

Latin American Geography through Film
GEOG 4263, Summer 2017

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course uses feature length and documentary film to introduce students to the historical and cultural geography of Latin America. Among other things, we examine representations of Latin America as a place, the European encounter with Amerindians, Catholic missions, African experiences in Latin America, extractive economies and gender. Given that this course unfolds in Puebla, most of the films, readings and discussion focus on film representing Indigenous regions of Mexico.

MAIN GOALS OF THIS COURSE

1. Learning to critically consider the **geopolitics of representation** and **media geographies**.
2. Recognizing the positionality of **embodied knowledge production** – both in authoritative and in popular representations.
3. Developing an appreciation for the need to listen to what marginalized communities have to say, as well as basic skills for doing so
4. Sharpening critical faculties through close reading, class conversation, and analytical writing.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS: Before going abroad, students are expected to prepare for their trip to Mexico by writing four one-page (single-spaced) response papers focused on four sets of readings. These response papers constitute 25% of the course grade. While in Mexico, students are expected to engage with all activities related to the field study portion of this study abroad course. Both the instructor's and the students' own assessment of their participation in field trips and class discussions comprise 25% of the course grade. Students also prepare field notes while traveling. That is to say they will keep travel journals in which they record their notes from lectures and any meetings with media makers, scholars, government officials, and/or community leaders, as well their own observations and reflections regarding their experiences in Mexico. Upon return from Mexico, students submit edited versions of their travel journal. This assignment constitutes another 25% of their grade. Students also write a research paper that builds on both course lessons and research publications to geographically analyze a Latin American film. They submit this ten- to fifteen-page (double-spaced) paper four weeks after our return. It comprises the final 25% of their course grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Prior to departure, students read and write short responses to the following four sets of readings and videos that help “set the scene” for our trip to Mexico.

Part 1: Visualizing Pre-Columbian Mexico

- Alan Knight. 1990. Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940. In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*. Edited by Richard Graham. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 71-113.
- *Lhallchho/Nuestro Pueblo/Our People* 27-minute video by Ojo de Agua Comunicación <https://vimeo.com/100302218>
- *Nuestra Ley/Our Law* 27-minute video by Ojo de Agua Comunicación <https://vimeo.com/100285030>

RESPONSE PAPER DUE May 17

Part 2: From colonial encounters to regional and national identities

- Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, 1992. Selections from *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in Mexican National Space*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Nuestra Tierra no se vende/Our Land is not for Sale* 12-minute video by Ojo de Agua Comunicación <https://vimeo.com/99995626>

RESPONSE PAPER DUE May 22

Part 3: Identifying Indigenous media made in Mexico

- Erica Cusi Wortham, 2013. Selections from *Indigenous Media in Mexico: Culture, Community and the State*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- *Dulce Convivencia/Sweet Gathering* 18-minute video by Filoteo Gómez-Martínez <http://www.isuma.tv/en/mixe/sweet-gathering>

RESPONSE PAPER DUE May 27

Part 4: Gendering both Indigenous media and coffee production

- Erika Benítez-García, et al. 2015. Characterization of Coffee Production and Trade in the Municipality of Cuetzalan, Puebla. *Agricultura, Sociedad, y Desarrollo* 12 (Abril-Junio): 181-198.
- Laurel C. Smith. 2012. Visualizing Indigenous women in Oaxaca: Mexico at the end of the twentieth century. *Historical Geography* Special Issue "Digital Historical Geography: Representation, Archive and Access." 40: 61-83.
- *Mujeres del Mismo Valor/Women of Equal Worth* 27-minute video by Ojo de Agua Comunicación <https://vimeo.com/158547978>

RESPONSE PAPER DUE May 31

Daily notes and reflection journal DUE on Tuesday June 27

Research paper proposal DUE on Wednesday July 5

Research paper DUE on Sunday July 23