

C172 or CHC/LAT155  
**CULTURE CHANGE AND THE MEXICAN PEOPLE:  
NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE BORDER**  
Wednesday, 7:00 to 9:50p  
SSL 248

Professor: VIGIL  
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### **Outline**

This course explores the different culture change paths of the Mexican people, especially looking at identity formation and social movements. Among the facets of culture change to be reviewed are culture contact and colonization, innovation, diffusion, acculturation, assimilation, culture conflict and marginality, modernization, urbanization, and legal transformations. Both Mexico and the Southwest United States are the focus as we chart these changes through several centuries to lead students to appreciate and understand the indigenous base of the Mexican people and how they were transformed into peasants initially and in the modern era into immigrants. All of these transformations have had consequences in identity shifts and social protest developments.

There are three sections to this course. The first one summarizes the major features of Indian civilization and outlines how the Spanish colonial system revamped the lives of natives, creating a mestizo heritage with class, racial, and legal overtones. Secondly, the early roots of peasantry are examined in the context of Spanish expansionism, including the discovery and settlement of northern Mexico (now the Southwest U.S.) and its conquest by American forces in 1846-48. Peasant traditions are reviewed, particularly in the aftermath of the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Finally, fueled by industrialism and urbanization, Mexicans underwent intense and rapid culture change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new pattern of migration and immigration emerged to displace peasant life right at the dawn of a global economy. Most noteworthy is how immigrants adapted to the United States and added the Mexican American cultural and ethnic dimension to previous identities, making for "personas mexicanas" (many faces of Mexicans).

### **Texts**

1. Chavez: **The Latino Threat**

2. Conchas/Vigil: **Street/School Smart**
3. Vigil: **From Indians to Chicanos (3<sup>rd</sup>)**

### **Course Evaluation**

One midterm (30% of grade) and a final (30%)=60% of final grade. Two review essays of 3-5 pages each, double-spaced (250 words per page; 15% each one). Instructions for review essay format and style to follow, but a 6Cs issue should be the focus of the paper per the instructions presented in class. All books and/or reference sources selected to be **cleared** with the instructor or TA. Attendance and participation in classroom discussions are important (5% of grade).

### **Week            Lecture topics and readings**

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| 1  | General overview of the Mexican People and Culture Change; definition of terms, summary of key issues. Vigil: Intro., pp. 1-11    |
| 2  | Pre-Columbian nation-state; Fall of Aztec empire; Establishment of Spanish colonial system. Vigil: Ch. 1-4.                       |
| 3  | Independence, nationalism, and emergence of "mestizo" Mexico; Rise of peasantry. Vigil: Ch. 5-6.                                  |
| 4  | Spanish Borderlands; 1846 War; social movements and revolutions. Vigil: Ch. 7.  |
| 5  | Migration and dependency; early phase of Mexican immigration; Mestizaje identity; settling in urban America. Vigil: Ch. 8, Class. |
| 6  | Midterm.  |
| 6  | Continuing immigration; contemporary problems and issues; Vigil: Ch. 8 (remainder); Chavez Ch 1-3.                                |
| 7  | MexAmerican border culture; binational identity; Chavez 4-6.  |
| 8  | 20 <sup>th</sup> Century social movements and search for a new identity. Vigil: Ch. 9; Chavez 7, Epilogue; Conchas/Vigil 1-2, 4.  |
| 9  | Inside the Chicano Movement: Identity and Change Conchas/Vigil 5-7.   |
| 10 | Future Developments and Changes; Ethnic Identity. Conchas/Vigil 8-9: Conclusion; Vigil.   |