



Mexico-US Solidarity Network

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Summer 2011: Zapatistas and the Other Campaign

June 5 – July 2

Schedule:

June 5-12: UniTierra, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas (Orientation and first week of classes)

June 12 – July 1: Oventic, Chiapas

July 1: return to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas

July 2: Depart from Chiapas

Classes and Credits:

75 hours, 5 credits (Accredited by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco)

Mexican Social Movements (Soc 357/557): 2 credits

Spanish (Lang 201/301/401/501): 2 credits

(Fluent Spanish speakers may substitute 2 credits of Introductory Tzotzil for Spanish)

Modern Mexico (Pol Sci 352/552): 1 credits

Cost:

\$2,800 (Includes tuition, all ground transportation, and most food, lodging, books.)

Prerequisites:

Students must be at least 18 years old and have completed one year of university level Spanish, or equivalent in high school or independent study, or be a native Spanish speaker. Preference is given to students who are currently involved in community-based organizations and/or grassroots political work. Students are expected to have a rudimentary understanding of the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign, including their anti-capitalist positions. Students will be provided with several pre-course readings on the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign.

Professors:

Dr. Tom Hansen holds a doctorate in Rural Development from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco in Mexico City.

Dr. Maria Gloria Benavides Guevara holds a master's degree in linguistics and a doctorate in anthropology from the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología (CIESAS) in Mexico City.

Mtro. Stuart Schussler holds a master's degree in International Relations from the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales- Ecuador

Mtro. Anthony Nelson holds a master's degree in communication and rhetoric from Syracuse University.

Course description/objectives:

Students learn about the Zapatista movement, one of the most dynamic and innovative social movements in Latin America, and the Other Campaign, a national effort initiated by the Zapatistas to build a peoples' movement "from the left and from below" that challenges traditional Mexican politics and institutions. Students will learn:

- The history of the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign
- The ideological underpinnings of Zapatismo and the Other Campaign
- The context within which the movement develops, with a strong focus on political economy and the indigenous reality in Mexico
- The current-day manifestations and social actors involved in Zapatismo and the Other Campaign
- Potential roles for US activists in the Other Campaign and Zapatista solidarity

Students spend one week in the Universidad de la Tierra in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas and are housed in rustic collective dormitories on the campus. The UniTierra educates indigenous youth in practical skills, 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. An extensive library is available on campus. Breakfast is served from 8 to 9 each morning, lunch from 2:30 to 3:30, and dinner from 7:00 to 8:00. Spanish/Mexican culture classes are Tuesday through Thursday for 2 ½ hours a day in groups of three to six students. Wednesday Spanish classes involve 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.

Students spend three weeks in Oventic, a Zapatista cultural/political center (aka "Caracol") in the highlands of Chiapas, where we will be hosted by the Centro de Español y Lenguas Mayas Rebelde Autonomo Zapatista (Autonomous Rebel Zapatista Center for Spanish and Mayan Languages). During the fifth week students visit another of the five Zapatista caracoles. The program includes academic and Spanish classes using original texts from the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign and complimentary texts by noted Mexican and US authors.

The Spanish language component of the program focuses on verbal communication skills. Classes include nine hours per week of directed conversation, and workshops and special activities conducted in Spanish followed by English debriefing to clarify ideas and language issues. The Spanish course makes extensive use of original texts published by the Zapatista movement.

Typical weekly schedule

Monday and Tuesday

9:00-1:00: Seminars on Monday and Tuesday focus on the theory and practice of Mexican social movements (see the syllabus below for details on subject content). The program uses the modular system, a student-centered pedagogy developed at the UAM that focuses on group discussion and reflection. Homework consists of a two to four page reflection on the readings for each week.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

9:00-2:00: Spanish classes. Students are divided into groups of three or four for Spanish classes, depending on their verbal communication proficiency. Each student has three hours of directed conversation, with conversational topics related to student interests or the theoretical content of the program. Weekly homework includes a one to two page reflection on the week's events in Spanish. Resource materials include extensive use of daily newspapers and magazines (La Jornada, La Reforma, El Universal, El Proceso) and original materials published by the Zapatista movement.

Friday afternoon

Student evaluation, emotional check-in and planning for the coming week.

Daily

4:00-6:00 and 7:00-9:00: Workshops and special events. Students participate in workshops conducted by the Mujeres por la Dignidad Rebelde women's artisan cooperative, the Zapatista autonomous health system, the Zapatista autonomous education system and the Junta de Buen Gobierno. Special events include weekly news presentations in Spanish, development of a puppet show for primary and secondary school students, video and song nights, and traditional weaving and boot-making classes. Students can also participate in basketball tournaments, chess, and soccer games.

Housing:

Housing at Oventic is dormitory style in rustic settings. Outhouses and cold showers are standard fare, though students also have regular access to hot showers and internet during weekends at the Mexico Solidarity Network house in San Cristobal. Oventic has very slow internet available about half the time.

Schedule and syllabus:

Sun, June 5: Arrive in San Cristobal de las Casas. Students will be housed the first week at the Universidad de la Tierra, 15 minutes outside San Cristobal de las Casas.

The syllabus below will be supplemented by current information on the Mexico context, the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign, including newspaper articles, contemporary academic articles, and analysis pieces.

Orientation (June 6, UniTierra, San Cristobal): Orientation includes health and safety, program logistics, cultural sensitivity, and a brief overview of the current political situation in Chiapas and Mexico.

