

Mexican Social Movements Study Abroad Program

Syllabus and Schedule: Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Mexico City, and Chicago

Accreditation

All classes are accredited by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana at the undergraduate and Master's levels, depending on the level of study of the participating student. Hampshire College is the US school of record and provides official transcripts for an additional fee of \$300.

Program fees and minimum requirements

Your program fee covers tuition up to 16 semester credits (240 hours), most food, lodging, ground transportation within Mexico, and books.

Academic credits:

The Mexico Social Movements study abroad program is an inter-disciplinary, integrated course that covers the theory, practice, history and social/political/economic context of some of Mexico's most important social movements. The program includes a Spanish language/Mexican culture component. We employ an expanded version of the modular system, a pedagogy developed at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) in Mexico City. The modular system utilizes an inter-disciplinary, student-centered pedagogy organized around thematic seminars. The program includes the following:

- Three weekly seminars (9 class hours) address the theoretical, historical, contextual and practical aspects of Mexican social movements. Seminars are organized around 100 to 200 pages of reading each week that draw on sociological, anthropological, economic, political and historic texts.
- Students write a weekly analysis to prepare for the seminar discussions. These analyses include a discussion with the authors and questions that arise from the readings.
- Two to three workshops each week focus on topics related to the seminars. The workshops place students in direct contact with Mexican social actors and movement leaders. Workshops are conducted in Spanish, which encourages development of communication capabilities related to the seminar discussions.

- Language classes focus on improving verbal communication capabilities and are closely integrated with the rest of the program.
- Students live with members of the social movements they are studying. This offers daily interaction in Spanish with social actors and an unparalleled access to first-hand knowledge and experience.
- Students produce two major projects during the semester. The first project is a 10-15 page (double-spaced) analysis of a social movement, utilizing the theoretical and contextual work developed during the first seven weeks of the program. The final project is focused on integrating the knowledge and experiences gained from the program into the daily lives of students when they return to the US. Final projects may be individual or collective, and may include theater productions, works of art, written papers, zines, preparation for future courses or workshops at home institutions, preparation for speaking tours, etc. Projects are presented in seminars during the eighth and thirteenth weeks of the program.

Language and culture

The Spanish language/Mexican culture component of the study abroad program focuses on communication skills, particularly verbal comprehension and speaking, with a secondary emphasis on reading comprehension and writing ability. Communication skills include a comprehensive understanding of the cultural contexts in different parts of Mexico, including indigenous culture in Chiapas, campesino culture in Tlaxcala, and urban and student cultures in Mexico City. Class work and field trips are closely integrated with the rest of the academic program so that students can understand and express themselves on the same topics they are studying. Direct communication with social actors is a high priority of the program, and the language and culture component furthers the necessary skills. Resource materials include original writings or speeches produced by social movement actors, newspapers, short stories, and academic articles written in Spanish. Classes are limited to three to six students and divided according to language abilities determined by an initial proficiency test. Students may move up or down at the end of each week, depending on their comfort level in class.

Formal Spanish language/Mexican culture classes meet six to nine hours per week. All professors are native speakers. Because of the small size, professors are able to tailor classes to the specific needs of students, with individualized programs focused on conversational structures, vocabulary, and specific topics of interest.

Students participate in workshops each week that extend their communication capacities while learning about the breadth and depth of Mexican culture:

- Students participate in at least two workshops each week conducted in Spanish. Topics include human rights, Mexican history, immigration dynamics, indigenous culture, etc. Students participate in at least one special, hands-on workshop each week con-

ducted in Spanish. Topics include preparing Mexican cuisine, boot-making, weaving, herbal medicine, working in the fields, massage therapy, etc. Each workshop is followed by a debriefing period in which students can clarify language issues.

Students live with families during four weeks of the program, and none of the families speak English. The families have a good deal of experience with foreign students, and are very patient in developing verbal language skills.

