CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN STATE AND SOCIETY (SOC/LAS 276)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

Study of the development of Mexico’s economic and social development in the Twentieth Century. The course focuses on two tasks: it provides an outline of economic, social, and political development since independence and evaluates the process of industrialization in the twentieth century. The basic conceptual framework is that a socio-historical approach may help us understand the successive periods of growth and stagnation in Mexican society. What does the sociological analysis teach us about the current obstacles to social and economic development?
1. Learning goals for the students

Part 1,

- Learn about the long-term trends in the Mexican economy and society
- Analyze past episodes of radical shifts in development strategy and the role of the state and the markets
- Examine economic growth since independence and compare successive periods of stagnation and growth.
- Evaluate Mexico’s development policies during the state-led industrialization period from 1942 to 1982 as well as during the more recent market reform process.

Part 2,

- Comprehend the New Political Regime that emerges with Neoliberalism and Mexico’s Double Movement: Globalization, the state and civil society.
- Understand the emergence and entrenchment of the New Political Regime
- Grasp Mexico’s great national challenges: Migration, Narco-traffic, and Water Management.

GOALS FOR THE COURSE

- Introduce students to a comparative historical, sociological, economic, and political analysis of Mexico.
- Analyze how Mexican proximity to the United States gives it a special place in Latin America.
- Comprehend why Mexico’s transition to liberal democracy is much slower than in South America
- Understand why resistance movements have a higher rate of failure in Mexico when compared to South America.
Requirements: Supervised students’ work

1) Paper proposal: Students will prepare a research proposal that consists of five books and five journal articles. They will read at least three of these articles and portions of a book or two before writing the proposal. In this process, they will consult with the instructor to discuss the definition of the research topic, the theoretical framing the research questions, and the organizational structure of the paper. Students will write a proposal of two to three pages and a preliminary bibliography = 10 hours.

2) Attend a library workshop for one hour instruction given by a librarian = 1 hour.

3) Attend two lectures or activities sponsored by the Latin American Studies Program = 3 hours.

4) Researching and writing a 15-page research paper includes: Reading five books, re-reading the five research articles, writing the paper, taking it to the College’s Writing Center for a grammar and structural check and, finally, editing and preparing the final copy = 20 hours.

5) Read a novel assigned by the instructor (See Instructions below) = 7 hours.

6) Writing a review of the novel includes, reading at least three professional reviews published in professional journals, the actual writing of the review, and having it checked at the Writing Center = 5 hours.

Total = 46 hours.

CLASS PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE, AND READINGS

This course is taught in a seminar format. This means that students must come prepared for every class. Class participation is an integral part of this course and crucial for its successful completion. Thus, attendance is mandatory; students will be allowed one non-excused absence. Additional absences will have a negative impact on the grade. Students must keep in mind that class participation must be meaningful, which requires reading the assigned materials before coming to class. Sports events will not qualify for excused absences.
Students will take two in-class examinations that must be taken as scheduled and assignments must be delivered on specified dates. Make-up examinations may be provided for students with an official excuse. Should a student know that she/he will be absent on the day of an examination, she/he must discuss this with instructor as soon as possible. In case of unforeseen absences (illness or other emergencies), students must notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before or on the day of the examination is scheduled.

Students must buy a memory stick to save their work. Excuses such as a computer failure the night before a paper is due will not be acceptable. All cell phones must be off during class time. Students caught texting will be excused the first time. Subsequently, for each time a student is caught texting he/she will lose half a letter grade.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER

The research paper proposal is the first step in preparing an excellent paper. Students must explain why they have chosen a given topic and provide at least two important research questions about their subject of study. It is thus necessary that students read a number of articles or portions of a book or two in order to prepare their proposals. Furthermore, it is essential that students come to the instructor’s office for consultation. Consultations will be useful to choose and define topics, discuss the appropriate theoretical framework for the research questions and select important bibliographical information. The instructor will hand out a series of topics during the first week of classes so students can get their work started as soon as possible.
The paper must include a bibliography and proper references. Papers must have 15 pages, title, introduction, body, and conclusion. Students must number all the pages and sign the honor code at the end of the paper. Students should consult with the Writing Center at the CUB (extension 7574) to ensure the use of proper grammar and excellent organizational mechanics. They must buy a memory stick to save their work. Excuses such as a computer failure the night before a paper is due will not be acceptable.

