History 573  POWER AND PATRIARCHY IN MEXICAN HISTORY  Steve J. Stern
5105 Humanities  263-1841/3-1800

Course Description

This seminar is an intensive reading and discussion course on the significance of patriarchy and gender relations for understanding the organization and uses of power in Mexican history. Our purpose is to discuss, debate, and otherwise come to grips with the basic feminist argument that the analysis of gender and patriarchal power transforms the interpretation of society as a whole. This we attempt to do over a long sweep of time, from the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán to women workers in Mexico City in the 1980s. Our method will be to discuss intensively and systematically a large body of books and articles. Because our purposes are broad, and because discussion of the particular is sometimes helped by theory and comparison, we will on occasion read about other societies and about theory.

This is your seminar. In a discussion course, all the participants take on an especially active responsibility for the success of the course. I expect all students to participate actively and thoughtfully in seminar discussion, and to master the art of combining sharp debate on points of disagreement with a collegial atmosphere encouraging us all to learn from one another and to develop lines of analysis as a group.

Course assignments and grading are discussed after the schedule listed below.

Schedule

1. Jan. 18. Martin Luther King Day. No meeting.
2. Jan. 25. Introductory session. Students should be well into the reading for next week's discussion.
4. Feb. 8. Gender, the Cult of Courage, and Aztec Imperialism.


Temma Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918," Signs, 7:3 (Spring, 1982), 545-566.


6. Feb. 22. The Agony of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Reading: Margaret Sayers Peden, ed. and trans., A Woman of Genius: The Intellectual Autobiography of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Salisbury, Ct., 1982).

Irving Leonard, Baroque Times in Old Mexico (Ann Arbor, 1959), 172-192.


Reading: Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "Honor Ideology, Marriage Negotiation, and Class-Gender Domination in New Mexico, 1690-1846," Latin American Perspectives, 44 (Winter, 1985), 81-104.


Supplem. on 19th century transitions:


8. March 7 (continued).


Anna Macias, Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico (Westport, Ct., 1982).


John Reed, Insurgent Mexico (orig. 1914; New York, 1969).


Reading: María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier (Albany, 1983).

Course Assignments and Grading

The most important assignment of this seminar is active, thoughtful, and bold oral participation on a week-to-week basis. Read the material, think about the issues it poses, come ready to articulate and defend your thoughts, dare to disagree with peers and so-called experts.

In addition to week-to-week participation, each seminar member will have special participation roles on one of the seven "work teams" we will establish at the start of the semester. Each work team (2-3 individuals) will undertake two tasks: 1) writing a joint report, described below, on supplementary readings; and 2) serving the role of leader/facilitator during the first hour of one week's session. The joint report on supplementary readings will be due at 2 pm in 3211 Humanities on the Friday preceding the pertinent Monday seminar. The report shall be 2-3 pages in length, and will present a paragraph on each of the following topics: a summary of the supplementary book's principal findings and argument; your reaction to the book's findings and argument; the implications of the supplementary reading for the core readings and issues assigned to the whole seminar; the single most important issue raised by the supplementary reading for class discussion on the core readings and issues. In the leader/facilitator role, work teams will provide a list of 2-3 discussion issues by Friday 2 pm for the subsequent Monday seminar, and will lead discussion in the first hour of the seminar.

Aside from the joint reports of work teams, each seminar member will fulfill the following writing assignments:

1) a short paper (4-5 pages) presenting a critical review and analysis of the assigned readings of a given week, due at the start of the pertinent seminar session;

2) a journal-essay. Each member of the seminar will keep a weekly journal recording her or his reflections on and reactions to the readings on a single page. Pages from the journal should be submitted to me at the beginning of class on a week-to-week basis as the semester proceeds. At the end of the semester, students will write a short-to-medium essay (6-9 pages) analyzing their intellectual evolution during the course of the semester, and presenting their conclusions about power and patriarchy in Mexican history. The completed journal and essay are due by Friday, May 2.

Grading will be weighted roughly as follows:

week-to-week participation--one third; work team participation--one sixth; short critical essay--one sixth; journal-essay--one third.
12. April 11 (continued).


13. April 18. Women and Industrial Labor (Part II)

Reading: Lourdes Beneria and Martha Roldán, The Crossroads of Class & Gender: Industrial Homework, Subcontracting, and Household Dynamics in Mexico City (Chicago, 1987).


Reading: Irene Silverblatt, Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru (Princeton, 1987).

15. May 2. Comparative Perspectives: Gender, Class, and Peasantry in Modern Settings.