Courses:

Students may take a maximum of 16 credits per semester. One year of college level Spanish or its equivalent in high school or independent study is required for participation in the program. Courses include:

Mexican Social Movements (Soc 353/553) 4 credits: Covers the theory and practice of some Mexico's most important and dynamic social movements, including the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, campesino and Ex-Bracero movements in Tlaxcala, and urban housing and student movements in Mexico City.

Week 1: Hansen, Zapatistas: A Brief Timeline

Week 2: Marcos, The Thirteenth Stele

Week 3: Munoz Ramirez, Reports on the Five Caracoles

Week 4: Marcos, Pedestrians of History, parts 1-2

Week 5: Marcos, Pedestrians of History, parts 3-5

Week 6: EZLN, Sexta Declaration of the Selva Lacandona

Week 7: mid term project

Week 8: EZLN, Autonomous Govt I, Autonomous Govt II (read two sections from each)

Week 9: EZLN, Participation of Women in Autonomous Govt, Autonomous Resistance (read two sec from each)

Week 10: Duffly, Defending Community

Week 11: Mize and Swords, Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA

Week 12: Student choice

Week 13: Final project

Political Economy (Econ 351/551) 4 credits: Covers the fundamentals of political economy that provide the context within which Mexican social movements unfold as well as the analytical foundations of many of Mexico's social movements. Students study Marxism, neo-Marxism, World Systems Theory, nationalism and neoliberalism at the theoretical and practical levels.

Week 1: Eagleton, Why Marx was Right, ch 1, 2 – Marxism outdated? Results of real existing socialism?

Week 2: Callinicos, Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx, ch 4 – dialectics, abstraction
Week 3: Callinicos, ch 5 – historical materialism, class society, forces and social relations of production
Week 4: Callinicos, ch 6 – value, surplus value, competition, commodity fetishism, crisis
Week 5: Callinicos, ch 7 – labor power, party, revolution
Week 6: Coben, ch 2 – Gramsci, hegemony
Week 7: mid term project
Week 8: Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, p 1-86
Week 9: Eagleton, ch 3, 4 – Marxism as determinist? Marxism as utopian?
Week 10: Eagleton, ch 5, 6 – Marxism as economic determinism? Marx rejects spiritualism?
Week 11: Eagleton, ch 7, 9, 10 – Marxist obsession with class? Marxism is state-centered?
Recent movements are not Marxist?
Week 12: Brodwin Sachs, Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender
Week 13: Final project

Modern Mexico (Pol sci 352/552) 4 credits: Covers the modern history of Mexico, with a special emphasis on the Mexican revolution, and an overview of Mexican political culture.

Week 1: Bonfil Batalla, Mexico Profundo, p 1-69
Week 2: Gilly, The Mexican Revolution, ch1, 2, 3
Week 3: Gilly, ch 4, 5, 6
Week 4: Gilly, ch 7, 8, 9 & Epilogue
Week 5: Klein, Compañeras, Ch 1-3 each student reads a chapter
Week 6: Klein, Ch 4-6, each student reads a chapter
Week 7: mid term project
Week 8: Klein, Ch 7-9, each student reads a chapter
Week 9:
Week 10: Soederberg, Deconstructing the Neoliberal Promise of Prosperity and Stability
Week 11: Adler Hellman, Mexican Social Movements, Clientelismo
Week 12: Student choice
Week 13: Final project

Spanish Language/Mexican Culture (Spanish 201/301/401/501) 4 credits: Spanish language classes focus on improving communication skills, with a secondary focus on reading and writing skills. Students use generative materials related to social movement seminars for discussion-based classes. We make extensive use of field trips, workshops and selected Spanish language texts.

Independent Study (Ind Study 355/555) 1 to 9 credits: Independent study is open to students whose universities will not accept the credits listed in the core curriculum. The content of independent study is negotiated in consultation with professors and study abroad advisors or academic advisors from your home institution, and requires the production of a final project.

