

History of Science 140
Harvard University
Spring, 2017

Public Health on the Border: Race, Politics, and Health in Modern Mexico

Professor: Gabriela Soto Laveaga, Ph.D.
Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00-10:59 am
Science Center 469

Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 pm
and By Appointment, Science Center 461
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This course examines how the 1848 creation of the U.S.-Mexico border came to define not just the border region but the relationship between two nations. In terms of disease prevention both countries have historically worked cooperatively and usually successfully. Yet public health concerns have often been used to justify troubling actions on both sides of the international border; such as the U.S. practice of spraying some border crossers with DDT in the 1950s. The course relies on historical case studies to demonstrate how health, hygiene, and disease policy often take on a different tone and mission when discussing the border. We will also discuss current news such as the consequences of drug cartel violence (more than 100,000 Mexicans killed in one decade) as emergencies with significant public health repercussions.

The course is divided into three (3) modules:

- I. Historical background that situates the class, and examines Mexico's history from the 1830s-1920s
- II. Case studies pertaining to Mexicans/Mexican-Americans along the border region and in the United States from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s
- III. Contemporary ethnographies of migrant health in the U.S

Given our country's current focus on the U.S.-Mexico border please be advised that, while unlikely, some weekly topics might be altered slightly (a short reading substituted or added, for example) so we can be conversant with the daily news.

After this course students will be able to think critically about a region that is often misrepresented as being criminal, corrupt, and populated by "illegals" seeking to cross into our country. In understanding the historical origins of the border this class shows that without Mexico, specifically without the creation of the 1848 border, there would not be a United States as we understand it today.

Course Requirements:

Books

- I. De León, Jason. *Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2015.
- II. Holmes, Seth. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2013.
- III. Garcia, Angela. *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2010.
- IV. Articles will be posted on Canvas or will be clearly cited so students may download them directly or visit specific websites.

Recommended texts- (Especially for students who have no previous class or personal experience with Mexico):

Meyer, Michael and Bill Beezley. *The Oxford History of Mexico*

Meyer, Michael, et al. *The Course of Mexican History*

Krauze, Enrique. *Mexico: Biography of Power, A History of Modern Mexico, 1810-1996*

Film: My Family, 1995

Course Policies:

Assignments & Grading:

Discussion section-

Teaching Fellow (TF): Angel Rodriguez, History of Science doctoral candidate.

A section meeting will be held weekly. Students will have the opportunity to discuss general and module readings more deeply, to think about the reading's relevance and applicability in their projects, and to discuss and review the progress of their work.

Grades & Evaluations:

Essay: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 20%

Oral history: 15%

Film Analysis: 15%

Participation/Attendance: 10%

Assignments: All written assignments will be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 font. Students must cite at least 4 sources (books and articles) **and** at least one website. Submit written assignments through **Canvas by 10AM** on the due date. Your TF will share any specific instructions about preference for

submission format. Papers submitted after 10AM will be marked late unless you have a medical note or one from your resident dean. Late papers will be marked down by one step each day (e.g. B+ to B) for the first six days. If papers are more than one week late, students will need to meet with their TF or Professor Soto Laveaga to discuss the situation. Your TF will return papers with comments within one week so that you have time to consider their feedback before proceeding with the next assignment.

Academic Integrity and Collaboration

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For the writing assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of topic and for advice about picking useful sources. However, you should ensure that any written work which you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing (and your writing alone), and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc., that have helped you with your work. You should also acknowledge anyone who provided substantial help with your research or writing (e.g., feedback on drafts from colleagues, etc.). For help with citation usage and formatting, please consult the Harvard Guide to Using Sources, which is used in Freshman Expos and which can be found online at: <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>

Honor Code

Students are expected to adhere to the values and practices of the Harvard College Honor Code in all of their work: “Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.”

