

## Mexican History (HIST 392)

*“Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States.”*

–Common Mexican saying

Fall 2008, Truman State University  
MC209, TR 1:30-2:50  
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### Description

This course surveys the history of Mexico from the earliest human inhabitation to the present. It will present different interpretations of the major themes and developments in Mexican history. A goal is to understand Mexico from the perspective of the Mexicans rather than from the point of view of the United States. It is important to understand, however, that Mexico is not a singular homogenous entity; there are “many Mexicos.” In particular, this course will emphasize the creation of Mexican identities, the role which Indigenous peoples and women have played in that creation, and how that role has changed over time.

This course also meets the Intercultural Perspectives requirement of the Liberal Studies Program. As such, it will provide you with a greater knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity through the study of encounters of Indigenous, European, and African worlds in Mexico. Hopefully this course will make you more aware of how culture has been used for political and social ends, including confronting racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and social injustice.

### Requirements

Our goal in this class is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of history, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Regular attendance and active participation are also necessary. Please drop me a note if you are unable to attend, or if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

### Readings

The following are the required books for this class. Read the assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class. Lectures and discussions will complement the readings and assume the base level of knowledge which they present, so it is critically important that you keep up with the readings. Do not wait until the last minute to buy these books since about half-way through the semester the bookstore will return unsold copies to the publisher.

Gilly, Adolfo. *The Mexican Revolution*. New York: New Press, 2005. [ISBN: 1565849329]  
 Hernández Chávez, Alicia. *Mexico: A brief history*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2006. [ISBN: 0520244915]  
 Muñoz Ramírez, Gloria. *The Fire and the Word: A history of the Zapatista movement*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2008. [ISBN: 087286488X]

**Assignments and grades**

Course grades will be based on the following assignments. You can check your grade progress on the class Blackboard web page (there is a total of 1000 possible points in the class). I do not accept “drop and run” papers. Grades on late assignments will be penalized 10 percent for each day that they are late. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Weekly response papers (13 x 20 pts ea)	260 pts
Hispanic Heritage Month	40
Research proposal (Sept 16)	50
Secondary source analysis (Sept 30)	75
Many Mexicos (Oct 15)	100
Primary source analysis (Oct 21)	75
Research paper (Dec 4)	200
Final exam (Dec 9)	100
Participation	100

**Response papers:** Post a short response to each week’s readings to the discussion board on Blackboard. Briefly state the authors’ main arguments and the evidence that they use. Examine the use of sources, methodology, and theory. Provide your own assessment or critique of the readings (20 pts ea.).

**Hispanic Heritage Month:** Attend one of the events from Hispanic Heritage Month and report back on it to class. Write up a brief evaluation of the event, and post it to the discussion board on Blackboard (40 pts).

**Many Mexicos:** As part of Hispanic Heritage Month, our class will present a multi-media examination of the diversity that is Mexico. Many people in the United States know little about Mexico, and the images that they have often do not extend beyond negative stereotypes of drug traffickers and “illegal aliens.” Mexico, however, is an incredibly diverse country, with long, rich, and varied historical and cultural traditions. From the peninsula of Baja California, through the depths of the Copper Canyon and the heights of Popocatepetl, to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the limestone plains of the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico’s geography varies broadly. Much more than a *mestizo* country, Mexico is also Indigenous, African, Asian, European. Even this, however, understates Mexico’s diversity because it is home to dozens of widely divergent Indigenous peoples, from the Raramuri and Yaqui in the north to Mixtec, Zapotec, and Maya in the south. In

addition to Spanish colonial influences, Mexico has also been strongly influenced by French and United States interventions. The class will research these “Many Mexicos” and present them through words, images, and sound to the Truman campus on Wednesday, October 15, at 7pm.

**Research paper:** Each student is required to write a research paper on a topic related to Mexican history. The paper must be 10 to 15 pages long, be typed, double spaced, and include page numbers, citations and a bibliography. The format should follow Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. In addition, you must use a minimum of six scholarly sources (books and journal articles) and one primary source. This project will be developed in a series of stages. Keep each of these assignments in a portfolio or folder, and hand in the entire portfolio with each subsequent assignment. Meeting all of these deadlines is a requirement to receive credit for the research paper.

**Sept 16:** Research paper proposal, including a paragraph describing your project, the research questions you seek to address with the project, a hypothesis of what you expect to find (the thesis statement of your research paper), and a preliminary bibliography of sources that you plan to use (50 pts).

**Sept 30:** Analyze one of the major secondary sources you will use in the writing of your research paper. This paper should be typed, double-spaced, about 3 pages long, and include citations a bibliography, and page numbers (75 pts).

**Oct 21:** Select a primary source from the Latin American history microfilm collection ([http://library.truman.edu/microforms/subject\\_list.htm#Latin%20American%20History](http://library.truman.edu/microforms/subject_list.htm#Latin%20American%20History)). Try to find something that relates as closely as possible to your research topic. Have me approve the source, and then write a paper (typed, double-spaced, about 3 pages, with citations, bibliography, page numbers) analyzing the document and its historical significance for your research topic. Attach a copy of the document to the essay (75 pts).

**Nov 20:** Peer review of research papers. Bring a draft of your research paper to exchange with another student. Read and comment on the other student’s paper and return by the next class period.

**Dec 4:** Final research paper due. When handing in your final draft, please be sure to include copies of *all* of the previous assignments including the peer-reviewed draft.

**Final exam:** The final exam is cumulative (100 pts).

### **Class Schedule**

Week 1 (Aug 26-28) Introduction & Geography

Week 2 (Sept 2-4) Ancient Civilizations  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 1 (“The indigenous world”)

Week 3 (Sept 9-11) Conquest  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 2 (“The new kingdom: conquest and colonization”)

Thursday, Sept 11: Meet in the library classroom, Pickler 103.

- Week 4 (Sept 16-18) Colonialism  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 3 (“The colonial world”)  
**Assignment:** Research paper proposal (due Tues, Sept 16)
- Week 5 (Sept 23-25) Independence  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 4 (“The twilight of the colonial world”)
- Week 6 (Sept 30-Oct 2) Iturbide  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 5 (“Independent Mexico”)  
**Assignment:** Secondary source analysis (due Tues, Sept 30)
- Week 7 (Oct 7) Santa Anna  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 6 (“The First Republic”)
- Week 8 (Oct 14-16) Juárez  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 7 (“Liberalism and national reconstruction”)
- Wednesday, October 15, 7pm:** Many Mexicos presentation
- Week 9 (Oct 21-23) Porfiriato  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 8 (“The decline of the liberal order”)  
**Assignment:** Primary source analysis (due Tues, Oct 21)
- Week 10 (Oct 28-30) Revolution  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 9 (“The Revolution”)  
Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution*
- Week 11 (Nov 4-6) Tlatelolco  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 10 (“The foundations of the new state”)
- Week 12 (Nov 11-13) The Mexican Miracle  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 11 (“Growth and stability”)
- Week 13 (Nov 18-25) Zapatistas  
**Read:** Muñoz, *The Fire and the Word*  
**Assignment:** Peer review (due Tues, Nov 20)
- Week 14 (Dec 2-4) The Future  
**Read:** Hernández, *Mexico*, ch. 11 (“Into the new millennium”)  
**Assignment:** Research paper (due Tues, Dec 4)
- Final Exam:** Tuesday, December 9, 11:30-1:20 p.m.