

An Overview of 500 Years of Mexican History

Program and suggested readings (in addition to the *Compact History of Mexico*) for twelve classes, July 1-July 31, 2026

Suggested readings with * can be found online

1. First encounters. Prehispanic Mexico. Two myths: Quetzalcoatl and the number 3. The epic of conquest. Concept of “Just war”. Hunger and disorientation, death and destruction. Native lack of natural immunity and new diseases. Refuge zones. Population crash. Fray Pedro de Gante and linguistics. Bartolomé de las Casas and the destruction of the Indies. Zumárraga and the Virgen of Guadalupe. Education as a form of conquest. The Colombian Exchange. Indian and Negro slavery. Changes in the environment.

Readings: * Escalante, Pablo, *et al.*, *A New Compact History of Mexico*, México, El Colegio de México, 2013, chapter 1.

*Cortés, Hernán, *Letters from Mexico*, New York, Grossman Publishers, 1971.

Electronic resource

*Díaz del Castillo, Bernal, *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*, Ted Humphrey (trad.), Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, “The Voyage”, “Doña Marina’s Story”. “The Stay at Cempoala”. **Available also at 972.02 / D5421t**

*Crosby Jr., Alfred W., *The Columbian Exchange. Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1973 chapters 2 and 3. 614.42 / C949c

2. Beginnings of a Mestizo society. Recognizing humanity of Indians. Fray Julian Garcés, bishop of Tlaxcala. Schools for Indians. Restrictions for Indians joining priesthood. Episcopal Inquisition and the burning of Indian cacique Don Carlos. Persecution of Jews and the Inquisition. Syncretic Catholicism. Vasco de Quiroga and arguments over payment of tithes by Indians. Organizations of “hospitals” for Indian communities.

Readings: * Gibson, Charles, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: a History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964, chapter I. **972.02 / G448a**

* Kubler, George, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1948, chapter II “Urbanism”.

3. Closed society? Power of the Catholic Church. Cult of the Virgen of Guadalupe. 17th century decline? Family life. Women’s position in society. Dowries and divorce. Social divisions base on the “quality” of the individual. The poetess Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Mining and the resulting wealth: the creation of elite arts. Baroque architecture, music, painting, literature. Population recovery. Cities developing in the north.

Readings: * Boyer, Richard, *Lives of Bigamists: Marriage, Family and Community in Colonial Mexico*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1995, chapter 3 "Marriage". **364.153 / B791I**

*Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1952, chapter 2. **972.48 / G448t**

Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico*, (reader's choice). **338.2 / B799m**

Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*, (reader's choice). **RE/ 381.0972 / K47c**

4. Convents and monasteries. Recipe books, knowledge of medicinal herbs, midwives, education of girls, working women, especially Indians. XVIII century revival. The Enlightenment. Father Alzate and attacks on popular religion and superstitions. Bourbon reforms. New institutions. Colleges, hospitals, cemeteries. Arrival of Basques, Gallegos, Catalonias, and other foreigners.

Readings: *"Tridentine Catholicism and Enlightened Despotism in Bourbon Mexico," in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 15, 1983, pp. 1-22

Arrom, Silvia Marina, *The Women of Mexico City, 1750-1850*, Stanford University Press, 1986, chapter 2.

Arrom, Silvia Marina, *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000, chapter 1: "The problem of Beggars and Vagrants". **362.5097252 A778c**

Lavrin, Asunción ed., *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, Lincoln, Nebraska University Press, 1989, chapters 1, 4, 5 (reader's choice).

5. Independence. Destruction of the Bajío region. Hunger, illness and death. Collapse of credit networks, communications. Old social rules, new aspirations. Celebrations, funerals, village fiestas. Changes in dress, entertainments, transportation and the concept of time. Ordinances for community harmony. Thievery, idleness and contraband, living outside the law. Social bandits, famous crimes, charismatic religious figures. The concept of neighbor and neighborhood.

Readings: Doris M. Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility at Independence, 1780-1826*. (reader's choice).

Staples, "Clerics and Politicians: Church, State, and Political Power in Independent Mexico", in *Mexico in the Age of Democratic Revolutions, 1750-1850*, Jaime E. Rodríguez O, ed., Boulder & London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994.