Office Hours: If you choose to come to my office hours, please come prepared with questions you wish answered or topics you want to discuss. If you cannot make my office hours I am willing to try to arrange another meeting time. Please contact me at: gsotolaveaga@fas.harvard.edu

Emails: I try to respond to e-mails as soon as possible but I may be out of the state/country at a conference and may not get back to you as swiftly as you wish. If 48 hours have passed and I do not respond, please e-mail me again to make sure I received your initial message.

Make-up exams: There will be no exam make-ups. Unless there is a documented act of the whims of nature, family tragedy, or a note from a certified M.D., students *must* be present during exam times. I do not accept notes from mothers, fathers, or significant

others as proper excuses for a no-show to an exam or for a late paper. *If you foresee scheduling conflicts, please see me or your TF before they arise.*

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required in all class and section meetings. Absence without excuse or permission will affect the grade. Participation is a key component of the class and regular informed contributions in lecture and section are necessary.

Module I. – Historical Background

Week 1 –(January 24 & 26)

The emergence of the Border. The current border emerges from a war that Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, and thinkers of the time termed an unjust war. This week we examine why the contours of our southern border were drawn in 1848 and 1853.

Major point: Historical narratives and national myths are not free of politics, especially when we speak about the border.

Terms:

American Invasion/Mexican-American War 1846-48; Texas, The Alamo; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; James Polk campaign; Spot Resolution; Gadsden Purchase, Manifest Destiny

Readings:

- 1) *Independent Indians and the Mexican American War* by Brian Delay
http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/112.1/pdf/delay_ahr112.1.pdf
- 2) Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo – on website pgs 922 - 941
<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage>
- 3) President Polk's Address to Congress, May 11, 1846 <http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/documents/polk.htm>
- 4) March 18, 1846 Proclamation by Gen. Francisco Mejia
<http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/documents/mejia.htm>
- 5) Ulysses S. Grant's Memoirs, Preface and Chapter 3, especially paragraphs 9-12 (Army Life—Causes of the Mexican War—Camp Salubrity)
<http://www.bartleby.com/1011/3.html>

January 24 – What is the role of a Border? How do we create a border? Stats on the U.S.-Mexico Border.

January 26 - Why did Texas secede from Mexico? Why did the U.S. invade Mexico? Why was the border drawn at the Rio Grande?

WEEK 2 – How does one defend a border in the 19th Century? Who do you defend yourself from? Invasions altered Mexico's map. The new border takes on new political and economic importance

Terms: Porfiriato, Maximilian, The crisis of Church and State (and how it affected healthcare)

January 31 – Foreign invasions of France, England, and Spain: what does this mean for the provision of healthcare, education, building of institutions?

February 2 – What is happening in the new border region? What does the border look like at this time?

WEEK 3 – How does cleanliness, criminality, public health and race become intertwined in Porfirio Diaz's (1876-1910) Mexico? What does that mean for foreigners?

Feb 7 – Public health projects in Mexico during the Porfiriato, origins and examples.

Feb 9 - Public health concerns about foreigners and immigrants. The case of the Chinese in Mexico.

Readings:

1) Kennett Cott, "Mexican Diplomacy and the Chinese Issue, 1876-1910"

Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Feb., 1987), pp. 63-85

2) Inspection Service, Mexican Border. Precautions against Yellow Fever at Eagle Pass

Public Health Reports (1896-1970), Vol. 18, No. 42 (Oct. 16, 1903), pp. 1763-1764

3) Kelly Lytle Hernandez, "Mexican Immigration to the United States," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 23, No. 4, North American Migrations (Oct., 2009), pp. 25-29

4) Alexandra Minna Stern, "Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930"

[The Hispanic American Historical Review](#) Vol. 79, No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 41-81

WEEK 4 – Revolution (1910 – 1917) – the cost of poverty, violence and oppression.

Feb 14 – American interests and the socio-political roots of the Mexican Revolution.

Feb 16 – Impact of the Revolution on the Border.

Readings:

1) Abel EK, "From exclusion to expulsion: Mexicans and tuberculosis in Los Angeles, 1914-1940," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2003 Winter; 77(4):823-49.