Professors:

Dr. Maria Gloria Benavides Guevara is in charge of the Spanish language and Mexican culture portion of the study abroad program. Gloria holds a Doctorate in anthropology from Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología (CIESAS) in Mexico City. Her thesis covered the use of indigenous language in the ex-Bracero struggles in Tlaxcala. Gloria lives in Mexico City and has 30 years of experience as an organizer.

Dr. Tom Hansen is the Executive Director of the Autonomous University of Social Movements and holds a Doctorate in Rural Development from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM)-Xochimilco in Mexico City. His international solidarity work began in 1982 with the New York-Nicaragua Construction Brigade. In 1987 he was the Director of the Veterans Peace Convoy, a national project that challenged the US embargo against Nicaragua. From 1988 to 1996, Tom was the director of Pastors for Peace, during which time he helped organize 25 caravans to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Cuba. Tom has led over 100 educational programs in Central America, Mexico and Cuba.

Mariana Hernandez is a Social Anthropologist currently finishing a Master dissertation in Indoamerican Linguistics at CIESAS in Mexico City. She is fluent in Tzotzil and Tzeltal, Mayan languages spoken in Chiapas. She has a long history working in the Autochthonous Church - an initiative of the San Cristobal Diocese of the Catholic Church grounded in Liberation Theology.

Luis Garcia is the program “todologo.” He has decades of experience as a community-based social actor in Mexico City, Monterrey and Chiapas. His history includes extensive factory and construction work, community gardening, and auto repair. He coordinates logistics for the program, and teaches classes in chocolate production, Mexican cooking and others.

Astrid Diego is the stateside Study Abroad Coordinator. She participated as a student, in the AUSM-Mexico study abroad program in the fall of 2011. She holds a BA in “Spanish for the Professions” from the University of Colorado at Boulder. As a member of UMAS y MEXA de CU Boulder, Astrid’s work as a community organizer and activist was geared towards issues of

immigration, access to higher education, and health that surround the Chican@/Latin@ community.

Social movements we learn from:

The Autonomous University of Social Movements works with leaders and members of some of Mexico's most important social movements. We coordinate workshops, housing, and special programs with the following movements:

- Zapatista movement in Chiapas
- Universidad de la Tierra in Chiapas
- Consejo Nacional Urbano Campesino (CNUC) in Tlaxcala
- Tlanezi Calli housing Cooperative in Mexico City

PROGRAM SCHEDULES & READINGS:

Pre-trip readings:

- Ramirez, Gloria Muñoz, 2008. *The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement*
- Klein, Hilary, 2015. *Compañeras – Zapatista Women's Stories*, Intro & Ch 1 (pp. xv – 21). Seven Stories Press.
- Illich, Ivan, 1968, "To Hell with Good Intentions."
- Smith, Andrea, 2013. "The Problem with Privilege."
- Batalla Bonfil, Guillermo, 1996, *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, University of Texas Press, p.1-69.
- CCRI, 2005, "Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona" English translation.
- Hansen, Tom & Enlace Civil, 2001, p 445-451. *Zapatista Timeline, Our Word is Our Weapon.*
- Freire, Paulo, (any edition), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapters 1 and 2 (& Ch 4 later in the semester)
- hooks, bell, 1994. Chapter 4 - *On Freire, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.*

Due Every Monday: analysis and questions from readings for the coming week.

