

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Semester I, 1988-89

History 557

Florencia E. Mallon
5125 Humanities
263-1822/1800

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).

Fuentes, Carlos, The Death of Artemio Cruz (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1964).

Levy, Daniel, and Gabriel Székely, Mexico: The Paradox of Stability and Change (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987, 2nd. Edition).

Reed, John, Insurgent Mexico (New York: International Publishers, 1969).

Turner, John Kenneth, Barbarous Mexico (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969).

Womack, Jr., John, Zapata and the Mexican Revolution (New York: Random House, 1968).

Plus a short document handed out in class.