

# Modern Architecture of Mexico

Spring 2009 Tuesday Evening, 5:30pm-8:15pm

ARC 4143/902 CRN#24482 undergraduate listing, cross listed as ARC 5643/901 CRN#26338 for graduate students

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This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

- I. **Catalog Description:** A survey of the architecture and urbanism of Mexico from Independence in 1821 to the present.
- II. **Prerequisites:** Undergraduates and graduate students in the Department of Architecture, students from throughout the University.
- III. **General Description:** This course presents a broad overview of the extraordinary architecture and urbanism of Mexico framed against the backdrop of modern Mexican culture, from Independence in 1821 to the avant-garde contemporary architecture of the present. Major topics include: Neoclassicism and the roots of late 19<sup>th</sup> C. Mexican nationalism including the work of Manuel Tolsá, the *Porfiriato* and new modes of architecture brought about by industrialization, orthodox Modernist architecture in Post-Revolutionary Mexico including Juan O' Gorman and others, Art Deco Architecture of the 1930's including Carlos Obregón Santacilia and others, Modernist architecture after WWII including Luis Barragán, Félix Candela, and others, the architecture of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City including Pedro Ramirez Vazquez and others, the architecture of the 1970's and 1980's including Carlos Mijares, Ricardo Legorreta and others, and contemporary architecture of Mexico from the 1990's to the present including the work of Alberto Kalach, Agustín Landa, Fernanda Canales, Tatiana Bilbao, and others. Non-required field trips to the San Antonio Museum of Art and Monterrey, NL Mexico may also be offered as part of the course. Also, we will have the noted contemporary architect Tatiana Bilbao from Mexico City exhibiting and lecturing on her work here in San Antonio.
- IV. **Instructional Objectives:** The objectives of the class are threefold; first, to expose students to the extraordinary architecture and urbanism of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Mexico which is generally under-appreciated even in the American Southwest; second, provide students with the opportunity to acquire the critical tools to evaluate significant works of art and architecture, and third, with the semester project, to make a contribution to the larger task of documenting this important and undervalued body of work that can be disseminated to others beyond the setting of this classroom.
- V. **Instructional Methodology:** The course will consist of weekly lectures and discussion of the readings, as well as a semester project. The required reading for each week and the lecture will form the basis for discussion which will follow after each lecture where the class will be divided into an undergraduate discussion group that will discuss the required undergraduate weekly reading, and a graduate discussion group who will discuss the required graduate student reading. Note: The weekly reading has been reduced to approximately 10-15 pages each week with expectation that each student will be an active participant in the discussion. Don't be shy! Participate! The midterm exam will cover the lectures and required readings first half of the course, while the final exam will cover the lectures and required readings for the last half of the course. These will be separate midterm and final exams for undergraduates and for graduate students. The semester project will have separate requirements for undergraduates, who will select their topic from a list I

will hand out in class, and for graduate students who will develop their own topic based on their interests.

**VI. Required Texts:**

Burian, Edward R., "Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico," University of Texas Press, Austin, 1997 (available at the UTSA Downtown Bookstore, amazon.com, or through UT Press.)

(Note: My book has been translated into Spanish by Gustavo Gili of Barcelona as, "Modernidad y arquitectura en México," I will keep a copy with the reserve books for this course for those Spanish speakers who would like to read the text in Spanish.)

Those weekly readings not in the text will be available on reserve in the Downtown Architecture Library and also available online on the "Blackboard" page for the class.

**VIII. Grading Policy:** The final grade will be determined as follows:

1. Attendance/Participation/Leading Discussions	5%	5 points
2. 2 brief, unannounced 5 minute quizzes on weekly reading	20%	20 points
3. Midterm Exam	25%	25 points
4. Final Exam	25%	25 points
5. Semester project	25%	25 points
Total possible		<b>100 points</b>

**IX. Course Schedule:**

Wk 1 12 Jan.	Setting the Stage: Introduction to course / A Brief Overview of the Geography of Mexico and a Historical Overview of Pre-Columbian (2000BC-1521) and Colonial Mexico (1521-1821) Required Reading: " <u>Mexico Splendors of Thirty Centuries</u> ," p.87-92, 280-285, 315-322.
Wk 2 19 Jan.	19th Century Roots of Mexican Nationalism and the Ecole Beaux Arts during the <i>Porfiriato</i> (1876-1882), Part 1 Required Reading: Burian, P.3-11, P. 13-18 Additional Graduate Reading: " <u>Mexico Splendors of Thirty Centuries</u> ," p.487-499. Discussion/Tutorial
Wk 3 26 Jan.	The Architecture of <i>Porfiriato</i> (1882-1910) Part 2: Refugio Reyes and others Required Reading: Burian, P. 18-24 Additional Graduate Reading: " <u>Mexico Splendors of Thirty Centuries</u> ," p.499-507, * <i>Selection of semester project, with approval of instructor.</i> <b>Tatiana Bilbao Lecture and Exhibit in San Antonio time/location TBD</b>
Wk 4 2 Feb.	Post-Revolutionary Culture: The Mexican Mural Movement and the work of Villagrán, O' Gorman, and de la Mora y Palomar Required Reading: Burian, P. 24-25, 30-31, 61-89 Additional Graduate Reading: " <u>Mexico Splendors of Thirty Centuries</u> ," p. 553-558 Discussion/Tutorial
Wk 5 9 Feb.	The Art Deco in Mexico: Obregón Santacilia, Segura, Serrano and Others Required Reading: Burian, Burian, P. 151-161 and P. 163-176 Additional Graduate Reading: Myers, " <u>Mexico's Modern Architecture</u> ," p.45-54
Wk 6 16 Feb.	Del Moral and Pani: The <i>Ciudad Universitaria</i> and the <i>Multifamiliares</i> Housing Projects Required Reading: Burian P. vii, and 91-106