All Week 1 readings should be finished before the beginning of the program & Analysis #1 will be due the first Monday of the program at the beginning of class

****SYLLABUS CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH ADVANCE NOTICE****

Week One (UniTierra, San Cristobal de las Casas) – Students are housed in collective dormitories on the campus of Universidad de la Tierra. The UniTierra educates indigenous youth in technical trades, including computers, carpentry, auto mechanics, ceramics, sewing, organic agriculture, and much more. Typically there are over 100 indigenous youth on the campus at any given time. The beautifully wooded campus is located on the outskirts of San Cristobal, about 15 minutes from the center of town. Most of the food consumed by the students is produced on the campus in environmentally sustainable fashion. **Breakfast is served at 8am each morning, lunch 2pm, and dinner at 7pm. The staff at UniTierra insist on serving their guests first, so don't be late (otherwise you hold up all the youth waiting for their meals).** Spanish/Mexican culture classes are Tuesday through Thursday for 2-3 hours a day in groups of four to eight students. Wednesday's language and culture class involves field study in the San Cristobal region. Academic classes are generally Tuesday and Thursday for 3+ hours. Fridays are devoted to student presentations, evaluation, emotional check-in and planning for the following week.

Sunday: Tuxtla-Gutierrez (TGZ) airport arrival and check-in at CIDECI/Universidad de la Tierra

Staff telephones – Mobile phone in Mexico: 045 967 107 4819

House phones: 967-678-7549 (local land line)

or 773-572-6104 (US-based Internet phone)

Sunday:

9:00-2:00 & 3:00-5:00: Introductions, Orientation on Health and Safety, Class Schedules, Academic Expectations, Cultural Sensitivity, Housing and Logistics, Tour of the UniTierra campus

Monday:

9:00-12:00: Academic class

12:00-2:00: Tour of UniTierra

Tuesday:

9:00-10:00: Introductions/Spanish Skills Assessment

10:00 -12:00: Spanish/Culture and Social Movement Classes

2:00 *Comida*

3:00-6:00: Academic class

Wednesday:

Field trip around San Cristobal de las Casas to distinguish the difference between “*el recinto turistico*” and “*el otro*” San Cristóbal de las Casas. We will be visiting: Centro Histórico, Popular Market, Cemetery, and an outskirts neighborhood called *Salsipuedes*.

Thursday:

9:00-11:30: Spanish/Culture and Social Movement Classes

11:30 -2:00: Spanish/Culture and Social Movement Classes

2:00 *Comida*

3:00-6:00: Academic class

Friday:

9:00: Individual Presentations on Personal World Visions (5 minutes each, followed by discussion)

12:00: Group check-in, evaluation and planning for the coming week, orientation for San Cristobal de las Casas

2:00: *Comida*

Spanish and Mexican culture readings:

Readings will be assigned by the language and culture *promotorxs*.

Weeks Two thru Nine (Oventic):

Participants are housed in collective dormitories in Oventic. Participants are welcome to stay in Oventic or stay at the MSN house in San Cristobal on weekends. Healthy meals are prepared by a staff trained in hygienic food production suitable for the tender digestive systems of visitors.

A typical week in Oventic includes nine hours of historical/theoretical seminars focused on a distinct theme each week, and nine hours of Spanish/indigenous culture classes using popular education pedagogies. Language class discussions are closely related to historical/theoretical seminar topics. Culture classes include two or three workshops per week with indigenous social actors that are conducted in Spanish and include: Indigenous weaving techniques, field-work in the *milpa*, river trip, song & dance nights, and much more.

Culture classes also include investigative projects and exchanges with secondary school students. Investigations may include research on the meaning of Zapatismo, the difference be-

tween western and indigenous culture, the historical reasons behind local names, etc. Exchanges include producing puppet shows, basketball tournaments, presentation of weekly news summaries, etc. Documentary videos are screened two nights a week on the history and dynamics of Chiapas. One night per week is reserved for singing and guitar playing where students learn popular Spanish language songs. Students also participate in workshops on traditional weaving and boot-making.

A typical week in Oventic might include the following:

Monday:

9:00 -1:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Orientation to Zapatismo and Oventic

8:00: Video on the founding of Oventic

Tuesday:

9:00 – 1:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Work preparing fields for planting corn, beans, and squash

7:00: “Theater of the oppressed” session to explore the principles of Zapatismo

Wednesday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish classes, divided by verbal comprehension level. Each group has three hours of directed discussion using generative materials associated with theoretical classes.