2) Abel EK, "Only the best class of immigration": public health policy toward Mexicans and Filipinos in Los Angeles, 1910-1940. *American Journal of Public Health*, June 2004, 94(6): 932-9.

3) Mark Overmeyer-Velázquez, "Good Neighbors and White Mexicans: Constructing Race and Nation on the Mexico-U.S. Border" *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Fall 2013), pp. 5-34

WEEK 5 –Aftermath of Revolution and its impact on the provision of healthcare in Mexico. – Reform in medical schools.

Feb 21 – Socialized medicine in Mexico, Social service for medical students

Feb 23 – Science in Mexico – Case of barbasco, Steroid hormones

1) Molina, Natalia. [Am J Public Health](#). 2011 June; 101(6): 1024–1031. Borders, Laborers, and Racialized Medicalization Mexican Immigration and US Public Health Practices in the 20th Century

2) Gudiño, María Rosa, *Disney Health Films in Mexico*, Oxford University Press Research Encyclopedias.

<http://latinamericanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-318>

3) Soto Laveaga, Gabriela, “Seeing the Countryside Through Medical Eyes: social service reports in the making of a sickly nation. *Endeavour*. March 2013.

II.- MODULE 2 – Case Studies in Public Health

WEEK 6 – Labor and health – Braceros

World War II in Mexico; The Bracero Program; Zoot Suit riots; The Mexican Miracle.

Feb 28 – Increased racial violence against Mexicans during WW II, Zoot Suits

March 2 – Bracero Program

Readings:

1) Official Bracero Agreement

2) Richard Griswold del Castillo, The Los Angeles "Zoot Suit Riots" Revisited: Mexican and Latin American Perspectives

Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer, 2000): 367-391

3) Cueto, Marcos. “Appropriation and Resistance: Local Responses to Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955-1970,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Mexico (Aug., 2005), pp. 533-559.

4) Romero Alvarez, Humberto. Health without boundaries: notes for the history of the United States-Mexico Border Public Health Association, on the celebration of

5) United States-Mexico Border Public Health Association: Conference Report 1 Public Health Reports (1896-1970), Vol. 77, No. 2 (Feb., 1962), pp. 140-146.

WEEK 7 – Mexican Laborers, increased militarization of the Border cont.

March 7 – **Midterm**

March 9 – 1970s economic crisis in Mexico and the shift in migration

Readings:

- 1) Begin Reading *Open Graves*, Intro.Part I, section of Part II (1-106)

WEEK 8 - SPRING BREAK March 11-19, 2017

WEEK 9 - Forced Sterilization of Mexican Women in 1975 Los Angeles

March 21 – Need to Reschedule Class

March 23 - **Watch “No Mas Bebés”**

Readings:

- 1) Stern, Alexandra. Sterilized in the name of public health: race, immigration, and reproductive control in modern California. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2003 Winter;77(4):823-49.
- 2) Myla Vicenti Carpio, “The Lost Generation: American Indian Women and Sterilization Abuse,” *Social Justice* Vol. 31, No. 4 (98), Native Women and State Violence (2004), pp. 40-53
- 3) Optional: take a look at this website: <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/health-info/forced-sterilization/>
- 4) Continue Reading *Open Graves*, (107 – 219)

Week 10 - Maquiladoras: origins, number and environmental health

March 28 – Surge of maquiladoras

March 30 – Urbanization of border towns and their impact

Readings:

- 1) George Sanchez, selections from his book *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*: 1) *Across the Dividing Line* 2) *Newcomers in the City of Angels* 3) *Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant*: pgs 38-106
- 2) Manuel Navarrete, “Garment Maquiladoras in Rural Yucatán: An Environmental Tale,” *Journal of Latin American Geography* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2008), pp. 105-132

Optional: J. Manuel Navarrete and Fernando Aragón-Durand, Garment Maquiladoras in the South: A Closer Look at the Mayan Maquiladora Workforce *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 38, No. 5, (September 2011), pp. 93-109

WEEK 11 –1980s – Cocaine, drugs, and drug enforcement

April 4 – Drug cartels, DEA, and the border in the 1980s

April 6 – Cartel violence after 2006

Readings:

1) *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*, entire book this week.

