



# Peasants, Rebellion and the State in Latin America

HISL 695-02 – Fall 2003 – Mayer Hall 104 – T3:30-6:00pm

Prof. Justin Wolfe

Office Hours: W1:30 - 4:00 PM or by appt.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Out of the ashes of the independence struggles, Latin American elites sought to create new societies. This process challenged the lives and livelihoods of peasants, the vast rural populations of Latin America who formed the fundamental building blocks of rural communities and were often key actors in rebellions, social movements and revolutions. The emerging states in Latin America were certainly more powerful than any individual or rural community and in the historical record the voice of the state is heard more frequently than that of the peasant. A primary goal of this class will be an effort to see peasants as real historical actors, try consider this history from their perspective, and look at the challenges of doing so. How and why did peasants respond to the new states? Did they ignore change or challenge it? Did they passively accept change, rise up in rebellion, or walk a middle path between the two? Did they act or just react? In this seminar, we will consider these issues through in-depth case studies on Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica. To help us in confronting these issues and in thinking comparatively, we will also examine theoretical approaches to these issues.

## GRADING POLICY AND ASSIGNMENTS

The success of this class depends on your critical reading and active participation in discussion. Each week, beginning with the 9/16 class session, students will lead the class in discussion. These students will post discussion questions to the class BlackBoard discussion list by the Friday before class at the latest. Make sure you schedule your time to prepare early enough. Each student will also be required to bring at least one written question of their own that does not duplicate those of the discussion leaders (bring two copies, one for the instructor and one for yourself).

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Research statement, preliminary bibliography and historical context (10%)
- Historiography paper (15%)
- Research paper (40%)
- Peer reviews (5%)
- Discussion (20%)
- Discussion leadership (10%)

You are required to meet with me by September 30 to receive approval of your research paper topic. Unapproved topics will result in an incomplete. All assignments must be completed to receive a grade for this class. Three absences from class will result in your automatic withdrawal from the class.

All assignments are due on the date noted. If you turn in an assignment late without having cleared it with me 48 HOURS BEFORE THE DUE DATE, you will be marked down one grade-step for each day that it is late (e.g., from a "B" to a "B-", etc.). All emergency excuses must be received through your academic advisor.

## **BOOKS FOR THE COURSE**

All of the following books are available for purchase at the University Book Store. If available, they will also all be placed on 1-day reserve at the library.

Samuel Brunk, *Emiliano Zapata: Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

Marc Edelman, *Peasants Against Globalization: Rural Social Movements in Costa Rica* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Robert Levine, *Vale of Tears: Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893-1897* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Gonzalo Sanchez and Donny Meertens, *Bandits, Peasants and Politics: The Case of "La Violencia" in Colombia*, translated by Alan Hynds (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

Cliff Welch, *The Seed Was Planted: The Sao Paulo Roots of Brazil's Rural Labor Movement, 1924-1964* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

**9/2 Introduction to the seminar**

**9/9 Peasants, Landlords and States: Some Terms and Ideas (1)**

Joel Migdal, "Introduction: Why Peasants Change" in *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures toward Political and Social Change in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

John Tutino, "Agrarian Life and Rural Rebellion," in *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

Steve J. Stern, "New Approaches to the Study of Peasant Rebellion and Consciousness: Implications of the Andean Experience," in Steve J. Stern, ed., *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World: 18th to 20th Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

### **9/16 Peasants, Landlords and States: Some Terms and Ideas (1)**

Partha Chatterjee, "The Nation and Its Peasants," and "Communities and the Nation," in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 2 (Apr. 1990): 383-408. Available on JSTOR.

Alan Knight, "Weapons and Arches in the Mexican Revolutionary Landscape," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

### **9/23 Peasants and Politics in Colonial and Post-Colonial Mexico**

Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of the Mexico's National State*, all.

### **9/30 Research Topic Presentation**

Assignment Due: Statement of research paper topic, preliminary bibliography, and historical context paper due in class today.

### **10/7 Peasants at the Edge of Modernity**

Robert Levine, *Vale of Tears*, all.

### **10/14 Peasants: Followers or Leaders?**

Samuel Brunk, *Emiliano Zapata*, all.

### **10/21 Peasants and Labor Politics**

Cliff Welch, *The Seed Was Planted*, all.

Assignment Due: Historiographical essay related to research topic due in class today.

### **10/28 Banditry or Self-Defense?: Peasants and Violence**

Gonzalo Sanchez and Donny Meertens, *Bandits, Peasants and Politics*, all.

### **11/4 Peasants and Globalization at the Millennium**

Marc Edelman, *Peasants Against Globalization*, all.

### **11/11 Research Paper Draft and Presentation**

Assignment Due: Complete draft of your paper is due in class; bring a copy for each student and the instructor. Also short presentation of paper.

### **11/18 Peer Reviews**

Assignment Due: Peer reviews for all student papers are due in class; be prepared to discuss each other's papers.

### **11/25 Thanksgiving Holiday - No Class**

### **12/2 Research Paper Due**

Assignment Due: Completed final research papers are due.