Calderón de la Barca, Fanny, *Life in Mexico. The Letters of Fanny Calderón de la Barca*, New York, Doubleday and Company, 1966.

*"All the president's women: the wives of General Antonio López de Santa Anna in 19th century Mexico", *Feminist Review* 79.

Staples, "Policía y Buen Gobierno: Municipal Efforts to Regulate Public Behavior", in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance. Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*,

edited by William H. Beezley, et al., Delaware, Scholarly Resources Books, 1997, pp. 115-126. **394.20972 / B415r**

6. Five foreign invasions. Political instability. Huge loss of territory. European influences and modernization. A new look at childhood. Newspapers, books and libraries. The importance of pamphlets. Educational reforms, destruction of charitable organizations.

Readings: * The Compañía Lancasteriana and the Elite in Independent Mexico, 1822-1845", in *Tesserae*, vol. 2:1, 1996

* Tenenbaum, Barbara, "Merchants, Money and Mischief. The British in Mexico, 1821-1862", in *The Americas*, XXXV:3 (Jan 1979).

*Fowler, "Joseph Welsh: A British Santanista (Mexico, 1832)", *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36.

7. Civil War and its aftermath. The threat of religious tolerance. Reform laws. Conservative backlashes. French and American influence at end of 19th century. Positivism. Railroads. Electricity, revolution in mining and refining: Guggenheim investments.

Readings: Smith, Benjamin T., *The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico: Catholicism, Society, and Politics in the Mixteca Baja, 1750-1962*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2012. Chapter 4, **972.74 / S6421r**

Mijangos y González, Pablo, *The Lawyer of the Church: Bishop Clemente de Jesús Munguía and the Clerical Response to the Mexican Liberal Reforma*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2015, Chapter 5. **92/M9662m**

Vanderwood, Paul J., *The Power of God against the Guns of Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998, 409 p. **972.14 / V228p** (reader's choice).

8. Revolution and more destruction, Spanish vs Indian, assimilation vs integration, Mexican patriotism and nationalism. Exiles. New institutions. Open air art schools, mural movement, beginnings of tourism, transportation, national integration. First and Second World Wars: Mexico's participation. Stabilizing development. 20th century rejected and embraced. Conservative reactions. Growing corruption. Miguel Alemán, PRI political party. Liberation theology and Bishop Samuel Ruiz in Chiapas. 1994 and the Zapatista movement. War on drugs.

Readings: Vanderwood, Paul J., *Juan Soldado. Rapist, Murderer, Martyr, Saint*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2004, **922.2272 / C3523v** (Reader's choice)

Lavrin, Asunción ed., *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, Lincoln, Nebraska University Press, 1989. Chapter 11, **301.42098 L414s**

9. North American Free Trade Agreement. In bonded manufacturing. The petroleum industry. Mining. American, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean car assembling plants.
10. Religion in Mexico today: Mormons, Jehova's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists (with their hospitals etc.), main line Protestants, Catholics of all persuasions.
11. Government support for the arts: Fonart, INAH-Bellas Artes, Conaculta, network of museums.
12. ¿A socialized State? Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social; Bienestar; guaranteed income for seniors and schoolchildren. "Free" school lunches. Subsidized transportation -the subway. Free entertainment on Sundays. Chapultepec Park, Xochimilco. Los Pinos -presidential residence now is a museum. Expanding transportation system -bringing back the trains. Current problems: still stealing gasoline (los huachicoleros), murder of women, and journalists, missing persons. Mexico's first woman president, as well as its young people, give great hope for the future.

Possible subjects for final paper:

- 1) What does the image of the Virgen of Guadalupe tell us about Mexican History.
- 2) How do current foods and drink remind us of the Columbian Exchange?
- 3) People, plants, and plagues in the new world: where did they come from and what impact did they have?
- 4) What is peculiar and characteristic of the Spanish "traza", or grill, used to lay out towns and villages in the new world?
- 5) Mestizaje describes Mexican society today. Why, and when did it start and how?
- 6) Experimentation with different forms of government characterize the 19th century. Why was this necessary?
- 7) In what ways did/does Mexican culture differ from Spanish or European culture, and why?