Course Title: Of Fire and Blood: Art-Making, Culture and Mythology of Mexico  
Professor Jaime Arredondo; jma5@nyu.edu  
Subject: Syllabus, Spring 2016  
Course: ARTS-UG 1431  
Time/Location: Monday 2.00-4.45; 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, known as the first civilization of the Americas; Teotihuacan, or the “City of the Gods”; the Toltecs of Tula, and Quetzalcoatl the “Feathered Serpent”; the hyper-religiosity of the Aztecs; and, lastly we will read almost in its entirety the Popol Vuh, known as the Mayan creation myth of the universe, a highly visual and almost hallucinatory document once pushed underground for centuries. 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 final exhibition will be created to show students work to the NYU community.

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

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
- Olmec Project: 20%  
- Teotihuacan/Toltec Project: 20%  
- Aztec Project: 20%  
- Popol Vuh: 20%  
- Quiz: 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, 1.25.16 Review of Syllabus
Class 2, 2.01.16 No class: Instructor to attend One Man Show in Austin, Texas
Class 3, 2.08.16 Working with the live model
   No Class: Presidents Day, Feb. 15, 2016
Class 4, 2.22.16 Lecture: The Olmecs: The Colossal Heads and the Were-Jaguar myth
   The Popol Vuh: Part 1, pp. 77-106
   Studio: The Olmecs
Class 5, 2.29.16 Museum of Natural History
Class 6, 3.07.16 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: 3.14.16, No Classes
Class 7, 3.21.16 Working with the live model
Class 8, 3.28.16 Studio: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs
   The Popol Vuh: Part 2, pp. 139-164
Class 9, 4.04.16 Presentation: Teotihuacan and the Toltecs
   Lecture: The Aztecs: Sacred Journey, Sacred Homelands, and their Apocalyptic End
Class 10, 4.11.16 The Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian
Class 11, 4.18.16 Aztec lecture continued
   The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp.165-179
Class 12, 4.25.16 The Popol Vuh: Part 3, pp.179-192
   Quiz: Popol Vuh; and, Art and Culture of Mesoamerica
Class 13, 5.02.16 The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Class 14, 5.09.16 Presentation: PV and The Aztecs
Class 15, 5.16.16 Final Exhibition and Review