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Values Statement
Lehman College is committed to providing the highest quality education in a caring and supportive environment where respect, integrity, inquiry, creativity, and diversity contribute to individual achievement and the transformation of lives and communities.

Services for Students with Disabilities: The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students can request services by contacting the Office of Student Disability Services located in Shuster Hall, Room 238. Students should be prepared to discuss the nature of the disability, the impact on learning, and the accommodations needed to help you meet your academic goals. Please contact (718) 960-8441 to schedule an appointment.

Course title LEH353 MEXICAN MURALISM (3 credits)
Course Number- OA2A
Dates: June 1 - 24
Times: Online
Commitment: 1 to 2 hours daily

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Prerequisites
60 credits

Co-requisites

I. Course Overview

i. Art and its place within the Twentieth Century: Europe, North America and Mexico

The twentieth century (1900) was to be the “Modern Century,” for great developments occurring so rapidly in every sphere —science, technology, medicine, psychology, architecture, invention— would transform the human condition. The century quickly delivered its wonders (the internal combustion engine, X-rays, powered flight), having an impact on the arts: former ideas of reality and representation[1] were questioned. Paris was the laboratory of ideas in the arts; it was the city where manifestos, wild exhibitions and public

[1] Since this course deals with art (mural painting), we should think about the role art plays in our lives: do we simply express through art -whatever its manifestation may be (writing, painting, singing, dancing)- our emotions? At the beginning of the century art -and its intention- was defined by many *isms*: cubism, futurism, abstractionism, muralism.

outrages could only occur. The modern century, however, would later experience the collapse of European empires, Revolutions and World Wars[2].

Barbara Haskell has observed the following about the United States:

> [The country] entered the twentieth century with a youthful confidence about its place in the world. American technological ingenuity and manufacturing efficiency had made the country the world's largest industrial power and showcase of electricity and steel production. In no other nation were cities so dazzling illuminated or so assertively vertical; nowhere else was the revolution in communications and transportation so pervasive. Unparalleled economic prosperity among the wealthy elite had given a handful of Americans the highest standard of living in the world.
>
> At the same time, the nation assumed a more global and imperialist outlook with its victory in the Spanish-American War (1898) and the acquisition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii, and the Philippines.[3]

North American artists certainly reflected this prosperous reality; the nation was indeed in the age of confidence.

Some Latin American countries at the beginning of the twentieth century looked forward to comfortable futures based on continuing primary exporting. But this "prosperous future" would not last long; in the capitals of some of the most prosperous countries (Argentina, Mexico, Chile) a labor organization soon emerged, creating a class conflict. Thus, Latin America experienced its first social revolution: the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920).

ii. The Mexican Revolution and a revolutionary art: mural painting (Mexican muralism)

The Mexican Revolution began with the overthrow of the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz (1830-1915). Diaz had ruled the country continuously since 1877; during this period Mexico experienced a steady economic development, moving towards modernization. But the only beneficiaries of this "economic development" had been the *creoles*[4] (white Mexicans) and the foreign investors whom Diaz had drawn into the country. Although Diaz was

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[2] That is, World War I (1914-1918) and WW II (1939-1945). Some European empires (in Austro-Hungary, in Russia and in Germany) collapsed or experienced a revolution.

[3] Taken from her book, *The American Century: Art and Culture 1900-1950*.

[4] That is a descendant of Spanish or other European settlers.

himself a *mestizo*[5], the peasant[6] community gained little from his regime. The peasant and the middle-class population outside this economic growth finally realized that they also wanted their share.

Following a decade of bloodshed that left over one million dead, the new government of Alvaro Obregón faced a massive challenge: how to piece together a broken Mexico where most of the population was illiterate. To address this, minister of education José Vasconcelos commissioned the muralists –Diego Rivera (1886-1957), José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949) and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974) —to paint on public buildings the just experience of the Revolution. And so ordinary walls became visual textbooks for the illiterate.

Furthermore, the Revolution was to recover the heritage of the Aztecs and the Maya[7]; the true Mexican identity would be accomplished from the fusion of Indian and Spanish traditions: every person would deserve a dignified place in the emerging Mexico.

Classroom Design

We'll start with short readings that will help us understand Mexico's history and political system. Then we'll study the work of the Mexican muralists. For our study we are going to be using two methods: Description and Criticism. Description means looking at the murals and paying attention to color, style and themes. Criticism means taking this descriptive process to a higher level; if these murals have survived through time, it is because they still hold some value for the public. And we must identify that value! Some of our articles deal with these two methods. Through your writing assignments you will express and share with your classmates your point of view on the topics discussed. Your final essay will consist of a topic relevant to what we have discussed throughout the semester.

The space of our course is Brightspace. To get the highest grade possible in this course (**A**), you must comply with the following requirements: do all the reading, complete all assigned coursework on time and submit the final essay. This is an asynchronous course (online course), which means that you must check our course on a regular basis. Reading the articles and preparing your comments take time, so I suggest dedicating at least an hour and a half daily to the course. A computer and an Internet connection are your responsibility to access our course.

Course Learning objectives

Students will be able to:

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[5] That is a person of mixed race. In this case, Diaz was the offspring of a Spaniard and an American Indian.

[6] A peasant is a poor farmer of low social status who owns or rents a small piece of land for cultivation. In Mexico when one speaks of a peasant, one often refers to an indigenous person (an American Indian).

[7] Aztecs and Mayas were the native Indians. They comprised Mexico's population before and during the Spanish arrival.

