

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Semester I, 1994-95

History 982

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263-1822/ 251-4533

Twentieth-Century Mexico: Revolutionary Myths and Their Critics

Recent events in Mexico have dramatically revived debates over the various meanings of revolutionary mythology. As contemporary political officials dismantled the structures put in place by the revolutionary process, and reneged on the promises originally made by the first postrevolutionary governments, rebels in the southern state of Chiapas rose up in the name of revolutionary hero and icon Emiliano Zapata, echoing many of his original demands for land, social justice, and political democracy.

What is the meaning of the "new" Zapatismo in the context of Zapata's long genealogy in revolutionary myth? What does the contemporary political crisis and the implementation of NAFTA mean in the context of longstanding debates over "lo mexicano"? Were critics right in searching for post-nationalist and post-Zapatista forms of emancipatory projects? What is new, what is old, and what is still missing from the present picture?

Course Requirements:

- 1) Active participation in class. The seminar's success depends on it!
- 2) A weekly journal recording reactions, questions, analysis suggested by the readings. Each student will be asked to read from their journal twice during the semester as a prompting for class discussion. A schedule of journal readings will be made up the first week of the class. Journal entries will be shared with me by the Tuesday of each week.
- 3) A "course portfolio" containing final versions of the journal entries, as revised from my comments and the direction of class discussion.
- 4) a 10-15 page paper, due no later than the Monday after classes end, but you can hand it in anytime, depending on its subject. The purpose of the paper is to reflect in greater depth on the issues contained in one of our readings or groups of readings, and to expand the discussion to include the equivalent of 4 additional books in related materials. PLEASE COME TO SEE ME EARLY IN THE SEMESTER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE TOPICS AND APPROACHES. THIS IS NOT A RESEARCH PAPER, BUT AN EXTENDED CONCEPTUAL REFLECTION ON A TOPIC.
- 5) Grading:
Class participation will count for 35% of the grade. I will evaluate participation not only in terms of number or length of interventions in class discussion, but also in terms of willingness to engage the comments of others, and willingness to move the discussion forward even if it means asking a "stupid" question.

The journal, as revised in the course portfolio, will count for 35% of the grade.

The paper will count for 30% of the grade.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Week 1- Sept. 1- Introduction

UNIT I- Will the Real Mexican Please Stand Up?

Week 2- Sept. 8- Enter "Lo Mexicano"

Reading: Samuel Ramos, Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962).

Week 3- Sept. 15- Of Solitude and Wounds

Reading: Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1985), esp. pp. 7-212 (The Labyrinth itself); but also 215-398. Note: If you've read the Labyrinth just too many times, can participate in a discussion of it, but can't stomach reading it again, concentrate on the rest of the book (pp. 215-398).

Week 4- Sept. 22- Mestizaje: Horrible Curse or Cosmic Race?

Reading: Alan Riding, Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 3-21, 199-218; Xerox Packet.

*Roger Hansen, The Politics of Mexican Development, pp. 133-208; Xerox Packet.

*Alan Knight, "Racism, Revolution, and *Indigenismo*: Mexico, 1910-1940," in Richard Graham (ed.) The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 71-113; Xerox Packet.

Week 5- Sept. 29- Of Solitude, Wounds, and Corruption

Reading: Carlos Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962).

or: The Death of Artemio Cruz (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1964).

Week 6- Oct. 6- A Critique of Primeval Mexicanidad

Reading: Roger Bartra, La jaula de la melancolía: Identidad y metamorfosis del mexicano (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1987), or The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992). and

*Steve J. Stern, The Secret History of Gender: Power, Patriarchy and the Color-Class Order in Mexico (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995, forthcoming), Chapter 7; Xerox Packet.

Week 7- Oct. 13- "Peripheral" Mexicans and other Outcasts:

Perspectives from *La Frontera*

Reading: Norma Alarcón, "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism," Cultural Critique Vol. 13 (1989), pp. 57-87; Xerox Packet.

*Rachel Phillips, "Marina/Malinche: Masks and Shadows," in Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols, ed. Beth Miller (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 97-114. Xerox Packet.

*Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera (San Francisco: spinsters/aunt lute, 1987), pp. 1-98.

*José E. Limón, "*carne, carnales* and the carnivalesque: Bakhtinian *batos*, disorder, and narrative discourses," American Ethnologist, 16:3 (August 1989), pp. 471-86; Xerox Packet.

*José E. Limón, "Dancing With the Devil: Society, Gender, and the Political Unconscious in Mexican-American South Texas," in Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar, Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 221-35. Xerox Packet.

UNIT II- Will the Real Revolutionary Subject Please Stand Up?

Week 8- Oct. 20- The Rural Subject: Zapatismo

Reading: Jesús Sotelo Inclán, Raíz y Razón de Zapata (Mexico City: Editorial Etnos, 1943), pp. 8-18, 169-214; Xerox Packet.

*John Womack, Jr., Zapata and the Mexican Revolution (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 3-36, 224-55, 371-87; Xerox Packet.

