EMPIRE, NATION, AND MIGRATION:
HISTORY OF GREATER MEXICO
History 354– Fall 2007, Th 2 -5pm, Wood Hall 4A
Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

This course examines the binational twentieth-century history of Greater Mexico situated at the intersection of Mexican and Mexican American (Chicano/a) histories. In this contemporary period when the problem of legal and undocumented migration still presents a vexing issue in Mexican and U.S. politics, it is time to examine the historical binational relationship of these two countries and their populations. The arrival and adaptation of Mexican citizens to the United States (the only significant destination for Mexican migrants) has received much treatment by scholars of Mexican American (Chicana/o) history. However, the migrants’ departure from Mexico (up to ten percent of its citizens left, comprising the world's largest sustained movement of migratory workers in the twentieth century) has been largely neglected and requires long-range historical studies using Mexican archives to answer many critical questions.

Challenging static and bounded formulations of the “tyranny of the national in the discipline of history,” this reading seminar explores the simultaneous development of two national histories from the perspective of the lives and state regulation of migrants crossing back and forth through a contested and porous border. Traditional and official historical narratives of Mexico and the United States typically have either erased or absorbed Mexican migrants into teleological histories that lead to and celebrate an evermore “modern” nation-state. The class seeks to uncover and retell those histories and historiographies to include transnational subjects as central to the historical and mutually constitutive narratives of both countries.

Most of our time will be spent on the postrevolutionary period when migratory flows were the largest and the Mexican government focused its attention on rebuilding the Mexican state and society and legitimizing the ruling faction as the heir to the Revolution and its ideals. Many intellectuals, artists, and political leaders saw this as an opportunity to not only rebuild Mexican society but to create a more cohesive nation.

The course is divided into two sections, each with its own internal logic and progression. The first introduces Mexico’s recent past and the broad, inter/trans-national and -disciplinary fields under consideration and their relationship to historiography. The second section examines and compares central themes that transcend national and intercultural boundaries while simultaneously revealing some of the more salient sources of internal division among Mexican Americans. Themes include economic and political imperialism, cultural nationalism, political membership, gender relations, race and racism, identity formation, immigration law, and the arts. Each week, discussions and secondary readings will be supplemented by original documents.
including fiction, film, and visual, spatial and archival materials. An introductory course such as this necessarily privileges wide-ranging thematic analysis over specific detail. In order to somewhat compensate for this imbalance, a short, provisional list of suggested (not required) readings accompanies each week’s required texts to help provide broader context and to guide those interested in pursuing specific themes in their own research.

**Seminar Requirements**
- Attend and come prepared to all classes
- Participate in discussions
- (Co-) lead one/two week’s discussion
- Write five book reviews

**Participation and presentation**
Starting the third week of class, students (individuals or in groups) will make at least one oral presentation that cogently and provocatively frames the issues of the week’s discussion. Students will consult with the instructor prior to their presentations. When preparing your presentation please consult the article, “How to Give an Academic Talk”:
[www.si.umich.edu/~pne/PDF/howtotalk.pdf](http://www.si.umich.edu/~pne/PDF/howtotalk.pdf)

Consistent and thoughtful participation will determine a substantial part of your final grade. If discussion comes readily to you, look for ways to encourage others to participate. Absence from class precludes participation and has, therefore, an adverse effect on your grade. If you do miss a class meeting you will be responsible for finding out what was missed and for making up any assignments.

**Book Reviews**
Seminar participants are required to write five brief “book reviews” (5 pages double-spaced) over the course of the semester. The review must be e-mailed to me and cc’d to the other members of the seminar by 2 p.m. of the day before the class meets. N.B. This is a generous deadline; please see that you keep to it; earlier submissions will be appreciated.

In the spirit of gaining experience as professional historians, reviews must follow the format of the following relevant professional journals. Please refer to the instructions and style sheets for the following periodicals and model your review accordingly. Apply each format at least once during the term. Your reviews will be approximately 1250 words in length.

Hispanic American Historical Review (HAHR) [http://www.hahr.pitt.edu/bookreviewinstrux.html](http://www.hahr.pitt.edu/bookreviewinstrux.html)
American Quarterly (AQ) [http://www.americanquarterly.org/index.php/about/book_reviews](http://www.americanquarterly.org/index.php/about/book_reviews)
Journal of American History (JAH) [http://www.indiana.edu/~jah/bookreviews.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~jah/bookreviews.shtml)

For additional advice on crafting a good review consider consulting (available on JSTOR):
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**Readings**

Books are available for purchase at the UConn Coop. For those who read Spanish, there are also some (but not many) materials on the subject from Latin America itself; please see me if you are interested.


Selected articles and chapters in Course Pack [CP] and online through Homer Library ejournal links.
General Resources for Consultation

**General texts:**

**Short list of reliable internet sites relevant to the course:**
- Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino History at UConn [http://web.uconn.edu/laclh/](http://web.uconn.edu/laclh/)
- Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC) [http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/)
- Latin American Resources [http://www.oberlin.edu/~svolk/latinam.htm](http://www.oberlin.edu/~svolk/latinam.htm)
- The Latino History Project [http://www.latinohistory.com](http://www.latinohistory.com)

**Contact Information**
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-12pm and by appointment
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS
(Primary class day readings in **bold**)

PART ONE: ORIGINS AND INTRODUCTIONS

**Week 1 – Aug. 30**
INTRODUCTIONS: THEORIZING THE NATION

Reading: (*copies available outside my office; come prepared to discuss)

Suggested Readings:

