

Professor Mary Coffey  
208 Carpenter  
Office Hours: TH 1-2  
(or by appointment)

ARTH 16.1  
MWF: 12:30-1:35  
x-hour: T 1-1:50  
Carpenter 201-C

## **ART HISTORY 16.1 Mexican Muralism**

### **Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction to Mexican Muralism by focusing on the “Three Greats”: Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. We will study major works by each artist through in-class discussion as well as by placing different scholarly interpretations in dialog. Students will learn how to visually analyze and interpret mural art. In addition to considering muralism and its relationship to the Mexican Revolution and the post-revolutionary reconstruction of the state and society, we will also consider class and the politics of labor, gender and the politics of the body, and race and the politics of nationalism in Mexico and the United States in the 1920s and 30s.

### **Required Texts:**

- Desmond Rochfort, *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993. (this will be used as a general resource). In addition to the required texts, supplementary reading are available online through the course Blackboard.

### **Course Requirements:**

- Presence at all scheduled class meetings\*
- Active participation in all in-class discussions
- Timely completion of and active contribution to each phase of term-long research project

\*Please note that I have scheduled some class meetings during the x-hour. These meetings are mandatory and will factor into your attendance grade. Open x-hours may be scheduled if necessary.

**Disability Policy:** Students with learning, physical, or psychiatric disabilities enrolled in this course that may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an office appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Disability Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

### **Course Mechanics**

This course will be run as a lecture-discussion with web-based assignments to be completed outside of regularly scheduled class periods. It is imperative that enrolled students attend class regularly and prepare for discussion by thoroughly reading (or watching, in the case of films) all assigned materials before class. You should come to class ready to enter into conversation with the professor and your peers. Class discussion will provide an opportunity for asking questions about the reading, pursuing ideas collectively, and delving into the unique stylistic, ideological, and iconographic facets of the mural cycle under discussion. Chronic tardiness, excessive absences, or a persistent inability to enter into class discussion—because of lack of preparation or discomfort—will adversely affect your grade. If you are shy or having trouble understanding the assigned readings please meet with me outside of class to discuss ways we can address these difficulties.

- **Attendance and Participation:** 40% of final grade. This grade will be assessed at the end of the term on the basis of both the quantity, and more importantly, the *quality* of your contributions to our in-class discussions.
- **Term-long research project:** 60% of final grade. This grade will be assessed at the end of the term based on the cumulative quality of your contributions to the class wiki. I will provide feedback on your contributions to the wiki throughout the term. You are also expected to respond to the thoughtful feedback of your peers in addition to providing thoughtful feedback of your own. Your grade will take into consideration your individual contributions as well as your ability to work collaboratively with your peers to improve the project as a whole.

### **Guidelines for Wiki Project:**

This term, in addition to our in-class discussions, we will work collectively to produce essays on José Clemente Orozco's Dartmouth mural, *The Epic of American Civilization*, using the blackboard wiki tool. Our focus will be on the digitized preparatory materials that have recently been uploaded to ipads on reserve in the Orozco room. Our goal will be to produce short, but expertly written essays that can be included as part of the digital Orozco project. Each student will be responsible for a set of panels in the mural. You will work with this group of images for the entire term. In addition to working on "your" panel(s) you will also be peer editing and reviewing the contributions of the other members of your group using the wiki "comments" tool. You are expected to respond to the comments from your peers by continually revising your contributions to the wiki. Ideally, we will create a writing community, in which each student in the class contributes to the quality of their peers' work. Comments should always be constructive. Your comments need not be criticism. You can also ask questions or offer insights or ideas that overlap with topics you are working on, etc. Abusive or unconstructive comments will adversely affect your grade. While there are discreet dates on which different components of the wiki assignment are due, I expect students to be continually revising and rethinking their contributions in light of new information and ideas stimulated by our in-class activities. I will be monitoring the wiki throughout the term, tracking student participation and the evolution of your contributions over time. This activity will also inform my assessment of your grade for this component of the course.

NOTE: I reserve the right to modify the parameters of this assignment as the term progresses based on the evolution of our wiki.

