

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**  
**Winter 2019**  
**CLC 2129B/ SP 2102B/ VA 3390G- Mexico City**

(Please note: this course outline is subject to change)

**Professor:** Alena Robin

**Schedule:** Monday, 4:30-6:30 pm, Wednesday, 4:30-5:30 pm, UC 2110

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**Phone:** 519-661-2111, ext. 81599

**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 10:00-12:00



## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Examine Mexico City through its history of continuous transformations from the Aztec empire to the megalopolis it is today. Identify traces of the various pasts in the city's contemporary urban landscape and daily life through art, film and literature. Comparisons to other Latin American cities will be drawn. Taught in English.

## **II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Understand broader, underlying socio-historical changes that inform literary and visual representations of a unique Latin American city during the past eight hundred years;
- Develop knowledge of some of the major artistic representations of Mexico City, and other cities of Latin America, across a range of texts and images;
- Engage in visual interpretations of the social and urban space through art, films, literature and other media;
- Discuss the role of emblematic historical figures crucial to the future of Mexico City and other Latin American cities;
- Create a case study that analyzes the coexistence of the sacred and the secular by examining the works of artists, writers and directors;
- Assess the interplay between artistic endeavours and economical, political and religious powers.

## **III. EVALUATION**

**Participation (15%):** Students are expected to attend every class unless medical circumstances prevent them from doing so (please see section below on department policies). The success of the course depends on the frequency and quality of the participation of its members. Assigned readings should be done prior to class in order to be adequately discussed in class. Students will be asked to submit topics for discussion

in advance to the professor (readings with \*). This will also be taken into consideration as part of the participation.

Being present in class does not necessarily imply participating in it. Similarly, being absent from class on a repetitive basis will seriously affect the participation mark.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time, and to conduct themselves during class in a professional and respectful manner that is not disruptive to others.

When absent, it is still the student's responsibility to complete and turn in coursework on time and catch up on the material covered in class. Students must inform their professor by email of any absence as soon as possible.

**Reflection paper (20%):** Tell me about your experience reading Nick Caistor, *Mexico City. A Cultural and Literary Companion*. Further information will be provided in class. **Due February 11.**

**Photo essay (20%):** Create your own photo album of Mexico City! This assignment provides you with the opportunity to explore Mexico City through the camera lens. It is designed as an exercise in cultural observation, which encourages you to explore your artistic imagination and ethnographic skills. Further information will be provided in class. **Due March 18.**

**Mexico City collage (20%):** Collages are pictures composed by gluing papers and various other objects to a ground, with the intention of transforming the most commonplace materials into creative works of art. Think of this assignment as your chance to create your own image of Mexico City using a pasting technique of different objects. Be creative! No need to be an artist! Further information will be provided in class. **Due April 8.**

**Debate (20% + 5%):** According to the calendar of activities, students divided in small groups are expected to present a topic in relation to an assigned reading, animate and moderate the debate that their presentation will generate. Preferably by group of 4-5 people. This activity, in total, should cover the 50 minutes of the class. Further information will be provided in class. **Date TBA.**

**IMPORTANT:** The only acceptable reason for turning in a late assignment or missing an examination is for medical purposes (see section on departmental policies below). Late assignments will lose 5 points per day (on 100%). Assignments turned in a week after the due date (7 days) will not be accepted and will receive a grade of "0."

**PLEASE NOTE:** For group activities, the same grade will be given to all members of a group. However, you will be provided with a rubric to assess the collaboration of each member of your team.

The assignments will be graded on research, originality of thesis and approach, argument, structure and style. All written assignments must be in Times New Roman, 12 point font (no other font will be accepted), double-spaced, and prepared according to MLA style.

**E-MAIL POLICY AND ETIQUETTE:** Generally, all emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours during weekdays (excluding holidays). Emails will \*usually\* be addressed during regular work hours (9-5). The instructor may choose, at her discretion, to respond outside these hours, depending on availability.

When sending an email to the instructors, please make sure of the following:

An email etiquette is expected from your emails. Include a courteous greeting and closing. Make sure that the answer to your question is not contained in the syllabus. Please identify yourself properly.

Students are responsible for regularly checking their email, and the course OWL site for new notices related to the course.

### **ELECTRONICS**

- Computers/laptops/notebooks (and similar technologies) are permitted only for note taking and reading electronic materials.
- NO Facebook, Instagram and other social media during class.
- All cellphones (and similar technologies) must be turned off, or set to silent ‘vibration’ mode during the duration of the class.
- The instructor reserves the right to ensure that students are not text-messaging, surfing the internet, or distracting any students; spot-checks will be conducted during class time.
- No digital taping (either voice or image) is allowed.
- Disruptive behavior will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and may result in the suspension of laptop privileges.

All university regulations concerning plagiarism apply. If you are unsure about plagiarism, please ask.

“Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of Registration.”

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The **Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Modern Languages and Literatures courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures website at <http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.