



MEXICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS • STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

MEXICO SOLIDARITY NETWORK AND UAM-XOCHIMILCO PARTNERING FOR A BETTER WORLD

Summer 2014: Zapatistas & la Sexta Declaración [June 1 – 28, 2014]

Schedule Overview:

- June 1: Arrive at the Tuxtla Gutierrez airport (TGZ) or San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas
- June 2 – 27: At the CELMRAZ Language School in Oventic, Chiapas (optional weekends in SCLC)
- June 27: Return to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas
- June 28: Depart from Chiapas via Tuxtla Gutierrez airport (TGZ)

Classes and Credits:

90 hours, 6 credits (Accredited by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco)

- Mexican Social Movements (Soc 357/557): 2 credits
- Spanish (Lang 201/301/401/501) *or* *Tsotsil (Lang 101): 2 credits
- Modern Mexico (Pol Sci 352/552): 2 credits
- *only for fluent Spanish speakers*

Professors will include one or more of the following:

Tony Nelson has worked as a community organizer, teacher, and human rights activist around the issues of immigration, education, prison reform, anti-neoliberalism, and US-sponsored torture. His political orientation is formed by the solidarity work he has done with *compañer@s* fighting for economic and social justice in Mexico, Guatemala, and the US. He received his BA from Grand Valley State University (2003) and his MA from Syracuse University (2009) in the areas of communication theory, rhetoric, and philosophy.

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 was 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.

Course description/objectives:

Students learn about the Zapatista movement, one of the most dynamic and innovative social movements in Latin America and La Sexta. Students will learn:

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

***Before the program begins:** In addition to reading the required pre-program materials listed in the orientation, you need to read the material for Week 1 (listed below), as we will discuss this during class Tuesday and Wednesday of the first

week.

Program schedule

Due Every Monday: 1-pg, single-spaced written analysis/argument incorporating readings and experiences
Reflection #1 will be due the first Monday (June 2) of the program at the beginning of the day.

Sunday (June 1): Tuxtla-Gutierrez (TGZ) airport arrival and van ride to San Cristóbal de las Casas. (~1 hour)
 Upon arriving at the MSN house we will do orientation meetings until lights out (around 9pm) for early departure.

Monday (June 2): 6:30am Depart San Cristóbal for Oventic (about 1 hour ride through windy mountain roads)
 We will be doing the remaining part of the orientation and workshops where we can Monday & Tuesday.

Weeks One thru Four (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 or Tzotzil/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
- fieldwork in the *milpa* (corn patch)
- meetings with liberation theologians and human rights defenders
- Visits to various indigenous communities in the region

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

[Our first week will not look like this because we will be doing orientation and workshops when not in class.]

Monday:

9:00 – 2:00: Social movement seminar
 4:00: Orientation to Zapatismo and Oventic
 8:00: Video on the founding of Oventic

Tuesday:

9:00 – 2:00: 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 or Tzotzil 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 or Tzotzil classes
 4:00: Theater preparation. Students prepare a play that is presented the final week to the entire secondary school.

8:00: Video night.

Friday:

9:00 – 2:00 Spanish or Tzotzil 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

Week 1 Readings: (June 2 – 6, Oventic): History of the Zapatista movement and La Sexta

Illich, Ivan, 1968, "To Hell with Good Intentions." http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm

Freire, Paulo, (any edition), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapters 1 and 2 (all chapters if you can)

hooks, bell, 1994. "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom" Chapter 4 - On Freire.

Batalla Bonfil, Guillermo, 1996, *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, University of Texas Press, Austin, Translated by Philip A. Dennis, pp.3-39

EZLN - CCRI, 2003, "The thirteenth stele" Parts one through seven.

EZLN-CCRI, 2005, "Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona." <http://sixthdeclaration.blogspot.com/>

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

Week 2 (June 9 - 13, Oventic): Political economy - structural context of Zapatismo and La Sexta

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

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

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

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

Konczal, Mike. April 2012. "Against Law, For Order". *Jacobin Magazine*.
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2012/04/against-law-for-order/>

Friedman, Milton. 2002 [1962]. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.10-26

Week 3 (June 16 - 20, Oventic): Social actors and human agency – manifestations of Zapatismo and La 6ta

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

Sewell, Jr. William H, 1992, "The Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 1. (Jul., 1992), pp. 1-29.

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

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

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1999. "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books. Ch 5&7 (pp.75-86; 99-113)

Week 4 (June 23 - 27): Mexican social movements - Zapatismo and La Sexta in context

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press. Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 17-84.

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.

Kampwirth, Karen. 2002. "Also a Women's Rebellion: The Rise of the Zapatista Army." *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*. The Pennsylvania State University Press. pp.83-116.

CCRI & Subcomandante Marcos, Dec '12- Jan '13, "Strategic Dossier #1: Zapatista communiques & commentaries" http://cril.mitotedigital.org/sites/default/files/content/ccra_zapatismo_dossier-1_dec2012_1.pdf

Subcomandante Moises, 24 de mayo 2014, "Words of the General Common of the EZLN, in the voice of SCI Moises" <http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2014/06/01/words-of-the-general-command-of-the-ezln-in-the-voice-of-subcomandante-insurgente-moises-in-homage-to-companero-galeano/>

June 27: Evaluation and wrap-up in Oventic, clean and organize MSN house.

June 28: 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 27th.**

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 must be covered by emergency health care, which includes hospitalization and emergency repatriation to the US in case of serious illness or accident.