### **Wiki Assignment #1: Visual Analysis** Due the week of April 2-6 (maximum word count 200/per panel)

Draft a rich visual analysis of your panel(s) that takes into consideration iconography (subject matter) and formal qualities (composition, light, color, etc.). The purpose of the assignment is to craft a vivid written account of your panel(s) that creates a picture in the reader's mind that conforms to what you see in the work. You should take nothing for granted; never assume your reader sees what you see. Use careful word choice and active language to compel the reader to look again at the image or object. Note: this is not a research assignment. You should work with your own eyes and insights, not the claims or arguments of others.

You are to post your contributions no later than 5pm on Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. You are to post your comments on your peers' contributions no later than 5pm on Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. You are to come to class on Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> having read the entire wiki (and commenting, if compelled, on other sections). We will discuss the wiki contributions and comments in class on Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> as part of our on-site discussion of the Orozco mural.

### **Wiki Assignment #2: Preparatory materials** Due the week of April 23-27 (maximum word count 400/per panel)

You will continue to work with the same panel(s). You will consider all of the preparatory materials related to your panel(s). Return to your original contribution and revise your text to provide a synthetic account of your panel(s) that is now informed by the information you have gleaned from studying Orozco's working process. How did the iconography evolve over time? What choices, eliminations, additions, did Orozco make along the way? How do the preparatory materials help us to better understand his working method, his use of the fresco medium, his evolving ideas about his subject? These are not questions you must answer in your text. Rather they are prompts to help you when considering how to use the preparatory materials to revise your original essay.

You are to post your contributions no later than 5pm on Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. You are to post your comments on your peers' contributions no later than 5pm on Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. You are to come to class on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> having read the entire wiki (and commenting, if compelled, on other sections). We will discuss the wiki contributions and comments in class on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

as part of our discussion of the preparatory materials in Bernstein Study Storage at the Hood Museum.

**Wiki Assignment #3: Defining a Theme** Due the week of May 7-11 (maximum word count 600/ per panel)

Continuing to work with your essay and preparatory materials, you will now identify a theme or set of related themes that tie the works you are considering together and that are illuminated by your work with the preparatory materials. You will conduct library research on this theme and integrate your research into your analysis of the panel(s) with which you are working. This assignment allows you to enhance your original insights by seeking out historical studies, period works, archival documents, or related studies that will help you to more firmly and authoritatively argue for a particular interpretation of the panel(s) for which you are responsible.

You are to post your contributions no later than 5pm on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. You are to post your comments on your peers' contributions no later than 5pm on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. You are to come to class on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> having read the entire wiki (and commenting, if compelled, on other sections). We will discuss the wiki contributions and comments in class on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup> as part of our discussion of the other student work on the Orozco mural.

**Wiki Assignment #4: Comparative Media** Due the week of May 25-30 (maximum word count 800/ per panel)

Continuing to work with your contributions you will locate other works of art or visual culture that can better illuminate your theme and analysis via comparison. This may involve film clips or other kinds of media (i.e. art, prints, newspaper or magazine illustration, advertisement, etc.). You MUST consult with me about your ideas before executing them so that I can help you to establish clear limits and guidelines for this component. The comparative media contributions need to be brief to be effective.

You are to post your contributions no later than 5pm on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. You are to post your comments on your peers' contributions no later than 5pm on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. You are to come to class on Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> having read the entire wiki (and commenting, if compelled, on other sections). We will discuss the wiki contributions and comments in class on Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> on our final day of class.

**Final Wiki Assignment:** Due on June 4 by 11am

For the final assignment you will revise your essay taking into consideration the feedback you have received into a concise, well argued and expertly written essay. You will be sure that any media you include is well integrated into the essay with full captions as well as a well-formatted citation system. This will be the final draft of your essay. It should be formatted as a word document and emailed to me to read and to pass along to the museum staff for inclusion in the Digital Dartmouth project.

You are to post your contributions by 11am on June 4<sup>th</sup> in lieu of a final exam.

**Plagiarism and Proofreading:**

Any material or insights gleaned from another source should be cited in a footnote with a full citation. If you are confused about how to cite properly please consult a style manual (preferably Chicago Manual of Style or MLA). Persistent errors in citation will be treated as plagiarism. See *Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgment* (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>) for Dartmouth's policy on plagiarism. All contributions to the wiki must be carefully proofread for typographical, spelling, and grammatical mistakes. Excessive errors of this type will adversely affect your grade.