4:00: Traditional weaving class. Students produce a book bag using traditional backstrap loom technology.

8:00: Song night

Thursday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish classes

4:00: Theater preparation. Students prepare a play that is presented during the final week to the entire secondary school.

8:00: Video night.

Friday:

9:00 – 2:00 Spanish classes

2:00: Group check-in, evaluation and planning for the coming week.

5:00: Meeting in San Cristobal with a human rights defender, activist, or scholar

Weeks Ten and Eleven: Tlaxcala

Sunday: Arrive in Toluca de Guadalupe (or another small peasant community in the state of Tlaxcala, depending on the semester)

Students stay with families, one student per family, in Toluca de Guadalupe, a small community (about 2,500) located at the base of La Malintze, one of Mexico's largest mountains. The community is close-knit and consists of mainly non-indigenous campesinos. At least one member of most families migrates to urban areas or the US for work. The Consejo Nacional Urbano Campesino (CNUC) has a community center in Toluca where we hold classes and have regular (under normal weather conditions) access to internet. About a quarter of the families in Toluca belong to CNUC.

A typical week in Tlaxcala includes nine hours of historical/theoretical seminars focused on a distinct theme each week, and six hours of Spanish language/Mexican culture classes. The language/culture classes include historical presentations and discussion groups based on Mexican and Tlaxcalan current events. Three workshops per week by Tlaxcalan social actors are conducted in Spanish and include:

- Consejo Nacional Urbano Campesino (CNUC): CNUC has local chapters in more than 20 pueblos throughout the state.
- Asamblea Nacional de Braceros: The largest bi-national organization of Braceros from the post-World War II immigration program.
- UPADI: An urban neighborhood and small vendor union in Apizaco is one of the strongest in all of Mexico.
- Immigrant families: Almost all rural families in Tlaxcala have family members who are working in the US. This is a chance to learn about the impacts of immigration in sending communities.
- Alternative medicine: Workshop on the use of regional plants and animals in alternative medicine.
- Tlaxcalan cuisine: Workshop on some of Tlaxcala's most famous cuisine, including mole, pipian, mixiote, and more.
- Organic fertilizer: Workshops on production and use of organic fertilizer.
- Local festivals: There are always festivals in Tlaxcala, and we'll attend the ones that coincide with our visit.

A typical week in Tlaxcala might include the following:

Monday:

9:00 -12:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Orientation to Tlaxcala and the Consejo Nacional Urbano Campesino

Evening: Students spend most evenings with their host families

Tuesday:

9:00 – 12:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Workshop with local immigrant families to discuss the impact of immigration on sending communities.

Wednesday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish/Mexican culture classes. Introduction to Tlaxcalan history and culture, followed by a field trip to Apizaco where students are assigned various research projects. Students prepare reports on religious culture, local politics, popular markets, etc.

4:00: Workshop on Tlaxcalan cuisine. Students learn to make mole, pipian, mixiote and more.

Thursday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish/Mexican culture classes. Students present reports in Spanish from the previous day's research.

4:00: Workshop with a local CNUC committee in Nicolas Bravo, a campesino community involved in alternative survival strategies, including production of organic fertilizer.

Friday:

9:00-12:00: Social movement seminar

3:00 – 6:00: Group check-in, evaluation, reflection on the week, and planning for the coming week.

Weekends:

Students generally spend weekends with their families. Activities include visits to La Malinche, soccer games, family celebrations, local fiestas, etc.

