

Course Title: Of Fire and Blood: Art-Making, Culture and Mythology of Mexico
Professor Jaime Arredondo; jma5@nyu.edu
Subject: Syllabus, Spring 2011
Course: K40.1431
Time/Location: Wednesday 3.30-6.10; 715 Broadway, Room 432
New York University: Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Course Overview

A rich landscape of art and culture flourished in Mexico for thousands of years beginning with the Olmec civilization at around the second millennium before Christ. With the arrival of the Spaniards in 1519, a new hybrid culture resulted from the fusion of Iberian and the Native American cultures. This Arts Workshop will examine the art, culture and mythology of Mexico, combining it with hands on art making. It will move in the following way chronologically: the Olmec culture; Teotihuacan, or the City of the Gods; the Toltecs of Tula, and Quetzalcoatl the "Feathered Serpent"; the hyper-religious Aztecs; the large and complex Mayan culture; and lastly, the Mexican muralist movement with its major muralists, Rivera, Orozco, and Siquieros. Topics will include: astrology/astronomy; religion and shamanism; mythology; and human sacrifice. It is beneficial that students have a cursory understanding of art making. Techniques such as collage, 3-D model making, drawing and painting, will be utilized as well as working from a live model. A collaborative visual project is also required pertaining to the muralist movement at the end of the semester. A final exhibition will be held to show students work.

Course Texts

Required

Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs Micheal Coe; Thames and Hudson
The Popol Vuh Recinos, Goetz, Morley; University of Oklahoma

Recommended

Mexican Muralists Desmond Rochfort; Chronicle Books
The Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya Mary Miller/Karl Traube; Thames and Hudson
A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies Bartolome de las Casa; Penguin Classics

Class Content

Classes will be composed of slide lectures, student presentations, and studio art. Students will be expected to not only satisfy course readings and writings, but to also create topical visual pieces that reflect a disciplined approach to research, and that are of high artistic quality demonstrating craft and expertise. Presentation cannot be overstated, and a balance must be sought after between artistic and intellectual rigor. Sketchbooks are critical. Students will be required to create weekly sketches/collages pertaining to weekly readings of the Popol Vuh.

Course Requirements and Grading

Olmec Project	15%
Teotihuacan/Toltec Project:	15%
Aztec Project:	15%
Popol Vuh or Destruction	15%
Mural Project/Final Project:	20%
Participation:	10%
Presentation:	10%

Attendance

More than three absences could affect your grade negatively.

Lateness

Two latenesses are considered an absence. A lateness is anything past fifteen minutes after the appointed starting time.

Incompletes

Incompletes must be requested in writing and be approved by the instructor.

Class Schedule	
Class 1, 1.26.11	Review of Syllabus and Class Schedule
Class 2, 2.02.11	Lecture: The Olmecs: The Colossal Heads and the Were-Jaguar myth The Popol Vuh: Part 1, pp. 77-106 Studio: The Olmecs
Class 3, 2.09.11	Museum of Natural History
Class 4, 2.16.11	Working with the live model
Class 5, 2.23.11	Working with the live model
Class 6, 3.02.11	Presentation: The Olmecs Lecture: Teotihuacan/City of the Gods; the Toltecs and the legend of Quetzalcoatl the Feathered Serpent The Popol Vuh: Part 2, pp. 107-139
Class 7, 3.09.11	Studio: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs The Popol Vuh: Part 2, pp. 139-164 Spring Break: 3.16.11, No Classes
Class 8, 3.23.11	Presentation: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs Lecture: The Aztecs: Sacred Journey, Sacred Homelands, and their Apocalyptic End The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp. 165-179
Class 9, 3.30.11	Studio: The Aztecs The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp.179-192
Class 10, 4.06.11	Presentation: The Aztecs Studio: Popol Vuh
Class 11, 4.13.11	Presentation: Popol Vuh Lecture: The Muralist Movement: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros
Class 12, 4.20.11	The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Class 13, 4.27.11	The Muralist Movement: Lecture (cont.) Studio: The Muralist Movement
Class 14, 5.04.11	Studio: The Mexican Muralist Movement Exam Week: 5.09.11
Class 15, 5.11.11	Presentation of Final Project and Final Exhibition