## Course Schedule

### **(M) March 26 Introduction**

### **(W) March 28 The Origins of Mexican Muralism**

- Rochfort, chaps. 1 and 2.
- Jean Charlot "The Deus Ex Machina," *The Mexican Mural Renaissance, 1920-1925* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), 82-94.
- Excerpt from José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race* (1925), from *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 15-19.

### **(F) March 30 Class Cancelled**

### **(M) April 2 The First Murals: The National Preparatory School**

- Rochfort, chap. 3, 33-50.
- Jean Charlot, "The Preparatoria School," "Rivera's First Mural," "Orozco: First Murals," and "The Syndicate," in *The Mexican Mural Renaissance*, 107-119, 136-149, 225-240, 241-251.
- "Manifesto of the Union of Mexican Workers, Technicians, Painters and Sculptors," *El Machete* (May 1923), reprinted in Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea, *Inverted Utopias: Avant Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 461.
- Appendix A: "Technique of Fresco Painting," in Laurence Hurlburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 253-256. (please refer to this text throughout the term when considering the different mural techniques used by the "Three Greats")

### **(W) April 4 The Beginning- A Different View (Post wiki assignment #1 by 5pm, post peer reviews by 5pm on Thursday for discussion in class on Friday)**

- Leonard Folgarait, "The System" and "What is a Mural?" *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940: Art of the New Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13-26, 27-32.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** How does Folgarait characterize the "system" of patronage for Mexican muralism? How is his account of the early mural movement different from that of Charlot and Rochfort? What is a mural, according to Folgarait? Does his argument differ from that of Charlot or Rochfort? If so, how?

### **(F) April 6 Orozco at Dartmouth (Meet at Reserve Reading Room)**

- Rochfort, chap. 4, 100-119.
- Read entire brochure on Orozco's *Epic of American Civilization*, available in the Reserve Reading Room.
- José Clemente Orozco, "New World, New Races, and New Art," *Magazine of Fine and Applied Arts* (New York) 4, 1 (1929), reprinted in *¡Orozco! 1883-1949* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), 46.

### **(M) April 9 Rivera at the Ministry of Public Education and Chapingo Agricultural School**

- Rochfort, chap. 3, 50-81.
- Mary Coffey, "All Mexico on a Wall: Diego Rivera's Murals at the Ministry of Public Education," in *Mexican Muralism, A Critical History*, eds. Alejandro Anreus, Leonard Folgarait, Robin Adele Greeley (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming), n.p.

**(T) April 10 x-hour In-class discussion of *Qué Viva México***

- Masha Salazkina, "Eisenstein's *¡Qué Viva México!* "Prologue," Prehistory, Anthropological and Nationalist Discourses," *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein's Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 21-52.
- **Watch Before Class Meets:** Serge Eisenstein's *Que Viva México!*

**(W) April 11 Rivera at the Ministry of Public Education and Chapingo: A Different View**

- Renato González Mello, "Manuel Gamio, Diego Rivera and the Politics of Mexican Anthropology," *RES* 45 (Spring 2004): 161-185.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** Why does González Mello focus on Manuel Gamio when analyzing Diego Rivera's mural at the Ministry of Public Education? How does González Mello's interpretation of Rivera's mural and his relationship to post-revolutionary politics differ from the arguments put forth by Rochfort and Coffey? What kinds of visual evidence does he use to make his case for the Rosicrucian influence on Rivera's iconography?

**(F) April 13 Tour of *Men of Fire* exhibition, meet at Hood Museum of Art**

- Mary K. Coffey, "An 'AMERICAN' Idea': Myth, Indigeneity, and Violence in the Art of Orozco and Pollock," in *Men of Fire: Jose Clemente Orozco and Jackson Pollock* (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, 2012), 21-36.

**(M) April 16 Rivera at the National Palace**

- Rochfort, chap. 4, 83-99.
- Ida Rodríguez-Prampolini, "Rivera's Concept of History," in *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective* (New York, London: Founders Society Detroit Institute of the Arts, Hayward Gallery in association with W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), 131-137.

