

Mexican History (HIST 3825/303)

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

–Common Mexican saying

Fall 2026
BH212, TR 10:30-11:50

Marc Becker
marc@truman.edu

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 roles that Indigenous peoples and women have played in that creation, and how those roles have changed over time.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Readings

Gillingham, Paul. *Mexico: A 500-year history*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2025.
Townsend, Camilla and Josh Anthony, ed. *After the Broken Spears: The Aztecs in the wake of conquest*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2025.
La Botz, Dan. *Riding with the Revolution: The American left in the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1925*. Chicago: Haymarket, 2025.

Assignments and grades

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Mexican History Quiz	1
15 reading responses (1 pt each)	15
Discussion leader	10
Research paper proposal	5
Primary source	10
Research paper	30
Final Exam	29

Grades are calculated out of a percentage total possible points for the class: 90-100 percent is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, and 60-69 is a D. Below 60 percent is an F. Successful completion of all assignments is required to receive credit for this class.

Reading responses: Post a comment, question, response, or reaction for each week’s reading to the discussion board on Brightspace by midnight on Wednesday (or on Monday for Sept 29 and Oct 6) before we discuss that reading in class. 1 pt each, 15 pts total.

Discussion leaders: For each class period, one student will sign up to lead the discussion, including organizing the reading responses posted to the Brightspace discussion board into a logical flow. 10 pts.

Research paper proposal: Submit 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. We will discuss these proposals in class. Due Tues, Oct 6. 5 pts.

Primary source: Select a primary source related to your research topic from the microfilm collection. Try to find something that relates as closely as possible to your research topic. Have me approve the source in advance, and then write a paper (typed, double-spaced, about 3 pages, citations, bibliography, page numbers) analyzing the document and its historical perspective. Attach a copy of the document to the essay. Due Thurs, Oct 15. 10pts.

Research paper: Write a research paper on a topic related to Mexican history. The paper must use a minimum of six scholarly sources (including at least one book and one journal article) and one primary source, and should be about 15 pages long, typed, double-spaced, and include citations, a bibliography, and page numbers. The format should follow that found in Turabian/Rampolla/Chicago Manual of Style. Papers submitted without page numbers will be docked half a letter grade. Due Dec 3. 30 pts.

Final exam: The final exam is cumulative (29 pts).

Class Schedule

Week 1 (Aug 18-20): Intro & Geography

Read: Gillingham, Intro; Townsend & Anthony, Intro

Week 2 (Aug 25-27): Mexica

Read: Gillingham, ch. 1; Townsend & Anthony, chs. 1-4

Week 3 (Sept 1-3): Conquests

Read: Gillingham, chs. 2-3; Townsend & Anthony, chs. 5-7

Week 4 (Sept 8-10): New Spain

Read: Gillingham, Part Two (chs. 4-7); Townsend & Anthony, chs. 8-Conc

Week 5 (Sept 15-17): Independence

Read: Gillingham, chs. 8-9

Week 6 (Sept 22-24): Liberals and Conservatives

Read: Gillingham, chs. 10-11

Week 7 (Sept 29-Oct 1): Porfiriato

Read: Gillingham, ch. 12; La Botz, Intro & ch. 1

Thurs, Oct 1: Meet in library classroom, PML 103.

Week 8 (Oct 6): Magonistas

Read: Gillingham, ch. 13; La Botz, chs. 2-4

Tues, Oct 6: Research paper proposals due

Week 9 (Oct 13-15): Madero

Read: Gillingham, ch. 14; La Botz, chs. 5-7

Thurs, Oct 15: Primary source due

Week 10 (Oct 20-22): Zapata

Read: Gillingham, ch. 15; La Botz, Intro to Part 2-ch. 12

Week 11 (Oct 27-29): Cárdenas

Read: Gillingham, ch. 16; La Botz, chs. 13-Epilogue

Week 12 (Nov 3-5): Rise of the Perfect Dictatorship

Read: Gillingham, chs. 17-18

Week 13 (Nov 10-12): Zapatistas

Read: Gillingham, ch. 19

Week 14 (Nov 17-19): Braceros

Read: Gillingham, ch. 20

Week 15 (Dec 1-3): Neoliberalism

Read: Gillingham, ch. 21-Epilogue

Friday, Dec 3: Research paper due

Final Exam: Mon, December 9, 9:30-11:20 a.m.