

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester II, 1992-93

History 829- Research Seminar in Modern Latin American History
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5125 Humanities
263-1822

Course Description:

The purpose of this seminar is to provide an introduction to the process and meaning of historical research in Latin American documents. We will be approaching documents both as sources of information, and as texts. When looking for information, we will establish dialogue among documents, and between them and secondary sources. Depending on what questions we ask, the documents will yield different information. And the questions we ask will be contingent on dialogue among sources, and between sources and our own research agendas.

When considering documents as texts, we will be interested in unearthing, as far as it is possible, the process through which they have been produced. What are the relations of power contained therein? What are the interests or agendas of the documents' producers? What emphases and silences might be the result of such interests and power relations?

In Unit I of the course, we will examine a set of documents from 19th-century Mexico. While there is no pretense to being exhaustive, reading and discussing a variety of sources from the same general time period and region will make the dialogue among primary and secondary materials more meaningful and cumulative. It will also allow us to focus on the problems and strengths of different kinds of materials in a historically grounded way. This does not mean, however, that you cannot research and write on a different area or time period.

Unit II of the course will be independent research, during which people will work on their projects full-time. This will be initiated in Week 6, Feb. 25th, with a discussion of library practica (see below). After that, the course will not meet formally for six weeks (March 4th-April 15th). During those weeks, my Thursday afternoon sign-up office hours, 2:30-4:30, will be available for people to discuss any issues or research problems as they come up.

Unit III of the course will be research presentations, during which we will schedule four meetings of 2 1/2 hours each, over a period of two weeks (April 19th-30th). The purpose here will not be to present a finished product necessarily, but to bring materials, analyses, and problems to a supportive forum. Depending on where each individual is in the process of preparing the paper, she/he may choose to circulate a rough draft for discussion (ready for copying a week before the session), or to present research results in a more informal way in order to elicit discussion.

After the presentations, people will have approximately two weeks--from May 1 to May 13th--to revise their research papers with the benefit of collective discussion and criticism, before turning them in on Thursday, May 13th

by 5:00 p.m. Please note that this due date is as late as possible for me to get in grades. No extensions will be granted beyond that date, and no incompletes given except in cases of dire health emergency, family crisis, or natural disaster.

Requirements:

1) Everyone will be expected to complete a library practicum by the 5th week of the semester, so that the written practica can be copied and circulated to students for a general discussion in Week 6 (Feb. 25). The library practicum will consist of slightly different things, depending on the research stage of each individual student: please see special handout for more detailed instructions. In general, though, people will identify a general period of interest, then explore existing primary and secondary sources in the library. Anyone unfamiliar with Memorial Library is encouraged to sign up for a library tour. Many are given at the beginning of each semester. The library practicum will consist of a written section (see handout), and a 5-minute oral report in class. It will count for 10% of the overall grade in the seminar.

2) Everyone will research and write a 25 to 40-page research paper, based on a combination of primary and secondary sources. People are encouraged to use the seminar as a forum in which to begin, continue, or finish M.A. thesis research; write and present a dissertation chapter; or begin background research and conceptualization in preparation for field research. Special arrangements can be worked out with me. The paper will constitute 60% of the overall grade in the seminar.

3) Everyone is encouraged and expected to participate in the discussions--of common readings, of the practica; and especially during student presentations of research. Participation in discussion will constitute 30% of the overall grade.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

UNIT I- Common Readings of Primary Documents

Week 1- Jan. 21: Introduction and Organizational Meeting. Discussion of seminar format and syllabus; discussion of possible research areas and topics; arrangement of special sessions for research presentations.

Week 2- Jan. 28: The Exploration of an Event: Diplomatic, Political, and Secondary Materials .

Reading: Lilia Díaz (comp. and trans.), Versión Francesa de México: Informes Diplomáticos (1853-58), Vol. I (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1963), pp. 378-80, 408-412.

Juan Alvarez, "Manifiesto del Ciudadano Juan Alvarez a los Pueblos Cultos de Europa y América," reproduced in Daniel Muñoz y Pérez, El general don Juan Alvarez (Mexico City: Editorial Academia Literaria, 1959), pp. 442-491.

Benito Haro, Memoria justificada de la conducta que observó en la Comandancia Principal del distrito de Cuernavaca, ...con ocacion de

los sucesos acaecidos en la hacienda de San Vicente en el mes de diciembre del año anterior (Mexico City: Imprenta de Vicente Segura, 1857).

Florencia E. Mallon, "Peasants and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Morelos, 1848-1858," Political Power and Social Theory, Vol. 7 (1988), pp. 1-54.

