly vs. Laissez Faire
Reading: Levy and Székely, Chapters 1 and 2.
Discussions Begin in Week 2
Week 3
Sept. 20- The Liberal Revolution and its Consequences
Sept. 22- The French Intervention and the Restored Republic, 1861-1876.
Reading: Document handed out in class will be topic of discussion.

Week 4
Sept. 27- The Porfiriato: Origins and Politics
Sept. 29- The Porfiriato: Economics and the Social Question
Reading: John Kenneth Turner, Barbarous Mexico, pp. xi-146.

UNIT II: The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940

Week 5
*****Review Paper on the Document due Monday, Oct. 3, at 5:00 p.m.*****
Oct. 4- Background to Revolution: Developments in the North
Oct. 6- The Maderista Revolution and Unrest in the South
Reading: Turner, pp. 147-295.

Week 6
*****Review Paper on Turner due Monday, Oct. 10, at 5:00 p.m.*****
Oct. 11- The Peasant Revolution to 1914
Oct. 13- Decline of the Peasant Revolution, 1915-1918
Reading: John Reed, Insurgent Mexico, entire.

Week 7
*****Review Paper on Reed due Monday, Oct. 17, at 5:00 p.m.*****
Oct. 18- The Constitutionalists through 1920
Oct. 20- Revolution at the Periphery
Reading: John Womack, Jr., Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, pp. ix-223.

Week 8
Oct. 25- Women and the Revolution
Oct. 27- *****Midterm examination in class*****
No sections, no new reading

Week 9
Nov. 1- "Socialism" in one State? Yucatan, 1915-1925
Nov. 3- Crisis in the 1920s
Reading: Womack, pp.223-411.

Week 10
Nov. 8- The New Revolutionary Culture: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera
Nov. 10- The Cristero Rebellion
DEBATE ON THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION: Hours to be arranged
No New Reading: Prepare for Debate

Week 11
Nov. 15- Cardenas: Mobilization as Institutionalization
Nov. 17- The Limits of Mobilization
No New Reading: Debate Post-Mortem in Discussion Section
UNIT III: Mexico After Cardenas

Week 12
Nov. 22-- The "Economic Miracle"
Reading: Levy and Székely, Chapters 3-6.

*****THANKSGIVING BREAK*****

Week 13
*****DEBATE PAPER DUE, WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30 AT 5:00 P.M.*****
Nov. 29-- The Political System
Dec. 1-- Agribusiness and the Green Revolution
Reading: Begin Carlos Fuentes, The Death of Artemio Cruz

Week 14
Dec. 6-- Migration and Emigration
Dec. 8-- The Border Economy
Reading: Finish Fuentes.

Week 15
Dec. 13-- Mexico Today (Lecture and Discussion)
Dec. 15-- The Meaning of the Revolution, Past and Present
Reading: Levy and Székely, Chapters 7 and 8.

LIST OF REQUIRED READINGS (In the University Bookstore and on reserve in Helen C. White).


Plus a short document handed out in class.