

# ARH 4930: Special Topics

## Mexico City Through the Ages

University of Florida, Spring 2025 (3 credit hours)

Meeting Time: 1:55 PM - 2:45 PM) & W | Periods 6-7 (12:50 PM - 2:45 PM)

[Meeting Room: FAC 201](#)

Final exam: No final Exam Scheduled

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### **Course Description**

This class surveys the art and architecture of Mexico City, which has been an important cultural center for more than seven centuries (ca. 1325- 2024). It follows the city from its foundation as the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1325 to its rechristening as Mexico City, the capital of the Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain in 1521. It concludes with a look at the city's place in modern Mexico, as it evolved from a cradle of modernism to a booming locus of "global contemporary" art. Rather than a strict history of the city itself, the course uses the great metropolis as a platform for examining the relationship between art, politics and place. To do this, we will look at a variety of artforms, including (but not limited to) urban planning, architecture, muralism, and performance art. By weaving together pre-Columbian, colonial, modern, and contemporary Latin American art history, the course exposes students to a variety of art historical methods that should recall the lessons they have learned in other classes. Additionally, the course will support the students in their own individual exploration of a single artwork from the city's rich history, refining their research and writing skills.

### **Assigned Reading**

There are no required texts for the course. Instead, we will use numerous book chapters and articles available on our Canvas page.

### **Requirements and Grading:**

#### **Requirements:**

All students must:

- (1) attend class (see attendance policy below)
- (2) complete assigned readings *before* the classes for which they are assigned
- (3) participate in class discussions and activities
- (4) complete smaller, in-class and homework assignments
- (5) Complete the major research podcast assignment
- (6) Complete the three "section synthesis" assignments

#### **Grade Break Down:**

10% Attendance and Participation

10% In class and homework assignments

- 20% Podcast project
- 20% Section Synthesis #1 (Due Feb 19)
- 20% Section Synthesis #2 (Due March 26)
- 20% Section Synthesis #3 (Due April 30)

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is extremely important for this class, as many of our learning outcomes can only be achieved by attending class and participating fully in the lecture and discussion. We will circulate a sign-in sheet each day in class. You will be allowed ***TWO*** un-penalized absences, which assumes that you will need a day here or there because you are sick, etc. For each subsequent absence you will lose 2 points from the “Attendance and Participation” portion of your final grade. (Note that in certain cases- eg. serious illness- absences can be excused with proper documentation; Also, note that excessive absences are grounds for receiving a failing grade for the class, and failure to sign in [if you are late, for example] will be counted as an absence.)

**In Class and Homework Assignments**

Throughout the semester you will need to complete a number of assignments either in class (questions, brief 1 question quizzes, etc.) or before class (discussion board assignments, reading comprehension assignments) to ensure that you are staying engaged and understanding the material.

**Podcast Project**

This class will teach you all about the art and architecture in Mexico City and as a final project you will create a podcast that gives listeners a “guided tour” of three artworks- one from each of the three major periods of the city’s past: Ancient, colonial, modern. Your project will require you to pick a theme for your tour and to choose three artworks/sites related to the theme. You will then carry out significant research into those three artworks/sites, write a script and record it. To facilitate dialog in your analysis and to make the project a bit more dynamic, you will carry out your project in pairs. More precise information will be forthcoming soon.

**Section Syntheses**

Instead of exams this class will have three “section syntheses” that allow you to show that you have gained a mastery of the information related to the three major periods of the city’s art history: Ancient (Mesoamerican), colonial, and modern/contemporary. You will complete these written assignments at home (with access to notes and outside materials). More information will be forthcoming.

**Grading Scale**

Grades are tabulated on a 100-point scale and a letter grade is assigned as follows:

-----	94–100 A	90–93 A-
87–89 B+	84–86 B	80–83 B-
77–79 C+	74–76 C	70–73 C-
67–69 D+	64–66 D	60–63 D-
59 and below F		

If you have questions about how grade points are assigned by the University, go to:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **Reminders and Requirements**

**UF Requirements and Policy:** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Statement Regarding the Honor Pledge:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Accommodations:** I, along with the rest of the University community, am working to create inclusive learning environments. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with instructors and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester. So, please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation as soon as possible and we can work to find a solution.

**Respect and Community:** The intent is that we explore the content of this course in a way that is respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. The intent is also to present content that explores diverse points of view, which might be challenging. Maintaining a respectful environment will be our responsibility. The intent is that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

**Changes to the Syllabus:** While this document provides guidelines for the class, I do reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time during the semester if the need arises. Each class is different, and sometimes it takes some tweaking to get the right readings, topics, and assignments. Being flexible with the syllabus allows us to get it right.