Weeks twelve and thirteen: (Mexico City)

A typical week in Mexico City includes nine hours of historical/theoretical seminars focused on a distinct theme each week, and six hours of Spanish/Mexican culture classes. The language/culture classes include historical presentations and discussion groups based on news drawn

from the week's workshops and visits around the city. Three workshops per week by Mexico City social actors are conducted in Spanish and include:

- Students from the National Autonomous University (UNAM)
- Youth working with Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (HI-JOS), the sons and daughters of political prisoners and the disappeared from throughout Latin America.
- Former political prisoners from San Salvador Atenco
- Academics from the UNAM and UAM
- The Zapatista Organization for the Education and Liberation of our People, a popular education collective that helps social movements develop primary and secondary education curricula
- Brigada Callejera, a collective of sex workers that works for consciousness-raising and health

Students live with host families from Tlanezi Calli, a gated housing cooperative located in Izta-palapa on the southeast side of Mexico City.

A typical week in Mexico City might include the following:

Monday:

9:00 -12:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Orientation to Tlanezi Calli and the surrounding neighborhood

Evening: Students spend most evenings with their families or going to organized events

Tuesday:

9:00 – 12:00: Social movement seminar

4:00: Workshop with the TC organizer/educators

Evening: Students spend most evenings with their families or going to organized events

Wednesday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish/Mexican culture classes. Introduction to Mexican City history and culture, followed by a field trip to the Zócalo in central Mexico City. Students prepare reports on the main Cathedral, popular markets, museums, etc. in the center of Mexico City.

4:00: Workshop on student organizing at the National Autonomous University (UNAM).

Evening: Students teach English to neighborhood youth

Thursday:

9:00 - 2:00: Spanish/Mexican culture classes. Students present reports in Spanish from the previous day's research.

4:00: Workshop with TC

Friday:

9:00 – 12:00: Group check-in, evaluation, reflection on the week, and planning for the coming week.

Week thirteen (Mexico City): Final Projects, Future Work and Evaluation of Program

FINAL PROJECTS DUE ON TUESDAY: Final projects cover a topic to be decided in consultation with academic advisors.

Wednesday and Thursday:

Morning: Student presentation of final projects in a discussion based seminar. Each student has a half hour for presentation and discussion.

Friday:

Morning and afternoon: Bringing it home: Final program evaluation and action planning with students.

Evening: Going away party

Saturday:

Departure: Students may schedule departing flights from Mexico City for any time on Saturday.

Grading criteria for Social Movement classes:

Academic projects:

Two academic projects are due during the semester, accounting for 50% final grade. Papers are ten to fifteen pages, and the content of other projects (plays, works of art, etc.) are determined in consultation with professors.

Project one: Students analyze a social movement in which they are involved or with which they are familiar, using the theoretical framework developed during the first seven weeks. Students present their analysis for class discussion during week eight. The midterm project accounts for 25% of the student's grade.

Project two: Students divide into groups or work individually, and write a paper (or prepare a video, artwork, etc.) on a topic to be discussed with the academic advisor. Past final projects included a six week speaking tour on Zapatismo, a street theater presentation, a pamphlet for potential immigrants to the US, a children's book, etc. Papers based on original research included sex workers in Tlaxcala, the history of CNUC, Zapatismo in urban settings, the cultural impact of video in indigenous communities, and many others. The final project accounts for 25% of the student's grade and should be commensurate to a 10-15 page paper.

Class participation: Students are expected to prepare for academic classes by reading assigned materials. Students are graded daily on their class participation and facilitation. Class facilitation and participation accounts for 25% of the final grade.

Weekly writing assignments: Students are assigned from 100 to 200 pages of reading per week. Each Monday students submit an analysis based on the readings, including questions pertinent to the week's class discussions. The weekly analyses account for 25% of the final grade.

Grading criteria for Spanish language and Mexican Culture classes:

Students are evaluated according to the following criteria:

25% Attendance. Students must attend at least 85% of classes to pass.

25% Homework assignments (includes written analyses, research projects, interviews, and preparation for discussions on current events)

25% Final verbal exam administered the final week of classes. Students are evaluated based on their progress in verbal communication skills during the 13-week program.

25% Class participation