2) “Why Cartels Are Killing Mexico’s Mayors,” NY Times January 15, 2016

3) “U.S. Drug Habit Helps Finance Mexican Cartels,” Associated Press May 26, 2009.

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/30946730/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/us-drug-habits-help-finance-mexican-cartels/#.WKyaWhDFxqM

Suggested if you are interested in a timeline: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/world/americas/mexico-drug-war-fast-facts/>

Film Analysis of “No Mas Bebés” DUE March 28, 2017

III.- Module 3 –Ethnographies of Health

WEEK 12 – Health and Mexican immigrants in the USA

April 11, April 13

Readings:

1) Selection from Montoya, Michael.. *Making the Mexican Diabetic: Race Science and the Genetics of Inequality*, Chapter 2: Genes and Disease on the U.S.-Mexican Border

2) Robert Kaestner, Jay A. Pearson, Danya Keene and Arline T. Geronimus, “Stress, Allostatic Load, and Health of Mexican Immigrants,” *Social Science Quarterly* Vol. 90, No. 5, Special Issue: on Health Policy and Healthy Populations (December 2009), pp. 1089-1111

WEEK 13 – Race and Citizenship in a contested region: Whiteness, Brownness and the Border

April 18, April 20 – 1990s new immigrants new tensions

Readings:

1) Ortiz, Vilma and Edward Telles. “Racial Identity and Racial Treatment of Mexican Americans,” *Race Soc Probl.* 2012 Apr; 4(1)

2) Accents (Puerto Rican but can still apply to those with Mexican Spanish accents)
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/poet-beautifully-describes-why-spanish-accents-are-so-special_us_565c926ae4b079b2818b111e

3) Anzaldúa, Gloria. “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

Oral History Deadline April 20, 2017

WEEK 14 – Undocumented field workers - Course Wrap Up. The 2017 Border: Continuity and Change

Readings:

- 1) *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* – entire book
- 2) Wallace, Steven P., Carolyn Mendez-Luck and Xóchitl Castañeda
“Heading South: Why Mexican Immigrants in California Seek Health Services in Mexico” in *Medical Care*, Vol. 47, No. 6 (Jun., 2009), pp. 662-669
- 3) “Migrating North, but to Mexico, Not the U.S.” NY Times, Feb 12, 2017.

Essay Deadline – April 26, 2017

Reading Period – April 27 – May 3, 2017

Instructions for Essay, Oral History project and “No Mas Bebés” film

ESSAY – Please select **one** of the below options for your final paper essay.

I.- Select a current newspaper article written between October 2016 to April 2017 on any topic of interest to you but pertaining to the border, Mexico, Mexicans, or border health. Your essay will be an historical analysis of the origins of the present-day article. You must nuance present-day news reporting/commentary with primary and secondary sources.

After researching the news item’s history you should be able to respond:

- How accurate (historically factual) is the article?
- What needed to be changed or elaborated to make it a better news piece?
- How did historical knowledge specifically (give concrete examples) aid your understanding of the news?

Example: You can take an article on Mexican assembly plants and U.S. politics in multiple directions.¹ Further examine 1) the long history of foreign investments in Mexico 2) the background that led to the creation of assembly plants in Mexico 3) labor relations 4) environmental impact of foreign assembly plants in Mexico or 5) the health impact of assembly plants on workers or neighboring communities, etc.

