

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Semester I, 2002-03

History 557

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The Mexican Revolution: Background,  
Development, and Consequences

Course Description

With the election of Vicente Fox in 2000, the 80-year reign of Mexico's revolutionary party officially came to an end. But rumors of its demise had been circulating for quite a while before this moment. Since the presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), political officials had been busily dismantling the structures put in place by the revolutionary process, amending the Constitution in order to reverse the promises originally made by the first postrevolutionary governments. Rebels in the southern state of Chiapas rose up on January 1, 1994 in the name of revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, echoing many of his original demands for land, social justice, and political democracy. Suddenly, the Mexican Revolution--a violent upheaval which lasted ten years and cost perhaps a million lives--seemed both dead and newly relevant to the present day. The need to explain this event, the first social revolution of the twentieth century, and its consequences for Mexican history more broadly, is not simply academic.

In this course we will examine 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 of 1910, and the changes set in motion in the past fifteen years, will serve as the two conceptual centers around which these themes are developed. Our ultimate purpose will be to combine reading, lectures, discussion and debate in order to explore--from a variety of viewpoints--the significance of recent transformations in the overall process of modern Mexican history.

Course Assignments

1) There will be two in-class debates about issues raised in class readings, lectures, and discussions. Each student will be expected to participate in these debates in the following ways:

- a) an oral presentation in one of the two debates;
- b) one written (5-8 page) summary and analysis of the other in-class debate, which includes a discussion of the student's own opinions concerning the issues involved.

2) There will be a take-home midterm, composed of one essay question: "Why did the Chiapas rebels call themselves Zapatistas rather than Villistas?" This question will allow you to compare and contrast the two popular movements in the 1910 revolution, while also comparing the 1910 revolution to the 1994 Zapatista uprising.

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3) There will be a final exam composed of two parts: a comprehensive essay question taken from a review sheet handed out ahead of time; and a section of short essays on key concepts and terms (a list will be provided as part of the review process).

3) All students are expected to participate actively in discussions.

4) Grading system: Oral debate presentation, 15%; Written assessment of debate teamwork, 10%; Debate paper, 20%; midterm, 20%; final, 35%.

### SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND LECTURES

#### UNIT I: The End of the Mexican Revolution

##### Week 1- Mexico Today

Sept. 3- The End of the PRI: When, How, and What It Means

Sept. 5- The Chiapas Rebellion, 1994-2001: An overview

Reading: Stephen, pp. xxv-88.

##### Week 2- Chiapas and the Indigenous Question: Historical Background

Sept. 10- The 1910 Revolution Comes to Chiapas

Sept. 12- Changes in the Land, 1970-1994

Reading: Stephen, pp. 91-215.

##### Week 3- Chiapas in Broader Perspective

Sept. 17- Indigenous and Rural Peripheries in Revolutionary Mexico

Sept. 19- Earlier indigenous experiments: Juchitán's COCEI

Reading: Stephen, pp. 219-315.

#### UNIT II: The Emergence of the Liberal Nation-State

##### Week 4- The Triumph of Liberalism

Sept. 24- From Independence to the French Intervention, 1810-1867

Sept. 26- Liberalism Uncontested: The Emergence of the Porfiriato, 1872-1890

Reading: Documents handed out in class:

\*Ponciano Arriaga, "A Mexican Radical," in Benjamin Keen (ed.), Latin American Civilization: History and Society, 1492 to the Present (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 260-62.

\*John Kenneth Turner, "The Contract Slaves of the Valle Nacional" and "In the Valley of Death," in Barbarous Mexico, Orig. Ed. 1910 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 54-67 and 68-90, respectively.

##### Week 5- The Porfiriato in Crisis and the Road to Revolution

Oct. 1- The North

Oct. 3- The South

Reading: Hodges and Gandy, pp. 1-38;

\*Zapatista documents: "Plan de Ayala" and "Agrarian Law," translations in John Womack, Jr., Zapata and the Mexican Revolution (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 393-404, 405-11, respectively.

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Week 6- The Violent Decade, 1910-1920

Oct. 8- The Popular Revolution, 1910-1918

Oct. 10- The Victors: The Constitutionals through 1920

Reading: Reed, entire.

Week 7- Voices along the Edges of the Crowd

Oct. 15- Revolution at the Periphery

Oct. 17- Gender and the Revolution

**NO NEW READING; MIDTERM ESSAY DUE FRIDAY, OCT. 18<sup>TH</sup>, 5:00 P.M.**

Week 8- Picking up the Pieces, 1920-1930

Oct. 22- Periphery Against the Center: The Strange Case of Yucatán, 1915-1925

Oct. 24- The Puzzle of Institutionalization: Crisis in the 1920s

Reading: Hodges and Gandy, pp. 39-83.

Week 9- Cultural Contestations, 1920-1930

Oct. 29- The New Revolutionary Culture: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

Oct. 31- The Cristero Rebellion

Reading: Bantjes, pp. xi-85.

Week 10- Cardenista Institutionalization, 1934-1940

Nov. 5 Cárdenas: Mobilization as Institutionalization

Nov. 7- Cárdenas: The Limits of Mobilization

Reading: Bantjes, pp. 89-172.

UNIT III: Rise and Fall of the Liberal Welfare State, 1940-1968

Week 11- Quick Reversals?

Nov. 12- **DEBATE. Was the Mexican Postrevolutionary State a Welfare State?**

Nov. 14- Mexico after Cárdenas: The "Economic Miracle"

Reading: Bantjes, pp. 135-226.

Week 12- The Unraveling Continues

Nov. 19- Mexico after Cárdenas: The Political System

Nov. 21- The First Agrarian Counterreform: Agribusiness and the Green Revolution

Reading: Hodges and Gandy, pp. 83-126;

\*Document: Rubén Jaramillo, "Plan de Cerro Prieto."

Week 13- Glimmerings of a New Future

Nov. 26- Border Society, Culture, and Economy: Export Processing Begins

\*\*\*\*\*THANKSGIVING BREAK\*\*\*\*\*

UNIT IV: Crisis in Slow Motion, 1968-2000

Week 14- The Erosion of Prosperity and Democracy

Dec. 3- Crisis and Repression, 1968-1988.

Dec. 5- The Salinas Counterreform and Neocardenismo

Reading: Hodges and Gandy, pp. 127-187;

\*Article: Rubén Martínez, "Corazón del Rocanrol," in Gilbert M. Joseph et al.,  
Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940

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(Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 373-88 (handed out in class).

Week 15- The End of the PRI

Dec. 10- **DEBATE: Is the Revolution Dead Yet?**

Dec. 12- Mexico After the PRI

LIST OF REQUIRED READINGS:

Books are available **ONLY** at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman, 257-6050, and on reserve at Helen C. White. The titles are listed in the order assigned:

1) Lynn Stephen, Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

2) Donald C. Hodges and Ross Gandy, Mexico: The End of the Revolution (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002).

3) John Reed, Insurgent Mexico, Reprint Ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1994).

4) Adrian A. Bantjes, As If Jesus Walked On Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1998).

**AND OCCASIONAL DOCUMENTS OR ARTICLES HANDED OUT IN CLASS**