

# Syllabus for SPA 248/348-90

## Preparatory Course for Study in Mexico

(Patricia Cathey)

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INSTRUCTORS: Patricia Cathey      Dr. Robert Shell  
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PREREQUISITE: Credit or concurrent enrollment in SPA112, two years of high school Spanish, or consent of instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE: The Preparatory Course for the Interim Program in Mexico is an LAS International/Intercultural course. The class is an introduction to Mexican history and contemporary Mexican society and culture. It explores in depth the cultural differences between the United States and Mexico. The lecture and discussion are in English, however, some elements will be covered in Spanish. The primary objective of this course is to prepare students for a successful experience in Mexico. The course is designed to give students a practical knowledge of contemporary Mexican society and how they can successfully fit in. It will also give students a cultural and historical knowledge of Mexico that will allow them to go to Mexico as a well-prepared tourist.

### COURSE OUTLINE:

A. PRE-HISPANIC INDIAN CULTURES / CORTES AND THE CONQUEST      This unit covers the major Indian groups of pre-Hispanic Mexico and the major contributions and accomplishments of these groups. This unit also covers the arrival of Cortes and the Spanish Conquest.

B. THE HISTORY OF MEXICO      This unit covers Mexican history after the Conquest, beginning with the Colonial Period during which Spain ruled Mexico, through modern history. This unit also covers the current government and political situation in Mexico.

C. CONTEMPORARY MEXICO / FUNCTIONAL SPANISH      This unit will cover selected topics from the following list:

1. Mexico City in-depth, including the transportation systems and the major museums. This unit is designed to give students the confidence to explore on their own the parts of Mexico City that interest them and to better appreciate the city and all it has to offer.

2. Cuernavaca in-depth, including transportation, museums, attractions, restaurants, and possible day trips from the city. This unit is designed to help students get the most out of their stay in Cuernavaca.

3. Social Situations: The students will learn how to handle themselves in social situations. This will be done through selected vocabulary study and oral activities using that vocabulary.

Topics include:

- a. los saludos, las despedidas, y la cortesía (y groserías)
- b. at the table
- c. in the restaurant
- d. shopping
- e. the peso vs. the dollar

4. The Arts: Architecture and Art (including the muralists and Frida Kahlo)

THE WRAP-UP: Practical information regarding the school and classes in Mexico, what to pack and what to leave home, question and answer period, final itinerary, arrival at Mexico City

airport, customs, etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: For each unit, students will be assigned readings, which will be handed out in class. There will be a test over each unit. Upon returning from Mexico, students will submit a "Response to Mexico" paper. The following grading criteria will be used:

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| (1) 3 tests, each worth 25% of the final grade | 75% |
| (2) Response paper                             | 25% |

NOTE: Students who must do this class independently will have the same course requirements. The assigned readings must be picked up weekly in Dr. Shell's office or from me. Arrangements must be made with me to take each test on a timely basis.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements. Be aware that Mexican facilities are not ADA compliant.

ACADEMIC HONEST POLICY: Since honesty in the classroom is required, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the college constitutes a violation. A grade of zero may be assessed in the evaluation instrument.