Course Title: Of Fire and Blood: Art-Making, Culture and Mythology of Mexico
Professor Jaime Arredondo; jma5@nyu.edu
Subject: Syllabus, Spring 2015
Course: ARTS-UG 1431
Time/Location: Monday 3.30-6.10; 1 Washington Place, 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 Native American cultures. This Arts Workshop will examine the art, culture and mythology of Mesoamerica, combining it with hands on art making. It will move chronologically in the following manner: the Olmec culture; Teotihuacan, or the City of the Gods; the Toltecs of Tula, and Quetzalcoatl the “Feathered Serpent”; the hyper-religiosity of the Aztecs; the large and complex Mayan culture; and lastly, the Mexican muralist movement with its major muralists, Rivera, Orozco, and Siquieros. In addition, we will read almost the entire text of the Popol Vuh, the Mayan creation myth of universe. Topics throughout the course will include: astrology/astronomy and calendrical dating; religion, shamanism, and ecstatic experience; mythology, and cosmological belief; human sacrifice, and finally beliefs dedicated to vampirism. 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 created to show students work to the NYU community.

Course Texts
Required
Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs, Michele 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

Class Content
Classes are composed of slide lectures, student presentations, and art making. Students will be expected to not only satisfy course readings and writings, but to also create topically relevant visual pieces that reflect a commitment to research, and that are of high artistic quality demonstrating craft and expertise. Presentation cannot be overstated, and an equal balance between artistic and intellectual rigor is highly recommended. Sketchbooks are critical. Students are required to create weekly sketches/collages pertaining to weekly readings of the Popol Vuh.

Course Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Olmec Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teotihuacan/Toltec Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Aztec Project</td>
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<td>Popol Vuh or Destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mural Project/Final Project</td>
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<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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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, 1.26.15  Review of Syllabus

Class 2, 2.02.15  Working with the live model

Class 3, 2.09.15  Lecture: The Olmecs: The Colossal Heads and the Were-Jaguar myth
The Popol Vuh: Part 1, pp. 77-106
Studio: The Olmecs

No Class: Presidents Day, Feb. 16, 2015

Class 4, 2.23.15  Working with the live model

Class 5, 3.02.15  Museum of Natural History

Class 6, 3.09.15  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

Spring Break: 3.16.15, No Classes

Class 7, 3.23.15  Studio: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs
The Popol Vuh: Part 2, pp. 139-164

Class 8, 3.30.15  Presentation: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs
Lecture: The Aztecs: Sacred Journey, Sacred Homelands, and their Apocalyptic End

Class 9, 4.06.15  Aztec lecture continued
The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp.165-179

Class 10, 4.13.15  The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp.179-192
Quiz: Popol Vuh; and, Art and Culture of Mesoamerica

Class 11, 4.20.15  Presentation: The Aztecs
Lecture: The Muralist Movement: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros

Class 12, 4.27.15  The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Class 13, 5.04.15  Lecture on Mexican Muralist Movement, cont.
Presentation: PV

Class 14, 5.11.15  Studio: The Mexican Muralist Movement; Quiz, Mexican Muralist Movement

Class 15, 5.18.15  Presentation of Final Project and Final Exhibition