

San Bernardino Valley College
Course Outline
Social Science Division

I. Course Identification

History 153: History of Mexico

Three hours lecture: three units

Prerequisite: None

History 153 will cover Mexico from its pre-Columbian roots to the present. Topics will include the social, economic and cultural aspects of colonialism; imperial reform; collapse of empire; independence and the problems of nation building; Liberalism and Conservatism; foreign intervention; Mexican Revolution; industrialization; and neo-liberalism.

II. Course can be taken only once for credit.

III. Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the diverse geography of Mexico (highland, tropical lowlands).
- Identify the social, economic and political structures of the pre-Columbian civilizations of Meso-America. (Teotihuacán, Toltec, Maya, Aztec)
- Compare affects of European contact on different geographical regions and different Indian groups.
- Evaluate the validity of traditional interpretations of the European conquest.
- Explain the social and cultural consequences of mestisaje.
- Identify the dual nature of colonial society. (Indian and European)
- Describe the development of institutional structures of colonialism.
- Identify and define problems associated with nation building.
- Analyze the political, economic and social impact of liberal policies on 19th century Mexico.
- Recognize the factors leading to the Mexican Revolution.
- Explain the importance of nationalism and populism in 20th Century Mexican politics.
- Discuss the result of import substitution strategies during WWII on the Mexican economy
- Understand the role the PRI has had in creating political stability in Mexico since the Revolution.
- Analyze the consequences of the 1973 oil crisis on contemporary Mexican political, economic and social environment.

IV. Course Content.

1. **Introduction:** Geography and natural setting. Students must understand the topographic and climatic diversity of Mexico. In addition, a review of the historiography of Mexico need to be presented.
2. **Native Peoples:** Mexico's indigenous people have been seen as a homogenous group, this is far from the reality. The natives of the region

- were as diverse culturally as the geography. This plays an important role in the Spanish ability to conquer the region. (Aztec, Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec)
3. **Europe on the Eve of Expansion. Columbus and the Caribbean, Legacy of Columbus, Conquest of Mexico:** Students must understand the complexity of the society European explorers were apart of to accurately access their actions when confronted with a “new” peoples in the Americas.
 4. **Spanish Empire and Spanish Settlement:** New Spain and the Spanish Empire. Motives for exploration and settling Mexico. Although the Spanish planned to have a dual society, miscegenation led to a new type of people, mestizos and mulattos.
 5. **Conflict of Cultures; Establishment of Spanish Colonial Society.** Although the Spanish controlled an empire that lasted 300 years, indigenous populations were not passive bystanders. They were just as influential in the establishment of the colonial institutions and limited Spanish hegemony.
 6. **Colonial Economy and Labor, Race and Class in Colonial Mexico, Church and the Indigenous Worldview:** Spanish colonial society had a great amount of continuity to the pre-Columbian civilizations. Much of the labor systems, social structures and religion was more a synthesis between cultures than a complete elimination of indigenous roots.
 7. **Imperial Crisis and Bourbon Reforms:** After 250 years of neglect, the Spanish crown attempts to re-impose its authority over the colonies. Despite the success of the commercial and political reforms, the colonies suffered socially which leads to dissatisfaction with existing order.
 8. **Independence:** When Napoleon Bonaparte invades Spain, the colonies find their opportunity to break away from the mother country. This begins 11 year struggle for independence.
 9. **Economic Crisis and Political Disorder, 1825-1850:** The independence struggle leaves Mexico divided between liberal and conservative factions and plagued with political ineptitude. Not until Mexico can create viable nation will it be able to overcome its regionalism and vulnerability to foreign invasion
 10. **Retreat of the Gente Baja, Liberal/Conservative Conflict:** Political instability, caused by the liberal/conservative conflict, allows the lower classes of the society to resist the long established dominance over them. (Caste War)
 11. **Triumph of Liberalism, Juarez, Lerdo, Diaz and the Porfiriato:** After a long struggle and two humiliating foreign invasions by the US and France, Liberalism becomes the dominant ideology. Mexico enters a new era that was dominated by positivism and the modernization policies of Porfirio Diaz.
 12. **Costs of Modernization, Failure of Democracy, Mexican Revolution:** Despite the ability to attract foreign investment and modernize its railroads and utilities. However the social cost and lack of democratic institutions led to the first major revolution of the 20th century.

13. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Lazaro Cardenas: The PRI has dominated Mexican politics for more than 70 years. Its ability to shift its position on issues has been the key to its success. However, corruption and graft has also characterized its rule, which now seems to be in jeopardy of being lost to the PAN and PRD.