Additional Reading: browse, Adriá, "Mario Pani: La construcción de la modernidad," Cetto, "Modern Architecture in Mexico"  
Discussion/Tutorial

- Wk 7  
23 Feb. The *Ciudad Universitaria* and Stadium: The Local and the Global  
Required Reading: Burian P.91-106 and p. 107-114  
Additional Graduate Reading: TBD
- Wk 8  
2 March Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Abraham Zublodovsky: Nationalist Aspirations and PRI as Patron  
*No Reading for this week's lecture*  
**45 minute midterm exam**
- Wk 9  
9 March Technical Rationalism and Structural Determinism: Félix Candela, Agustín Hernández, and the work of John Lautner in Mexico  
Required Reading: Burian, P. 46-50  
Additional Graduate Reading: TBD  
Discussion/Tutorial  
**Brief Progress Review for Semester Project: 3 minutes each student**
- Wk 10  
16 March **Spring Break, Have a Good, Safe Holiday!**
- Wk 11  
23 March Reinterpreting Vernacular Architecture: Luis Barragán and Ricardo Legorreta  
Required Reading: Ambaz, "The Architecture of Luis Barragán," read introduction and essay by Emilio Ambaz, also read, Attoe, "The Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta," p. 15-22, p. 27-29  
Additional Graduate Reading: TBD  
Discussion/Tutorial
- Wk 12  
30 March Critical Regionalism: Carlos Mijares, Rodolfo Barragán, Antonio Mendez-Vigata  
Required Reading: Burian, Edward, "A Contemporary Response to the Conditions of Place: El Colegio Cervantes de Torreón, Coahuila," in *Texas Architect*, Jan. Feb. 2004 P. 22-23 and p.59.  
Additional Graduate Reading: "6 años de arquitectura en México: 1998-1994," P.182-183 and browse rest of book.  
Discussion/Tutorial
- Wk 13  
6 April Contemporary Architecture in Northern Mexico and Monterrey, NL: Agustín Landa, Alexandre Lenoir, Fernanda Canales, and Emerging Architects in Tijuana, Ana Santos and others  
Required reading, Burian, Edward essay in, "Landa, García, Landa Arquitectos," (also translated into Spanish)  
Additional Graduate Reading: TBD  
Discussion/Tutorial
- Wk 14  
13 April "Super Modernism 1:" Enrique Norten, Alberto Kalach, Issac Broid, Enrique Albin  
Required Reading: introduction, Ingersol and others, "TEN Arquitectos"  
Additional Graduate Reading: read CWA, "Kalach and Alvarez", p. 6-9 and browse rest of book  
**\*Semester project due, Graduate Students will make 5 minute Power-point presentations of their semester projects followed by 10 minute class discussion**
- Week 15  
20 April "Super Modernism 2:" Michel Rojkind, Estudio Carme Pinos, Tatiana Bilbao, and others  
Required Reading: TBD  
Additional Graduate Reading: TBD

## Discussion/Tutorial

Wk 16 The Environmental Crisis of Mexico City and recent Architecture that Mediates  
 27 April this Condition: Working Landscapes and Infrastructure in Mexico City/  
 Summary/Conclusions.  
 Required Reading: Burian essay, *Perspecta: The Yale Architecture Journal* No. 39  
 p.121-135  
 Discussion/Tutorial

**FINAL EXAM: Time and Date as per UTSA Catalog**

**X. Reserve Reading:** Background reading and material for your semester project will be on reserve in the UTSA Downtown Architecture Library. Scarcer books for your semester project may also be found through interlibrary loan with the Benson Latin American Collection at UT Austin and with other institutions.