***Before the program begins:** Buy and read *Fire and the Word* by Gloria Muñoz Ramirez (MSN sells them for \$13, shipping included). In addition, read Ivan Illich's piece entitled "To hell with good intentions" found online here: http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm

Week 1 (June 7-10, San Cristobal): History of the Zapatista movement and the Other Campaign

EZLN - CCRI, 2003, "The thirteenth stele, parts one through seven." [Copies provided]

EZLN - CCRI, 2005, "Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona." Available online at: <http://www.zcommunications.org/sixth-declaration-of-the-selva-lacandona-by-subcomandante-marcos>

Esteva, Gustavo, 2001, "The meaning and scope of the struggle for autonomy." Prepared for the meeting of the Latin America Studies Association, Guadalajara, Mexico. 1997. Also in *Latin American Perspectives*: 28, p.120-148. Available online: http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/LASA97/esteva_eng.pdf

Rus, Jan, Shannon Mattiace and Hernandez Castillo Rosalva Aida, "Introduction," in *Mayan Lives, Mayan Utopias: The Indigenous Peoples of Chiapas and the Zapatista Rebellion*, Ed. Jan Rus, Rosalva Aida Hernandez Castillo, and Shannon L. Mattiace, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Lanham, p. 1-26. [Copies provided]

Gonzalez Casanova, Pablo, 2005, "The Zapatista 'Caracoles': Networks of Resistance and Autonomy," *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol19: 3, p.79-92. [Copies provided]

Week 2 (June 13-17, Oventic): Political economy - structural context of Zapatismo and the Other Campaign

Soederberg, Susanne, 2001, "Deconstructing the Neoliberal Promise of Prosperity and Stability: Who Gains from the *Maquiladorization* of Mexican Society?" *Cultural Logic* 4:2. [Copies provided]

Harvey, David, 1990, "Modernization," in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell Press, Cambridge, MA, p. 99-118. [Copies provided]

Barone, Charles A, 2004, *Radical Political Economy: A Concise Introduction*, p. 3-22. [Copies provided]

Marx, Karl, 1865, *Value, Price and Profit: An Introduction to the Theory of Capitalism*, Ch. VI to XIV. [Copies provided]

Week 3 (June 20-24, Oventic): Social actors and human agency – manifestations of Zapatismo and the Other Campaign

Long, Norman, 2001, “The Case for an Actor-Oriented Sociology of Development,” in *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*, Routledge, NY, p. 9-29 [Copies provided]

Escobar, Arturo, 2001, “Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization,” *Political Geography*: 20, p. 139-174. (Post-development Theories). [Copies provided]

Harvey, Neil, 2001, “Globalization and resistance in post-cold war Mexico: difference, citizenship and biodiversity conflicts in Chiapas,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 22: 6, p. 1045-1061. Available online: <http://web.centre.edu/lorihm/harvey.pdf>

Coben Diana, 1998, *Radical Heroes: Gramsci, Freire and the Politics of Adult Education*, Garland Publishing, NY, p.9-52. [Copies provided]

Stephen, Lynn, “Gender & Politics, Experience and Structure” pp. 1-26. in *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below*. UT Press 1997. [Copies provided]

Week 4 (June 27 – July 1, Oventic): Mexican social movements - Zapatismo and the Other Campaign in context

Speed, Shannon and Jane F Collier, 2000, “Limiting indigenous autonomy in Chiapas, Mexico: The state government’s use of human rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 22: 877-905.

Eber, Christine and Janet Tanski, 2001, “Obstacles facing women’s grassroots development strategies in Mexico,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* Vol. 33: 4, p. 441-460.

Brodin Sacks, Karen. 1989. “Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender.” *American Ethnologist* 16(3). pp.534-550.

Subcomandante Marcos, 2006, “Los Zapatistas y La Otra: Los Peatones de la Historia,” parts I – V. Available online: <http://espora.org/~sartaguda/laotra/peatones.doc>

July 1: San Cristobal de las Casas: Evaluation and wrap-up.

July 2: Depart from San Cristobal de las Casas.

Grading:

Students are expected to attend all classes and workshops. An 80% attendance rate is required by the accrediting institution (UAM-Xochimilco). The academic program utilizes a multi-disciplinary, student-centered pedagogy that emphasizes discussion, student presentations, group reflection and integration of theory with hands-on experience. Professors are activist/academics with years of firsthand experience in popular struggles in Mexico and the United States. Grading is based on the following:

33% final paper or project: Students may choose either a final paper or a final project. Final papers are ten to fifteen pages. Subject matter and methodology will be determined in consultation with professors. Final projects may be done individually or in groups, and may consist of written papers, theater, art-work, plans for a community-based organizing project to be carried out upon return to the US, etc. Subject matter and methodology will be determined in consultation with professors. Final paper or project is due June 28.

33% class participation: Students are expected to prepare for academic classes by studying assigned reading materials. Classes are discussion based and students will be assigned to lead discussions at various times during the semester.

33% weekly writing assignments: Students are assigned from 80 to 150 pages of reading per week – generally three to six readings. Each Monday students will submit a one to three page reflection on the readings, including questions pertinent to the week's class discussions.

Health and safety:

The health and safety of Study Abroad participants is the highest priority for the Mexico Solidarity Network. Professors have decades of experience leading groups in Mexico. We work closely with local partners to assess current health concerns and safety issues, and we adapt quickly to changing political conditions. Our close, working relationships with local organizations in each location enable us to respond quickly and effectively if emergency situations arise. All students are covered by emergency health care, which includes hospitalization and emergency repatriation to the US in case of serious illness or accident.