

## SAN JOAQUIN DE FLORES INSTITUTE

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>Cultural History of Central America</b>
<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CLASS HOURS</b>	<b>3 (2:30) (48 total - 16 weeks -)</b>
<b>CLASS SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>PERIOD</b>	
<b>COURSE START AND END DATE</b>	
<b>PROFESSOR (include email address)</b>	
<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	

### **DESCRIPTION:**

This course will focus on the cultural history of Central America. The general ecological features of Central America have offered different possibilities for human societies developed in the area, and provided diversity to the human experience. With the exception of the Mayans, aboriginal societies that inhabited the lower tropical lands had a scarce political integration and remained as emerging states, seigneuries, cacicazgos or tribes until the arrival of the Spaniards. Due to the fragmentation and cultural diversity of Central America, it is necessary to compare different countries and even regions to elucidate the general and specific characteristics of each country or region during the historical process.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Analyze the diverse pre-hispanic cultural formations that co-existed in the Central American territory.
2. Explain the socio-cultural transformations of the colonial Spanish government and the role of the Church.
3. Understand the most relevant cultural problems in Central America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
4. Discuss the problems behind democratization and Central American ethnic equality.

### **CONTENTS:**

1. Aboriginal Central America: cultural and geographical context.
  - a. Mesoamerican cultural area.
  - b. Mayan civilization: the lords of Petén and Yucatan.
  - c. Mesoamerican presence in the central area.
  - d. Consolidation and peak of the Cacique Society (500 - 800 A.D. and 800 - 1500 A.D.) in the south of Central America.

2. The Spanish Conquest of Central America.
  - a. Consequences.
  - b. The imposition of the “encomienda” system.
  - c. Indigenous slavery.
  - d. Indigenous resistance.
  
3. Consolidation of the Colonial System (1542 - 1821)
  - a. Government, power and ideology.
  - b. Culture, ideas and society.
  
4. Economy and Society (1821 - 1870)
  - a. Independence.
  - b. From traditional agriculture to export agriculture.
  - c. Redefining society: miscegenation and ethnic identity.
  
5. National identities and Modern State in Central America
  - a. Nation and republic in Central America.
  - b. History of the political vocabulary in Costa Rica: state, republic, nation and democracy.
  - c. Changes in the Guatemalan State during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - d. The problems of the National State in Nicaragua.
  - e. Gender, citizenship and political culture in El Salvador.
  
6. Contemporary dynamics of education and culture in Central America.
  - a. Education.
  - b. Central American painting and sculpture.
  - c. Literature, cinema and other cultural activities.

**EVALUATION:**

<b>Use of target language.</b> Students must <u>only</u> speak Spanish during class. The use of English will be reason to lose points.	10%
<b>Homework.</b> Homework will be assigned each week, including readings, research of a	30%

specific subject, interviews to different people, etc.	
<b>Participation.</b> Students must have a spontaneous and active participation in all class discussions.	20%
<b>Final assignment.</b> At the end of the course, students must complete a final assignment that develops a subject related to Latin American culture and present it in front of the class.	40%

**METHODOLOGY:**

Lectures imparted by the professor will be complemented by presentations by the students. **Therefore, assistance to all classes is mandatory; a total of three absences will be reason enough to lose the course.**

**EVALUATION CHRONOGRAM:**

<b>QUIZ I</b>	
<b>PRESENTATION I</b>	
<b>QUIZ II</b>	
<b>QUIZ III</b>	
<b>PRESENTATION II</b>	
<b>QUIZ IV</b>	
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

**CHRONOGRAM OF ACTIVITIES:**

<b>SESSION NUMBER</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bethell, Leslie, ed. Historia de América Latina, Tomo N. 9.

Ciudad, Andrés, et.al. Mesoamérica.

Estado de la Región. Informe I, 1999.

Fonseca, Elizabeth. Centroamérica: su historia.

Historia General de Centroamérica. Tomo I, II, III, IV, V y VI.

Taracena Arturo y Piel Jean. Identidades nacionales y Estado Moderno en Centroamérica. Colección Istmo 1995.

## **CHRONOGRAM**

Sessions I-II-III

Cultural and Geographical Context of Aboriginal Central America

Visit to the Gold and Jade Museum

Sessions IV-V

Spanish Conquest of Central America

Session VI

Consolidation of the Colonial System

Sessions VII-VIII-IX

Economy and Society

Sessions X-XI-XII

National identities and Modern State of Central America

Visit to the Costa Rican Art Museum

Sessions XIII-XIV-XV

Contemporary Dynamics of Education and Culture in Central America

Note: short tests and one assigned subject oral presentation will be established along the course.