**General Background**

\*Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries," (the most thorough and complete overview of Mexican art from pre-Columbian to present, beautifully illustrated in full color as one would expect from the catalog of the gigantic traveling exhibition show which originated at the Met. in New York)  
 N 6550 M48 1990

\*Schmidt, H. "The Roots of *Lo Mexicano* : Self and Society in Mexican Thought 1900-1934," Texas A&M University Press, 1978 (survey of the development of nationalistic thought in Mexico) F1210 .S35

\*Smith, Bradley, "Mexico: A History in Art," Doubleday & Co., 1968 (The history of Mexico from preColumbian to present explained with significant works of Mexican art, primarily painting) N6550 .S6 1968b

**Background: Pre-Columbian Mexico**

\*Heyden and Gendrop, "Pre-Columbian Architecture of Mesoamerica," H.N. Abrams, 1975 (the standard work for the era in English) F1219.3a6 h4913 1988

**Background: Colonial Mexico**

Mullen, Robert, "Architecture and its Sculpture in Vice Regal Mexico"

**Books on Modern Mexican Architecture**

Adria, M., "Mexico 90's: A Contemporary Architecture" (best photographic overview of the most avante-garde architecture in Mexico during the decade of the 1990's)

\*Burian, E., "Modernidad y arquitectura en México" (Spanish translation of the textbook for the course....Spanish readers may read this version if they like...)

\*Cetto, M. "Modern Architecture in Mexico," Praeger, 1961 (wonderful photos and thoughtful text of the work of the 50's and 60's) NA755 .C413 1961 )

\*Myers, I.E., "Mexico's Modern Architecture," Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1952 (excellent photos of the most important work of the 40's and 50's) NA755 .M94

**Books on Individual Architects**

\*Attoe, W. ed, "The Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta", (profusely illustrated overview of the the architecture of Mexico's most prominent living architect)

\*Bamford Smith, C. "Builders in the Sun; Five Mexican Architects" (good surveys on contemporaries of Barragán) NA759 .L44 A4 2004

\*Burian, Edward and others, "Landa, García, Landa Arquitectos," (standard work on Northern Mexico's most important contemporary architect) NA759 .L36 L3 2006

\*Heyer, P. "Abraham Zabludovsky," Princeton Architectural Press, 1993 (standard book on Zabludovsky) NA759 .Z23 A4 1993

\*Ingersol and others, "TEN Arquitectos," (survey of the early work of the noted architect) NA759 H47 A4 1998

\*Laviada-Checa, ed. "Legorreta + Legorreta" (standard book on latest work of the partnership NA 759 L44 R53 1997

\*Ricalde, H., "Max Cetto, Vida y obra," NA759.C48 R53 2005

\*Toca Fernandez, A, ed. "Barragán: The Complete Works," (standard book on Barragán in English by Princeton Architectural Press) NA759 B36 A413 1996

**OTHER PERIODICAL REFERENCES NOT ON RESERVE THAT MAY BE USEFUL FOR YOUR SEMESTER PROJECT**

(Note: The following periodicals, while not on reserve, are primary sources for much material, which is otherwise unpublished, and be extremely useful in examining specific architects and projects. Our library is also currently ordering back issues for many of these journals.)

"*Artes de México*" (1964-1980 and c. 1989-present) N7 .A768

(Has been recently republished in 1989 and is one of the finest periodicals on Mexican art and architecture, the essays in the magazine are also translated into English. Beautifully produced, each issue is thematic and many feature architectural overviews of individual cities or critical ideas.)

"*Arquitectura / Mexico*" (1938-c.1998) NA5 .A834

(This was the standard Mexico City based journal for the country and featured most of the best known architects of the time.)

"*Arquine*" (c. 1995-present)

(Today, this is the standard avant-garde journal for contemporary architecture for the country, is of very high graphic quality, and is beautifully produced. Features avante-garde work from Mexico and around the world.)

**XII. Academic Success and the Tomás Rivera Center:**

The TRC provides an array of services to assist student in achieving learning success. The TRC provides training and assistance in such areas as study skills, test taking strategies, note taking skills, etc. The Center also has individual advising and tutoring for some courses. At the moment, tutoring is not available for this course, but the various skills workshops that they run along with individual advising may prove extremely helpful. The Writing Center is available and can review the outline, draft or final draft of your semester project. The TRC is located in the University Center 1.01.02 (far west end of the UC). You can reach them via the web ([www.utsa.edu/trcss](http://www.utsa.edu/trcss)) or by phone (458-4694).

**XIII. Classroom Behavior:** All members of the class are expected to behave with courtesy and respect toward others. Should behavioral disruptions interfere with the business of the classroom and the ability of class members to learn, they may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs in accordance with Section 202 of the UTSA

Student Code of Conduct available at (<http://www.utsa.edu/OSJA/index.cfm>).

Furthermore, this is a very, very small profession. Respect your classmates and their individual differences...if not for altruistic reasons but for the fact that you may need to ask them for a job to support yourself or your family at some point in your life! I try to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in my classroom. Treat each other as brothers and sisters with the respect due members of a family.

- XIV. University Policy on Academic Dishonesty:** Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. See the UT Regent's Rules of Regulation. You can also refer to the UTSA Student Code of Conduct on scholastic dishonesty and disciplinary action. This is available at: <http://www.utsa.edu/OSJA/index.cfm>

- XV. Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank the following individuals and institutions that contributed to the content of, or supported the development of, this course.

**Mexico**

ITESM, Depto. de Arquitectura, Monterrey, NL  
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**USA**

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