II.- In Harvard’s archives locate a primary source (or sources) pertaining to Mexico, Mexicans, the border and public health, or U.S.-Mexico relations. Use these sources to develop a research question (come speak with Professor Soto Laveaga) that uses the archival material as the pivot to your research. This option entails a bit more research

¹ “Donald Trump Is Threatening to Slap a 35% Border Tax On BMWs Built In Mexico,” *Reuters*, Jan. 16, 2017

legwork and the use of archival material but these skills (ability to find information and construct a narrative from it) have multiple applications in the real world.

All essays will be 7-10 typed pages, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 font. Students must cite at least 4 sources (books and articles) **and** at least one website. Submit written assignments through **Canvas by 10AM on April 26, 2017.**

ORAL HISTORY - Due April 20, 2017

Oral history with a Mexican citizen, Mexican-American, or Latino immigrant. Length of what you turn in will vary depending on how long you speak with the person, if the person is chatty, etc. but minimum you should have 3-4 pages.

During an oral history one person interviews another and asks about a specific episode or time period in the interviewee's life. The interviewer then takes the responses and creates a short narrative (**not** an exact transcript) using the point of view of the interviewee. The final narrative should convey the voice of the interviewee.

Throughout this course you have learned of some socio-economic and political factors pushing Mexicans to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. To gain insight into the lives of Mexican and Latino immigrants in the United States each student will interview one person, a first, second or third generation immigrant from Mexico (if not available to you then someone from the Caribbean and South America).

The person may be a peer, a friend, family member, or acquaintance but they should have memories of their arrival to the United States.

You must obtain oral or written consent from the person being interviewed. If you are recording the interview you can request this by stating something along the lines: "I STATE YOUR NAME am an undergraduate student at Harvard taking a course on Mexico, the Border, and Public Health. As part of the course requirements I have to conduct an oral history of someone from Mexico. This information will only be seen by my professor and TF. If you feel more comfortable I can use a pseudonym instead of your name. You can ask me to stop the questions at any time. You can also request not to have certain stories repeated either in writing or in oral form. I will respect your wishes. I NAME OF INTERVIEWEE give permission." If you chose to record the interview you must obtain explicit consent from the interviewee that he/she agrees to be recorded.

Objectives:

- Determine to what extent Latino lives are fairly represented in the media
- Provide a first-hand engagement that will allow a new, more informed perspective regarding immigration
- Learn to conduct a basic interview and write up an oral history experience

Remember that though you are telling the person's story in narrative form remember to contextualize certain historical events. You may wish to start your oral history by giving key information (name, gender, place of birth, age) about the person in a short paragraph.

Many of the below questions are borrowed from a Dartmouth Oral History project **they do not have to be questions you ask. You can add/delete, create new ones.**

Guiding Questions for Oral History Interview

- What country are you originally from?
- Why did you leave this country?
- When did you leave? How old were at that time?
- * What did you do in your country before you moved here?
- What were the conditions in the country when you left?
- How did you prepare for your trip here?
- Who came with you when you emigrated? Who did you leave behind? What did you leave behind?
- How did you get here? Did you stay somewhere else before arriving here?
- Why did you choose the United States? Why not some other country?
- Who decided you would come here? Did you want to leave?
- Where did you first settle when you came to this country?
- * Did you know English when you came here? What other languages did you speak?
- * How did others in your home country treat you when they knew you were leaving?
- What changes in lifestyle did you make when you came here?
- What was your first impression of the United States? Has this initial impression changed over time?
- What are some of the differences/similarities you've noticed in the cultures here and in your home country?
- What were your hopes for yourself (and/or your family) when you came here? Have you realized these hopes?
- How were you treated when you first arrived in the United States? How are you treated now?
- Were your expectations of America met? Was your idea of America the same as the reality?

How often did you see a doctor in your home country?

Did you have access to healthcare in your community of origin? What type of care? How has access to healthcare changed now that you are in the USA?

Is there a difference in how you feel in this country after the 2016 election? What has changed, if anything?

FILM ANALYSIS

600 word, single space analysis of of "No Mas Bebés" that places the film in a longer and broader historical perspective. **DUE March 28, 2017**