

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Semester II, 2005-06

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the structures put in place by the revolutionary process, amending the Constitution in order to reverse the promises originally made by the first postrevolutionary governments.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.
- 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, 17-19 Jan.- Mexico Today: The Chiapas Rebellion and the Fall of the PRI

Reading: *Marián Peres Tsu, "A Tzotzil Chronicle of the Zapatista Uprising," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson, eds., The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 655-69; XEROX PACKET.

Week 2, 24-26 Jan.- Chiapas and the Indigenous Question: Historical Background

Reading: Collier and Quaratiello, pp. 1-90.

Week 3, 31 Jan.-2 Feb.- Chiapas in Broader Mexican Perspective

Reading: Collier and Quaratiello, pp. 91-176.

UNIT II: The Emergence of the Liberal Nation-State

Week 4, 7-9 Feb.- The Triumph of Liberalism: From Independence to the *Porfiriato*

Reading:

*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, XEROX PACKET.

*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, XEROX PACKET.

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Week 5, 14-17 Feb.- The *Porfiriato* in Crisis and the Road to Revolution

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 1-35.

*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, XEROX PACKET.

Week 6, 21-23 Feb.- The Violent Decade, 1910-1920

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 36-70; Reed, entire.

Week 7, 28 Feb.-2 Mar.- Voices along the Edges of the Crowd

NO NEW READING; MIDTERM ESSAY DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 3RD, 5:00 P.M.

Week 8, 7-9 Mar.- Picking up the Pieces, 1920-1930

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 71-128.

******SPRING BREAK, 11-19 MARCH******

Week 9, 21-23 Mar.- Cultural Contestations, 1920-1930

Reading: Vaughan, pp. 3-46.

Week 10, 28-30 Mar.- Cardenista Institutionalization, 1934-1940

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 130-58; Vaughan, pp. 47-136.

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

Week 11, 4-6 Apr.- Was the Mexican Postrevolutionary State a Welfare State?

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 159-98; Vaughan, pp. 137-201.

Week 12, 11-13 Apr.- Was the Mexican Postrevolutionary State a Welfare State? (Part 2)

11 Apr.. Debate N° 1: Was the Mexican Postrevolutionary State a Welfare State?

Reading: *Document: Rubén Jaramillo, "Plan de Cerro Prieto," XEROX PACKET.

Week 13, 18-20 Apr.- Struggles with Crisis and Reprivatization

Reading: Steven J. Bachelor, "Toiling for the 'New Invaders': Autoworkers, Transnational Corporations, and Working-Class Culture in Mexico City, 1955-1968," in Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov (eds.), Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 273-326. XEROX PACKET.

UNIT IV: Crisis in Slow Motion, 1968-2000

Week 14, 25-27 Apr.- The Erosion of Prosperity and Democracy

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 199-250.

Week 15, 2-4 May- Mexico after the PRI

Reading: Aguilar Camín and Meyer, pp. 251-67.

2 May: Debate N° 2: Is the Revolution Dead Yet?

Reading: *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 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 373-88. XEROX PACKET.

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) George Allen Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello, Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas, 3rd. Ed. (San Francisco, CA: Food First, 2005). 2) Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, In the Shadow of the Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

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

4) Mary Kay Vaughan, Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997).

**AND OCCASIONAL DOCUMENTS OR ARTICLES IN A XEROX PACKET
AVAILABLE AT THE HUMANITIES COPY CENTER, 1650 HUMANITIES**