**In-Class Recording:** Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the

written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### **Notes on Technology and Communication**

- **Communication and Respect:** We all must strive to be good communicators to make this class successful. This means listening respectfully to others in class (faculty and students) and engaging in respectful conversation. It also, perhaps just as importantly, means maintaining professional standards while communicating via email and outside of class. With that in mind, please use formal, respectful, and professional standards when corresponding via email. This means beginning emails with a formal greeting, employing proper grammar, and avoiding unprofessional colloquialisms.
- **Canvas:** Please make sure that you are familiar with our course site on Canvas so that you will have access to announcements, assignments and readings, and pptx presentations you will need for your work.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Campus Resources: Health and Wellness**

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

### **Campus Resources: Academic Resources**

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1: Course Intro and Getting Started

M Jan 13: Overview of course and syllabus and course content

W Jan 15: Looking at Talking About Art

- Anne D'Alleva, "Fundamentals of Art History"

### Section 1: The Mexica and Tenochtitlan

### Week 2: The Founding of Tenochtitlan

M Jan 20: No class- MLK

W Jan 22: The Founding of Tenochtitlan

- Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, "Introduction to the Aztecs (Mexico)," in *Smarthistory*, 19 March 2018, <https://smarthistory.org/introduction-mexica/>.
- Felipe Solís Olguín, "The Art of the Aztec Era" in *The Aztec World*, eds. Elizabeth Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman (New York: Abrams, 2008), 153-177.

### Week 3: Tenochtitlan and the Templo Mayor

M Jan 27: Tenochtitlan and TM

- <https://smarthistory.org/templo-mayor-at-tenochtitlan-the-coyolxauhqui-stone-and-an-olmec-mask/>
- López Luján, "The Templo Mayor Project and the Excavation of Offerings; 1978-1991"

W Jan 29: Templo Mayor continued

### Week 4: The Sacred Precinct and Monuments

M Feb 3: The Sacred Precinct

- Leonardo López Luján, "The Sacred Precinct of Tenochtitlan"
- Raúl Barrera Rodríguez, "The Hui Tzompantli, the Ball Court, and the Temple of Ehecatl Quetzalcoatl"

W Feb 5: Monuments

- Umberger, "Art and Imperial Strategies in Tenochtitlan"

### Week 5: Ritual and Performance

M Feb 10: Ritual and Performance

- Catherine DeCesari, <https://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/calendar/time-ritual-and-sacred-landscape-in-aztec-mexico>

Wed Feb 12: Synthesis

### Section 2: The Spanish and Mexico City

### **Week 6: Creating Mexico City**

M Feb 17: Creating a colonial capital

- Richard Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World. 1493-1793*, selection

W Feb 19: colonial capital continued

### **SECTION 1 Synthesis Due**

### **Week 7: Politics, Action and Place**

M Feb 24: Viceregal Politics

- Richard Schreffler, *Art of Allegiance*, selection

M Feb 26: Ritual action and politics

- Barbara Mundy, "Moteuczoma reborn: Biombo paintings and collective memory in colonial Mexico City"

### **Week 8: Religious Culture**

M March 3: The Virgin of Guadalupe, etc.

- Jeanette Peterson, "The Viceroy and the Virgin," from *Visualizing Guadalupe*

W March 5: religious art continued

### **Week 9: Art and Identity**

M March 10: Casta Paintings and Social Divisions

- Katzew, "Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico"

W March 12: Synthesis

### **Week 10: Spring Break**

M: No Class

W: No Class

## **Section 3: Modern Mexico City**

### **Week 11: Mexican Muralism**

M March 24: Mexican Muralism

- Greeley, Intro and Chapter 1 "Muralism and the State in Post-Revolutionary Mexico"
- Mary K. Coffey, "The 'Mexican Problem': Nation and Native in Mexican Muralism and Cultural Discourse"

W March 26: Muralism continued

### **SECTION 2 Synthesis Due**

### **Week 12: Frida (and Diego) and Fridamania**

M March 31: Frida Kahlo

- Pankl and Blake, “Made in Her Image”

W April 2: Frida in Popular Culture and her legacy

- Episode 1:
  - <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-5-frida-fantasy/id1111786329?i=1000371672025>
- Episode 2:
  - <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-199-frida-fantasy-ii-an-interview-with-josie-lopez/id1111786329?i=1000519197707>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCvgqFbdVZ4>

**Week 13: Modernism and National Patrimony**

M April 7: Modernist Architecture: Barragán

- Keith Eggener, “Intro” *The Cultural Landscape*

W April 9: The Museo Nacional de Antropología

- Mary K. Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture*, selection

**Week 14: The Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

M April 14: Los Grupos and Alternative Arts

- Amy Sara Carroll, *REMEX: Toward an Art History of the Nafta Era*, selection
- *The Age of Discrepancies*, selection

W April 16: Ex Teresa Case Study

- Derek Burdette, “Exhibiting Contemporary Art in a Colonial Context”

**Week 15: Global Contemporary Art**

M April 21: Center of Global Contemporary

- <https://www.pbs.org/video/art-21-mexico-city/>

W April 23rd: Global Contemporary art continued

**Wednesday April 30, SECTION 3 Synthesis Due**