**Week 2 – Sept. 6**
NO CLASS MEETING – PREPARE FOR WEEK 3

**Week 3 – Sept. 13**
BRIDGING EPISTEMOLOGIES: DISCIPLINES AND HISTORIOGRAPHIES

Readings:
♦ Juan Poblete, Critical Latin American and Latino Studies, intro, Part I, and chap. 10.
Documents:
♦ University of Connecticut Undergraduate Course Catalog:
  http://www.catalog.uconn.edu/
♦ University of Connecticut Graduate Course Catalog:
  http://catalog.grad.uconn.edu/
♦ University of Connecticut Academic Spaces:
  Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies: http://web.uconn.edu/prls/
  Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies: http://clacs.uconn.edu/
  Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center: http://www.latino.uconn.edu/
  Institute for African American Studies: http://www.iaas.uconn.edu/

Suggested Readings:
♦ Alex Saragoza, “Recent Chicano Historiography: An Interpretive Essay” Aztlán Vol. 19 No. 1.
♦ Nicholas De Genova, Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago. Duke University Press, 2006
**Week 4 – Sept. 20**  
**REVOLUTION AND MEXICANIDAD**

**Readings:**

**Documents:**
♦ Images from a Post Revolutionary Mexican Space: El Sarape, Mexican Restaurant

**Suggested Readings:**
♦ Mariano Azuela, *Los de Abajo* (1930).

**Week 5 – Sept. 27**  
**MAPPING MODERN MEXICO**

*Guest Speaker, Dr. Ray Craib, Cornell University*

*Special Event: Dr. Ray Craib, “The Killing of Jose Domingo Gomez Rojas: Santiago, 1920,” Humanities Institute, 12-1:30pm.*

**Readings:**

**Suggested Readings:**


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**Week 6 – Oct. 4**

**FORJANDO PATRIA: POST-REVOLUTIONARY STATE FORMATION**

**Readings:**


**Documents:**

Muralistas


http://www.artnet.com/artist/8841/maria-izquierdo.html

**Suggested Readings:**

Special issue of *HAHR: Mexico’s New Cultural History: Una Lucha Libre?* 79:2 (May 1999)


PART TWO: CENTRAL THEMES AND COMPARISONS

Week 7 – Oct. 12/Día de la raza (*note change in day)

**EL OTRO LADO: BORDER SPECTACLES AND OTHER TRANSNATIONAL PERFORMANCES**
*Workshop with Guillermo Gómez-Peña*
*Mapa-Corpo 2, Interactive Rituals, Mobius Theatre, Drama Building, Thurs, Oct. 11, 8pm*

**Readings:**

**Documents:**

**Suggested Readings:**

Week 8 – Oct. 18

**IMPERIAL MIGRATIONS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHICANO/A HISTORY**

**Readings:**
Gilbert Joseph, et al. eds, Close Encounters of Empire, intro. [CP]

Documents:
Texts from the History of Latin American – U.S. Relations. [CP]

Suggested Readings:
Fredrick B. Pike, The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilization and Nature.
Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., Cultures of United States Imperialism

Week 9 – Oct. 25
BECOMING MEXICAN AMERICAN: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

Readings:
George J. Sánchez, Becoming Mexican American

Documents:

Film:
Culture Clash: “A Bowl of Beings: Revolutionary Comedy about Life, Death, and Pizza”

Suggested Readings:
♦ Film: Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement

**Week 10 – Nov. 1/Día de los muertos**

CHICANO/A NATIONALISMS

**Readings:**
♦ Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, “I Throw Punches for My Race, but I Don’t Want to Be a Man: Writing Us—Chica-nos (Girl, Us)/Chicanas—into the Movement Script,” Cultural Studies, eds. Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 81-95. [CP]

**Document:**

**Film:**
Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement

**Suggested Readings:**
♦ Gutiérrez, David G. *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States.*
♦ Gutiérrez, David G. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican-Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Identity.*
♦ De Leon, Arnoldo. *Tejano Community, 1836-1900.*
♦ Martinez, Rubén. *The Other Side: Notes from the New L.A., Mexico City, and Beyond.*
♦ García, Mario. *Desert Immigrants.*
♦ Paredes, Américo. *With a Pistol in His Hand.*
♦ Muñoz, Carlos. *Youth, Identity, Power.*
♦ Romo, Ricardo. *East Los Angeles.*
**Week 11 – Nov. 8**
**FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS: GENDER AND CLASS ENCOUNTERS**

**Readings:**
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Gender and the Latino Experience in Late-Twentieth-Century America.” [CP]

**Documents:**
- Selections from, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* [CP]

**Suggested Readings:**
- Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*.
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, ed., *Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends*

**Week 12 – Nov. 15**
**GIVE IT THE SHADE: LA RAZA MEXICANA**

**Readings:**

Documents:
José Vasconcelos. The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cosmica, translated and annotated by Didier T. Jaén (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), selections. [CP]

Suggested Readings:

Week 13 – Nov. 22
NO CLASS MEETING: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14 – Nov. 29
SEEING LIKE A STATE: DEFINING THE ILLEGAL ALIEN

Readings:
Document:
♦ Student Selection: US and Mexican news reports on current US immigration legislation debate

Film:
♦ “It’s Your Call with Lynn Doyle: Closing Borders”

Suggested Readings:

**Week 15 – Dec. 6**
**LA NUEVA FRONTERA: MEXICANS IN CONNECTICUT**
*Guest Speaker, Patrick Raycraft, Photojournalist, Hartford Courant*
*Class meets at Hartford’s El Sarape Restaurant for comida (Come hungry!): 931 Broad St, Hartford, CT 06106, (860) 547-1884*

Readings:
♦ Patrick Raycraft, “The Reluctant Americans.” Hartford Courant
-See article and video/photo links under “related links”- http://www.courant.com/

Documents:
♦ Images from a Post Revolutionary Mexican Space Revisited: El Sarape, Mexican Restaurant
♦ 2000 U.S. Census Reports

Suggested Readings: