This course provides a general, critical introduction to the history of Mexico since its independence from Spanish rule in the early nineteenth century. Rather than a chronological summation of events and great leaders, emphasis will be placed upon certain themes and trends with respect to economic, social and cultural development and change. We will be particularly interested in the patterns of conflict and negotiation that shaped Mexico’s history and emphasis will be given throughout the course to the ways in which “common people” participated in and influenced the political events of their times. In addition we will be attentive to the important regional, class, ethnic, and gender differences that have figured prominently in Mexico’s history as well as to the history of Mexico in the wider world. Finally, we will be concerned with the historiography, not just the history, of Mexico: that is, the ways in which the history of Mexico has been written and the political dimensions of writing those histories.

We will view a number of excellent films, including Viva Zapata! (with Marlon Brando) and Amores Perros (with Gael García Bernal). Assigned texts include works of history, philosophy, ethnography and fiction.