It is expected that students will read five journal articles prior to writing their paper proposals. The proposal must include a preliminary bibliography which indicates the student has really started doing serious research. Students will receive a list of academic journals from which they are expected to choose their articles. In addition, they will set up an appointment with Amy Ward, our librarian, to guide them through internet use, journals, reference materials, and books.

In the final version of their research papers, students must demonstrate that they have actually read at least five journal articles and consulted no less than five books in preparing to write their paper.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BOOK REVIEW.**

A book review is not a book report. A book report tells us what the book says. A review put the work under discussion in the larger context of the literature and how effectively the author communicates his/her arguments to the readers. Use critical reviews published in professional journal to help to identify the place of this novel in the larger literature of political novels in Latin America. Summarizing the content of the book is important, but it should not take more than 3 pages.
The real task is to think about the book, how it relates to this course, and what it means.

Two-third of the review must focus on the following areas: 1) What is Laura Diaz’s relationship with a political and cultural world that is dominated by men? 2) What was her relationship with both Spanish and American exiles living in Mexico? 3) How do the events described in the novel relate to issues discussed in class? 4) What is your evaluation of the novel and why do you have such evaluation? These four sections are not necessarily separate, but you must address them. Take time to read this novel, think about it as you read it and try to summarize it in your own words. Avoid lengthy quotes.

This review must have ten (10) double-spaced pages. It must include a title page, indicating the title of the book, author’s name, your name, date, course and instructor’s name. Please number on the pages. Good grammar and correct spelling are essential. Consult with the Writing Center on the second floor of the CUB. This review must include a bibliography and proper references.

In preparing their work, students should consult journals that specialize in Latin American literature. A number of journals can be found in the College library. The MLA (Modern Languages Association) or Lanic web sites can be useful. Go to the site, type the name of the novel and you will find the latest reviews. These reviews will enable you to understand the novel better.
GRADING POLICY:

Examination 1: 25
Examination 2: 25
Research paper proposal: 5
Research paper: 25
Critical review: 10
Films, lectures, and class participation: 10

IMPORTANT DUE DATES:

Handout topics, 1/27
Research workshop at the Library, 2/1
Research paper proposal due, 2/15
Mid-term examination, 3/1
Discussion of the “Years with Laura Diaz” – 3/22
Review of the “Years with Laura Diaz,” 4/5
Research paper, 4/30
Final Examination: Sunday, May 5 from 1:30 to 4:30

REQUIRED READINGS:

CONTENTS OF THE COURSE

Part 1: Development and Growth in Modern Mexico

Week 1: 1/21 – 1/25: The Obstacles to Economic Growth and Development (See The Mexico Reader, pp.263-278 (copies provided by instructor); Introduction and chapters 1 in Development and Growth.


(Week 3: 2/4 – 2/8: The Mexican Revolution and the Process of Consolidation of the Modern State, 2 (chapters 3 and 4)


Week 6: 2/25 – 3/1: The Shift in the Market-State Balance and the Quest for Export-led Growth (Development and Growth, chapters 8, 9 and 10).

Mid-term exam: March 4

Part II: The Transformation of State and Society in Mexico


Week 9: 3/25 – 3/29: The Challenge from below: Oaxaca. Gerardo Renique’s “The Uprising in Oaxaca” and “Subaltern Political Formation,” Gustavo Esteva, “Oaxaca: The Path of Radical Democracy and Lynn Stephen, “We are brown, were are short, we are fat...in the Oaxaca Rebellion, “ and Deborah Pool’s “The Right to Be Heard,” in Socialism and Democracy, Vol. 1, No. 39


