

FALL 2014
SPAN 447 Latin American Cultures

La fuerza del pasado en México y la América Central

Professor Santa Arias

This course will focus on the trans-historical study of culture and cultures in Mexico and Central America. We will center on the question of how the definition of cultural identity and the political present have been influenced by the history of imperial domination and the social and economic changes the region suffered before the 20th century. By reading and examining colonial, modern and contemporary authors and cultural products, the course will address the following themes: migration, poverty, indigeneity, slavery, war and revolutions, transformation of the land, and the tense relationship of the region with the United States. This course will introduce theoretical readings on key notions such as culture, identity, frontiers, and representation, which will help students, understand the readings and materials and write critically about them. We will review as well literary and cultural studies approaches to reading and interpreting texts, films, and visual art. Documents available on Black Board or the WEB include historical documents, movies, documentaries, and other forms of representation. Students are expected to review and use the terminology and methods introduced in SPAN 340.

Requirements: two exams, three short essays, a group presentation, and active and prepared participation in class.

SPAN 447 counts as an elective for Spanish majors, and is also open to non-majors. The prerequisite is SPAN 340. A grade of "C" or better in SPAN 340 is strongly recommended for students enrolling in this course.