**(W) April 18 Rivera at the National Palace- A Different View**

- Leonard Folgarait, "Revolution as Ritual: Diego Rivera's National Palace Mural," *Oxford Art Journal* 14:1 (1991): 18-33.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** What does Folgarait mean when he describes the Mexican Revolution as "discourse"? According to Folgarait, how and why does Rivera's mural privilege the discursive over the figurative? How does his interpretation of Rivera's mural, his intentions, and the artist's relationship to his patrons (the Calles regime) differ from that of Rochfort and Prampolini?

**Wednesday, April 18 Required Lecture**

**Michael Leja, Professor of Art History, University of Pennsylvania**

**Talk: "Orozco/Pollock, Pollock/Orozco"**

**5:30 Loew Auditorium, Hood Museum of Art**

**(F) April 20 Meet with Bart Thurber in Orozco Room to discuss Digital Orozco project**

- Review document on the digital Orozco project posted on blackboard.

**(M) April 23 Orozco at Pomona College**

- Rochfort, chap. 4, 90.
- David Scott, "Orozco's *Prometheus*: Summation, Transition, Innovation," in *José Clemente Orozco Prometheus*, ed. Marjorie L. Harth (Claremont: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2001), 13-26.
- Renato González Mello, "Mysticism, Revolution, Millennium, Painting," in *José Clemente Orozco Prometheus*, 47-62.

**(W) April 25 Orozco at Pomona College- A Different View (Post wiki assignment #2 by 5pm, post peer reviews by 5pm on Thursday for discussion on Friday)**

- Karen Cordero Reiman, "Prometheus Unraveled: Readings of and from the Body: Orozco's Pomona College Mural (1930)," in *José Clemente Orozco in the United States, 1927-1934*, eds. Renato González Mello and Diane Millotes (Hanover: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 98-117.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** How does Cordero Reiman's emphasis on the body differ from Scott's and González Mello's discussion of Orozco's *Prometheus*? Consider her discussion of the layering of sources in the *Prometheus* mural. How can we see this strategy at work in the Dartmouth mural as well?

**Wednesday, April 25 Required Screening**

**Film: *Quetzalcoatl*, followed by discussion**

**7 pm, Loew Auditorium, Hood Museum of Art**

**(F) April 27 Meet at Hood Museum to look at Orozco preparatory materials**

**(M) April 30 Rivera and Siqueiros in California**

- Rochfort, chap. 5, 121-126 and 145-150.
- Laurance Hurlburt, "California, 1930-31: The Worker in the Context of Modern Industry," "California School of Fine Arts," and "Los Angeles, 1932: Technical Innovation at the Service of Radical Politics," *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*, 98-109, 113-122, and 205-216.
- Shifra M. Goldman, "Siqueiros and Three Early Murals in Los Angeles," *Art Journal* 33:4 (Summer 1974): 321-327.

**(W) May 2 Rivera in Detroit**

- Rochfort, chap. 5, 126-130.
- Max Kozloff, "The Rivera Frescoes of Modern Industry at the Detroit Institute of Arts: Proletarian Art Under Capitalist Patronage," in *Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics*, eds. Henry A. Millon and Linda Nochlin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), 216-229.
- Hurlburt, "The Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1932-33: The Contemporary Industrial Environment of Detroit," *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*, 127-158.

**(F) May 4 Meet at Hood Museum of Art to discuss Orozco drawings**

- Ana Indyck, "Made for the USA: Orozco's *Horrores de la Revolución*", *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, XXIII: 079 (otoño 2001), 153-164.

**(M) May 7 Rivera in Detroit- A Different View**

- Anthony W. Lee, "Workers and Painters: Social Realism and Race in Diego Rivera's Detroit Murals," in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, eds. Alejandro Anreus, Diana Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 201-222.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** How does Lee's interpretation of Rivera's depiction of race relations within Ford's factory differ from the accounts of the mural offered by Kozloff and Hurlburt? What aspects of Ford's enterprise does each author focus on to establish the context for his argument?