Week 3- Feb. 4: The Ups and Downs of Quantitative Data

Reading: Anexo núm. 3 á la Memoria de Hacienda del año económico de 1877 á 1878, prepared by Emiliano Busto, Vol. 1 (Mexico: Imprenta de I. Cumplido, 1880), Introductory pages not numbered; pp. LXXIX-LXXXVII; Agricultura 1-7; Cuadros de Agricultura #'s 6, 7, 14, 19, 23, 28, 30; Observaciones al Cuadro Sinóptico, pp. 1-7.

John H. Coatsworth, "Anotaciones sobre la producción de alimentos durante el Porfiriato," Historia Mexicana, #102 (Oct.-Dec. 1976), pp. 167-87.

Ponciano Arriaga, "Voto Particular sobre el derecho de propiedad," 23 June 1856, reproduced in Francisco Zarco, Historia del Congreso Extraordinario Constituyente [1855-1857] (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1956," pp. 387-404.

Richard Sinkin, "The Mexican Constitutional Congress, 1856-1857: A Statistical Analysis," Hispanic American Historical Review, 53:1 (February 1973), pp. 1-26.

Week 4- Feb. 11: Sources for Intellectual History: Discourse and Politics
Reading: Francisco Pimentel, Memoria sobre las causas que han originado la actual situación de la raza indígena de México y medios de remediarla (Mexico City: Imprenta de Andrade y Escalante, 1864).

Week 5- Feb. 18: Oral History/Oral Testimony and Relations of Power.
Reading: Donna Rivera Moreno, Xochiapulco: Una gloria olvidada (Puebla: Dirección de Culturas Populares, 1991), pp. 1-17; 47-53; 93-134; 299-end.

Florencia E. Mallon, "Peasants and the Making of Nation-States," ms., Chapter 9, pp. 1-37.

Unit II- Independent Research

Week 6- Feb. 25: Discussion of Library Practicum.
Reading: Other students' Library Practicum reports, copies available in course envelope by Friday, Feb. 19. Please see Practicum Handout for Instructions.

NOTE: By the end of Week 6, research topics and sources have been identified and students are beginning the research process.

WEEKS 7-12, MARCH 4-APRIL 15- INDEPENDENT WORK ON RESEARCH PROJECTS.

Please Note: I will hold office hours on Thursdays, from 2:30-4:30. These hours are by appointment only, with sign-up sheet outside my door, put up

for the next week immediately after the hours are over on Thursdays. With only a little advanced planning, you can be assured that a half an hour of time will be set aside for you.

Unit III- Research Presentations

Weeks 13-14, April 19-30: Four meetings of 2 1/2 hours each, TBA. Each student will have approximately 40 minutes for presentation/discussion. Whether you choose to discuss a written rough draft or make an oral presentation, remember that this is the place to raise research problems and discuss them with a sympathetic and supportive audience. The discussion of specific documents that are causing you problems, or of questions of interpretation and/or organization, are all relevant. FEEL FREE TO BRING ANY OR ALL DOUBTS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GROUP!

Week 15- May 6: No Formal Meeting; continue paper revisions.

PAPERS DUE THURSDAY, MAY 13TH, BY 5:00 P.M.

HISTORY 829- LIBRARY PRACTICUM

1) Pick a Latin American region or country and a "long" century of personal interest. This should ultimately include your research topic.

2) Identify the following:

a) a list of 20-30 published primary sources for the region and time period chosen (ca. 2 typed pages);

b) the three or four most important such sources for your purposes, given the kinds of topics and problems you find interesting. Your practicum report should include a page of remarks on these sources.

c) the key library tools and works available to search out the secondary literature relevant to the region and time period (published bibliographies, dissertation abstracts, computer-assisted searches or data bases, etc.). A list of about 1/2 typewritten page should be appended to your practicum report.

d) the leading journals of interest published in the country or region under study (ca. 1/2 page).

3) The written results of your practicum should be ready for copying and distribution by Friday, Feb. 19 in order to give people a chance to look over each others' reports. You should all come prepared on Feb. 25 to speak for about 5 minutes on how the practicum went, and how you got your results. You should also be ready to state a research topic, and how the practicum helped or did not help in identifying it.

NOTE: Depending on your "stage" in graduate school, you will be working on different kinds of projects. Dissertators may wish to do a practicum on a chapter they are in the process of organizing or writing. People about to go into the field may wish to do the practicum on background research for a topic already identified. If your project doesn't immediately fit into the above instructions, or if you have any questions, please see me.