

# History 499 - Modern Mexico

Samford University, Fall Semester 2007  
MWF 10:30am-11:35am DBH 207

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## *Contact Information*

Professor: Dr. Barry Robinson  
Office Hrs: MW 11:40am-12:40pm, TR 10:00am-12:00am, or by appt.  
Office: DBH 314  
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## *Course Description and Objectives*

*Seminar on Mexican history, with particular emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.*

This course will use two distinct historical microcosms (the Colotlán Frontier & the Veracruz-to-Mexico City corridor) to engage important historiographical discussions concerning the pre-Columbian, colonial, and early national periods of New Spanish and Mexican history. The remainder of the semester will be spent examining the formation of modern Mexican society and culture from the Porfiriato through the present day. Discussion will center on in-depth consideration of required readings.

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## *Required Readings*

- Beezley, William H. *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico*, 2nd Edition. Bison Books, 2004. (ISBN #: 0803262175)
- Azuela, Mariano. *The Underdogs: Pictures and Scenes from the present Revolution*. Translated by Gustavo Pellon. Hackett, 2006. (ISBN #: 0872208346)
- Womack, John. *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*. Vintage, 1970. (ISBN #: 0394708539)
- Poniatowska, Elena. *Massacre in Mexico*, Reprint Edition. University of Missouri Press, 1992. (ISBN #: 0826208177)
- Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (Grove Press, 1994). (ISBN #: 080215042X) \*\*\*MUST ORDER THIS BOOK ONLINE, NOT THROUGH BOOKSTORE\*\*\*
- Selected additional readings provided in class

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## ***Assignments and Grading***

25%	Class Participation and Discussion Leading
30%	Book Reviews
20%	WebCT Activities
25%	Final Research Paper

### **I. Class Participation and Discussion Leading (26%)**

Success in this course depends upon faithfully attending class, completing the assigned readings, and participating productively in discussion of the issues we'll be considering. [See attendance policy below]. A portion of this grade will also be determined by your leadership of regular discussions (scheduled at the beginning of the semester) and your score on the Mexico Map quiz.

- Participation in discussions and in-class activities (16%)
- Discussion Leading (7% of total grade)
- Map Quiz (3% of total grade)

### **II. Book Reviews and Source Reflections (24%)**

Students will review three of the assigned books during the course of the semester (Beezley, Womack, and Poniatowska). You may also review an additional book from the suggested reading list and drop the lowest previous grade).

### **III. WebCT Activities (25%)**

#### ➤ Bio-Sketches:

Over the course of the semester, students will complete two bio-sketches of individuals from the period of Mexican history under consideration (see schedule). Students may choose an individual from the list provided on WebCT, or identify someone on their own (with approval of the professor). They will then write a brief (2 page / 500 words) biographical sketch of the individual, discussing the relevance of their life story to key themes covered in class.

#### ➤ Meta-Reviews:

Students will also write two meta-reviews of books from the list provided on WebCT (see schedule). These (2 page / 500 word) reviews will be written after examination of at least three different scholarly reviews of the book under consideration, and will attempt to place the work in historiographical context, analyzing both its contribution to the literature and relevance to the issues covered in class. More detailed instructions will be posted on WebCT.

#### ➤ Municipio Project

Early in the semester, students will choose a specific Mexican municipality (municipio), whose history they will investigate during the course of the semester. Periodically, each student will post brief information relating to the status of their locality during particular periods of Mexican history. Students are also encouraged to post comments and suggestions on their classmates' Municipio pages. More details will be provided in class and on WebCT.

### **IV. Research Paper and (25%)**

Each of you will write a 12-15 page research paper (excluding notes and bibliography) based on original research in primary sources and secondary literature. This will constitute 25% of your grade. You will need to submit a proposed topic (in writing, in person, by appt.) before Wednesday, October 10th, and will meet with Dr. Robinson again no later than Tuesday, November 14th to provide an update of your research progress. Papers will be due on Friday, December 7th, no later than the start of class.

**\*Extra Credit Opportunity:**

Students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in events in connection with Birmingham's Hispanic community. Specific details will be announced in class.

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***Grading Scale***

A	93.0 - 100%
A-	90.0 - 92.9%
B+	87.0 - 89.9%
B	83.0 - 86.9%
B-	80.0 - 82.9%
C+	77.0 - 79.9%
C	70.0 - 72.9%
C-	73.0 - 76.9%
D+	67.0 - 69.9%
D	63.0 - 66.9%
D-	60.0 - 62.9%
F	00.0 - 59.9%

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**Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend every class session. Any absences will affect your participation grade. Additionally, more than 5 total absences will result in a grade of FA. Exceptions will only be made in the event of a serious illness or emergency in which the student provides documentation from the Dean's office requesting an exception to the policy. Unless prior arrangements are made with the professor, it will be the student's responsibility to determine what was missed during their absence and to arrange for any necessary remediation.

**Academic Integrity:**

The Samford Honor Code governs all work done in this course, written or otherwise. In all cases students are expected to present original work, or to properly acknowledge the source of information gathered from other sources. Please refer to your copy of the Student Handbook for a more complete discussion of the importance of academic integrity. If in doubt about a particular issue, consult the professor.

**Disabilities:**

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services, located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall (telephone number: 726-4078 or 726-2105). Instructor will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

\* Professor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at his discretion at any time during the semester.



10/8 NO CLASS - Work on Research Topics and Beezley Review  
10/10 Porfiriato  
10/12 Porfiriato / Mexican Revolution [Beezley, Judas - REVIEW DUE]

### **La Revolución**

10/15 NO CLASS - Fall Break  
10/17 Mexican Revolution [Discussion of *The Underdogs*]  
10/19 Mexican Revolution

10/22 Mexican Revolution [Womack, Zapata]  
10/24 Mexican Revolution [Womack, Zapata]  
10/26 Mexican Revolution [Womack, Zapata]

10/29 Mexican Revolution [Womack, Zapata - REVIEW DUE]  
10/31 The Muralists: Images of a New Nationalism  
11/2 The Calles and Cardenas Generations [Bio-Sketch / Meta-Review]  
Final Opportunity

### **Reaction, Consolidation, and Dissent**

11/5 The Cristero Revolt [Poniatowska]  
11/7 The PRI and the "Milagro Mexicano" [Poniatowska]  
11/9 Dissent: 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre [Poniatowska]

11/12 From 1968 to 1994 [Poniatowska - REVIEW DUE]  
11/14 Liberalizing the PRI? Salinas / NAFTA [Paz, "The Other Mexico"]  
11/16 Dissent - Zapatistas

11/19 Dissent - Zapatistas [Paz, "The Philanthropic Ogre"]  
11/21 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving  
11/23 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

### **A New Politics**

11/26 Rise of the PRD and PAN  
11/28 "Modernity" and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century [Paz, "Mexico and the United States"]  
11/30 Immigration / Border Culture

12/3 Present and discuss research projects  
12/5 Present and discuss research projects  
12/7 Present and discuss research projects

Final Exam: There will be no final exam for this class.