14. Crisis of Development and Neo-liberalism: Mexico has experienced a crisis since the Oil crisis of 1973. Recent administrations have attempted neo-liberal policies to deal with the globalization of the market economy that look very similar to the programs attempted in the late 19th century. (NAFTA)

V. Methods of Instruction (100%):

- Lecture/In-class Discussion, including discussions of assigned readings
- Collaborative learning and small group exercises
- In-class student essays on broad questions raised by the subject matter
- Films and other multimedia presentations covering subjects in Mexican History
- Student presentations on student research projects
- Student trips to museums and other sites pertaining to more contemporary Mexican issues.

VI. Example of Assignments (Sample assignments which demonstrate the level of difficulty expected)

1. Essay question (in-class) It can be argued that the seeds of Porfirio Diaz's downfall can be found in the success of his modernization plan for Mexico. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain your answer by showing how Mexico changed politically, economically and socially during Diaz's rule.

Educational goals of assignment. In essay examinations students will demonstrate an ability to synthesize information from the lecture-discussions and readings, organize evidence and specific information into a coherent response to a major question in history, and produce clear and logically argued analyses in a conclusion. Essay questions will require students to demonstrate analytical thinking rather than rote memory alone, answering "why" and "compare and contrast" questions.

2. Book review. *Broken Spears*, by Leon Portilla, provides an alternative vision of the conquest of Aztecs. How does this perspective differ from the traditional interpretation? Are Portilla's sources credible in your opinion? Why or why not?

Educational goals of assignment. Book reviews should enable students to explore how prominent scholars tackle major problems. The assignment should also ask student to consider the following: what evidence was used to reach conclusions? What are the biases of the author? How does the author's treatment of environmental history tell us more about traditional subjects?

3. Collaborative learning and small group discussions. Use reading notes and discussions among yourselves identify major causes Mexican/US war.

Report to the class on your discussion. Be sure to describe subjects on which members of your group agreed and subjects on which there was disagreement.

Educational goals of assignment. Collaborative learning encourages students to take responsibility for teaching and learning and asks them to work creatively and productively with peers. By asking for a group report, the instructor can make students aware of dissenting opinions and differing interpretations.

4. On-line internet electronic discussions. Similar to collaborative work in class, for this exercise, students will respond to a major historical issue on Mexican history on the world-wide-web.

Educational Goals of assignment. This majority of this exercise is done outside of the classroom and serves two major functions. It gets students to formally post a position paper on a question or document that is on the internet. Their peers will then be able to evaluate and respond to directly to the work. Secondly, it introduces students to computer skills needed in today's high tech workplace.

5. Research Project. Students will chose their own topics in Mexican history and will use on-line internet resources an published materials to do research. The final product will be the result of individual effort.

Educational Goals of assignment. This project encourages students to pursue topics of interest on their own. Use of internet resources and published materials will be one skill gained in this project. Using these resources, students will be asked to develop skills of evaluation, syntheses, and analysis as they produce a coherent and analytical narrative that calls upon skills of critical thinking.

VII. Methods of Evaluation.

- In-class essays in response to key questions in Mexican History
- Discussion participation, including leading of classroom discussion on assigned readings and topics
- On-line electronic discussions involving responses to problems and questions in Mexican history
- Book reviews on major works on Mexican history
- Research projects on problems and subjects in Mexican history (at least 7-10 pages and at least 2 sources)

VIII. Required Course Materials: (All suggested works are primarily college level),

Ajlouny, Joe. Mexico: A Colorful and Concise History: Jsa Publishing, 1994.

Beezley, William H. El Gran Pueblo: A History of Greater Mexico: 1911-The Present: Prentice Hall, New York, 1994.

Coe, Michael D. Mexico: Thames and Hudson, New York, 1994.

Fehrenhach, T. R. Fire and Blood: A History of Mexico: Da Capo, New York, 1995.

Foster, Lynn V. A Brief History of Mexico: Facts on File, 1997.

Krauze, Enrique. Mexico: A History of Modern Mexico, 1810-1996.
Harpercollins, New York, 1997.

Meyer, Michael C, William L. Sherman, The Course of Mexican History 5th ed.,
Oxford, New York, 1996.

Miller, Robert R. Mexico: A History: Oklahoma, 1989.

Parkes, Henry B. A History of Mexico, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1972.

**Or other college level equivalents (text, Historical monographs, source readers, autobiographies, novels, or plays) that specifically deal with the topics related to Mexican History.

IX. Other Supplies Required of Students:

Floppy disk may be required.