- Tell what sparked the Mexican Revolution
- Identify the key figures of the Mexican Revolution
- Critically evaluate Mexican muralism as a tool for public education, state-building, and national identity (*Mexicanidad*)

Evaluation

- 12 Assignments (each one worth 5 points) in the form of Discussions 60%
- Final Essay 40% (final due June 28)

Grading scale

93 – 100 A	87 – 89 B+	77 – 79 C+	69-67 D+
92 – 90 A-	83 – 86 B	73 – 76 C	60-66 D
	80 – 82 B-	70-72 C-	59- F

Course Material

The reading for this class consists of articles (very interesting and short) uploaded on Brightspace. This is our (tentative) reading list:

1. John S. Brushwood, "A Note on Mexican History"
2. James Creelman Interview of Porfirio Diaz, 1908
3. Edwin Williamson, "Mexico: Revolution and Stability"
4. John Womack, "Diaz Elects a Governor"
5. H. Porter Abbott, "Narrative and Life"
6. Sam A Lewisohn, "Mexican Murals and Diego Rivera"
7. Viano, "An Introduction to the Murals"
8. Viano, "Description and Criticism of three murals by Rivera"
9. Hutton, "Roots and Meanings of Orozco's Zapata"
10. Mirkin, "Aurora Reyes: The First Female Muralist in Mexico"

Course Outline (tentative) **Due dates**

Unit 1: Pre-Revolutionary Mexico

Assignment 1- Course Impression: Our syllabus and "A Note on Mexican History" (Jun. 2)

Unit 2: The Outbreak of the Revolution & the Revolutionary Period

Assignment 2: James Creelman Interview of Porfirio Diaz, 1908 (Jun. 4)

Assignment 3: Williamson, “Mexico: Revolution and Stability”
(Jun. 6)

Assignment 4: Womack, “Diaz Elects a Governor”
(Jun. 8)

Unit 3: Aesthetic Approaches to Art

Assignment 5: Abbott, “Narrative and Life”
(Jun. 10)

Assignment 6: A Painting Exercise: Bruegel’s “Hunters in the Snow’
(Jun. 12)

Unit 4: The Legacy of the Revolution: The Mexican Muralists

Assignment 7: Sam Lewisohn, “Mexican Murals and Diego Rivera”
(Jun. 14)

Assignment 8: “An Introduction to the Murals” (Jun. 16)

Assignment 9: “Description and Criticism of Three Murals by Rivera”
(Jun. 18)

Assignment 10: Hutton, “Roots and Meanings of Orozco’s Zapata”
(Jun. 20)

Assignment 11: Some murals by Orozco and Siqueiros
(Jun. 22)

Assignment 12: “Aurora Reyes: The First Female Muralist in Mexico”
(Jun. 24)

Boilerplate Lehman Online Attendance Policy

Online students are subject to the same attendance policy and procedures as traditional students and instructors are required to record attendance to certify eligibility for financial aid. Please see the “Attendance Policy and Procedures” section of the Lehman Student Handbook. Individual instructors will often weigh online attendance and participation in determining grades. It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain the effect attendance may have on the grade in this course. However, participation will be defined in a different manner.

Student attendance in online courses is defined as active participation in the course as described in the individual course

syllabus. Online courses will, at a minimum, have weekly expectations for student participation, which can be documented by any or all of the following methods:

- Timely submission of assignments through the discussion board
- Comments must be relevant to our course subject and reading material
- Communication with the instructor

In order to maximize the learning experience for all, participants will be asked to:

- Read articles and materials actively and be prepared to discuss in class
- Contribute to small group discussions
- Complete all assignments on time

Course policies

Late posts are not allowed. You already have the due date for our weekly assignments, so there is no need to submit your comments late. **If you need a time extension for submitting the final paper, you must make a request for one before the proposal/paper/project(s) are due.** Instructor will not grant an extension requests made even a short time after the due date. We may grant a time extension of reasonable length if: (1) you have shown through prior contact with us during the course that you have been working on the proposal/paper/project(s) and are making progress; and (2) you make the request prior to the time the proposal/project is due.

Lehman Online Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

The most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is taking or giving help on a test: for example, using unauthorized books, papers, or notes during an examination; or procuring, distributing, or using unauthorized copies of examination. Plagiarism means the failure to give credit for the source of another's words or ideas, or—as in the use of borrowed or purchased papers—passing off another person's work as one's own.

<u>Technology and Brightspace Issues</u>

Brightspace Online Preventive Measures for Downtime and/or Information Loss

Brightspace is our new platform; though unusual and short-lived, we may experience unscheduled down time. There is no CUNY or Lehman College policy to restore courses in which all or part of the content is deleted, damaged or otherwise becomes inaccessible. Therefore,

students (as all users) are strongly urged to keep a print and electronic backup of all the class work they have submitted.

Be sure to have on hand your instructor's email address in case of any system failure: in such a case you should check the Brightspace link on the Lehman home page for the latest information on service interruptions and email your instructor for specific instructions, should you need them.

For help with Brightspace go to: lehman.cuny.edu and on the search bar type Brightspace. Visit the Lehman HELP DESK in the IT Center in Carman Hall. Off campus: (718) 960-1111

Incomplete (IN): *The grade of INC is awarded only when the course requirement has not been completed for good and sufficient reasons and when there is a reasonable expectation that the student can successfully complete the requirements of the course. The INC grade covers any failure to complete all requirements for a course, such as submitting a paper or taking a final examination.*
For an instructor to grant an INC, the student must have met the instructor's attendance requirements in the course and have a ***passing semester average.*** *The student must complete the missing work within the first ten weeks of the following semester. If the instructor is not available, the student must consult with the department chair. A grade replacing the INC may not be entered by the instructor or department chair later than the last day of classes of the following semester. INC grades not completed by the deadline will become Fs (FINs) (or the equivalent under Grading System I-R, NC).*