*Robert E. Morsberger, "Emiliano Zapata: The Man, the Myth, and the Mexican

Revolution," in John Steinbeck, Zapata, ed. Robert E. Morsberger (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), pp. 3-15; Xerox Packet.

*John Steinbeck, "Zapata: A Narrative, in Dramatic Form, of the Life of Emiliano Zapata," in Steinbeck, Zapata, pp. 16-53; Xerox Packet.

*Robert E. Morsberger, "Steinbeck's Zapata: Rebel Versus Revolutionary," in Steinbeck, Zapata, pp. 203-23; Xerox Packet.

Week 9- Oct. 27- The Rural Subject: Zapatismo's legacies

Reading: Armando Bartra, Los herederos de Zapata: Movimientos Campesinos Posrevolucionarios en México (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1985).

*Carlos Fuentes, Tiempo Mexicano (Mexico City: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1971), pp. 93-146; Xerox Packet.

*JoAnn Martin, "Contesting Authenticity: Battles over the Representation of History in Morelos, Mexico," Ethnohistory, 40:3 (Summer 1993), pp. 438-65; Xerox Packet.

*Ilene V. O'Malley, "The Public Image of Emiliano Zapata," in O'Malley, The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 41-70; Xerox Packet.

For Non-Spanish Readers, in lieu of Armando Bartra (optional for the rest):

*John Gledhill, "Agrarian Social Movements and Forms of Consciousness," Bulletin of Latin American Research, 7:2 (1988), pp. 257-76; Xerox Packet.

*Fernando Alvarez, "Peasant Movements in Chiapas," Bulletin of Latin American Research, 7:2 (1988), pp. 277-98; Xerox Packet.

*Neil Harvey, "Personal Networks and Strategic Choices in the Formation of an Independent Peasant Organisation: The OCEZ of Chiapas, Mexico," Bulletin of Latin American Research, 7:2 (1988), pp. 299-312; Xerox Packet.

Week 10- Nov. 3- Other Rural Subjects

Reading: Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 3-300.

*Ilene V. O'Malley, "The Public Image of Francisco Villa," The Myth of the Revolution, pp. 87-112; Xerox Packet.

Week 11- Nov. 10- Can we bury the rural subject?

Reading: Paco Ignacio Taibo, Cosa fácil (Madrid: Ediciones Júcar, 1976); or An Easy Thing (New York: Penguin, 1990).

*Paco Ignacio Taibo, "Zapatista! The Phoenix Rises," The Nation, March 28, 1994, pp. 406-10; and "Mexico's Days of Melodrama," The Nation, April 25, 1994, pp. 557-59; Xerox Packet.

*Michael McCaughan, "An Interview with Subcomandante Marcos," NACLA Report on the Americas, XXVIII:1 (July/August 1994), pp. 35-37; Xerox Packet.

*Julio Moguel, "Salinas' Failed War on Poverty," NACLA, pp. 38-41, Xerox Packet.

Week 12- Nov. 17- The Urban Subject (I)

Reading: Joseph and Nugent, Everyday Forms of State Formation, pp. 301-52.

*Carlos Monsiváis, "1968-1978: Notas sobre cultura y sociedad en México," Cuadernos Políticos, #17 (July-Sept. 1978), pp. 44-58, Xerox Packet.

*Carlos Monsiváis, "Feminismo y homosexualidad," Machete: Revista mensual de cultura política, May 1980, pp. 15-24 (and front matter; is first issue of the journal), Xerox Packet.

Week 13- Dec. 1- The Urban Subject (II)

Reading: Elena Poniatowska, Fuerte es el silencio (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1980).

*Héctor Manjarrez, "La indiscreción de Elena Poniatowska," Cuadernos Políticos, #27 (Jan.-Mar. 1981), pp. 102-114, Xerox Packet.

*For non-Spanish readers: Poniatowska, Massacre in Mexico (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991).

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Week 14- Dec. 8- The Woman

Reading: Elena Poniatowska, Hasta no verte Jesús mío (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1969).

*Poniatowska, "Hasta no verte Jesús mío: Jesusa Palancares," Vuelta, #24 (Nov. 1978), pp. 5-11; Xerox Packet.

*Lucille Kerr, "Gestures of Authorship: Lying to Tell the Truth in Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte Jesús mío*," MLN, 106 (1991), pp. 370-94; Xerox Packet.

*For non-Spanish readers: Ruth Behar, Translated Woman: Crossing the Border With Esperanza's Story (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

Week 15- Dec. 15- The Woman Wreaks Havoc with Established Subjects

Reading: Angeles Mastretta, Arráncame la vida (Mexico City: Océano, 1985).

*Elena Poniatowska, "Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela," in Poniatowska, Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela y otros cuentos (Madrid: Alianza/Era, 1987), pp. 11-59.

*For non-Spanish readers: Angeles Mastretta, Mexican Bolero (New York: Penguin, 1991).