**(W) May 9 Rivera at Rockefeller Center (post wiki assignment #3 by 5pm, post peer reviews by 5pm on Thursday for discussion on Friday)**

- Rochfort, chap. 5, 130-137.
- Hurlburt, "Rockefeller Center, 1933," and "The New Worker's School, 1933," *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*, 159-193.
- Tim Robbins, "Introduction: The Movie and the Moment," *The Cradle Will Rock: The Movie and The Moment* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2000), 1-4.
- **Watch before class meets:** Tim Robbins' *The Cradle Will Rock*

**(F) May 11 Meet at Orozco Room to discuss student work on mural**

- Mary Cooper, "New England as America: José Clemente Orozco's 'Anglo-America,'" *The Collegiate Journal of Art*, vol. 4 (Spring 2008): 82-96.
- Nichola Tucker, "The Epic of American Civilization as Performative Epic: Student Viewers as Heroes and the Re-Enactment of History," *The Collegiate Journal of Art*, vol. 4 (Spring 2008): 97-110.

**(M) May 14 Rivera at Rockefeller Center- A Different View**

- Robert Linsley, "Utopia Will Not Be Televised: Rivera at Rockefeller Center," *Oxford Art Journal* 17:2 (1994): 48-62.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** Linsley focus on the right half of Rivera's program to offer a different reading of the political message in Rivera's doomed mural. Compare Linsley's argument with those put forth by Rochfort, Hurlburt, and Robbins. How does his reading of the mural controversy differ from theirs? What contextual evidence—here consider both visual and textual source material-- does he use to support his interpretation?

**(W) May 16 Orozco at the Palace of Fine Arts**

- Rochfort, chap. 5, 137-145.
- Mary K. Coffey, "Angels and Prostitutes" José Clemente Orozco's *Catharsis* and the Politics of Female Allegory in 1930s Mexico," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 4:2 (2004): 1-33.

**(F) May 18 Meet at Thayer Hall to discuss Hovey Murals**

- Mary K. Coffey, "The 'Hovey Murals' and the 'Greening' of Orozco's *Epic of American Civilization*," in *The Hovey Murals at Dartmouth College*, ed. Brian P. Kennedy (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art; London: University Press of New England, 2011), 79-106.

**(M) May 21 Orozco at MoMA**

- James Oles, "Orozco at War: Context and Fragment in *Dive Bomber and Tank* (1940)," in *Orozco in the United States*, 186-205.
- "Orozco Explains," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 7, 4 (August 1940): 2-12, reprinted in *Orozco in the United States*, Appendix.

**(T) May 22 x-hour Discuss Olivier Debroyse's *Un Banquet a Tetlepayac***

- Masha Salazkina, "Going All the Way" "Fiesta" and "Maguay," *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein's Mexico*, 90-138.
- **Watch before class meets:** Olivier Debroyse's *Un Banquet a Tetlepayac*
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**(W) May 23 Siqueiros at the Electricians Syndicate**

- Rochfort, chap. 5, 150-159.
- Mari Carmen Ramírez, "The Masses Are the Matrix: Theory and Practice of the Cinematographic Mural in Siqueiros," in *Portrait of a Decade, 1930-1940* (Mexico, DF: INBA, 1997), 68-95.

**(F) May 25 Siqueiros at the Electricians Syndicate- A Different View (post wiki assignment #4 by 5pm, post peer reviews by 5pm on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> for discussion on Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>)**

- Jennifer Jolly, "Art of the Collective: David Alfaro Siqueiros, Josep Renau and their Collaboration at the Mexican Electricians' Syndicate," *The Oxford Art Journal* 31:1 (2008): 129-151.

**Questions for in-class discussion:** Jolly offers a different interpretation of Siqueiros as a Marxist mural artist. What does Jolly argue about Siqueiros' theoretical commitment to "collective" art versus his practice as a "collective" artist? And how does this effect her interpretation of the mural and Siqueiros' role in its conception and execution? How does Jolly's interpretation differ from Rochfort or Ramírez's argument about Siqueiros' "cinematographic" mural art?

**(M) May 28- Memorial Day, no class**

**(W) May 30 Final discussion of work, fourth paper due**

**(F) June 4 Final revisions to wiki essay due. Email word doc to Professor Coffey no later than 11am.**