SPANISH 3800-402

FOOD IN MEXICAN HISTORY: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

CLASS STRUCTURE FOR FALL 2023

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course seeks to explore the centrality of food in numerous human affairs by examining the roles it has played in Mexican history since pre-Columbian times until today. Drawing from a wide range of disciplines (history, sociology, feminism, literary theory, art, film and performance studies), we will investigate the functions that food has fulfilled and continues to fulfill in Mexico as well as the changes that its elaboration and consumption have experienced over time. Following a chronological order, we will learn about the value of corn and chocolate among the Aztecs, the culinary experimentation and innovations carried out in convents during the colonial period, the connection between cuisines and national identity, the modern concern with obesity and anorexia as well as with the consumption of animal products, and finally the extensive dissemination of national, regional and local dishes on Internet and through social media. Readings include selections from: Sonia Corcuera de Mancera, *Entre gula y templanza. Un aspecto de la historia mexicana*; Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity*; Sabina Berman, *La mujer que buceó dentro del corazón del mundo*.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

One of the following:

o Successful completion of SPAN 1800 (previously SPAN 219) or SPAN 1900 (previously SPAN 223) or a 3000-level course
o Explicit permission from the Undergraduate Chair of Hispanic Studies, Prof. Espòsito: esposito@sas.upenn.edu

COURSE STRUCTURE:

o In-person classes. We will be meeting two times per week (TR) for 90 minutes per class. All classes are taught in Spanish.
o The semester-long calendar of readings and the due dates for assignments and exams will be detailed in the course syllabus, to be published at a later date.
o This is the workload for a typical week:

For each class, students read a text (posted on Canvas),
complete comprehension & interpretation questions about it (also posted on Canvas),
and contribute to the class discussion board twice per week.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY:

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

o 25% -- Class Preparation and Oral Participation. You will be evaluated on the quality and consistency of your contributions to course activities as well as your engagement, interaction,

and collaboration with your classmates. Excessive absences (more than three class meetings) will affect this grade.

- o 50% -- Three written exams, dates to be published on the course syllabus.
- o 25% -- Final research paper (5-8 pages long) due during the final examination period.

COURSE MATERIALS:

- o Most of the course materials and readings will be posted on the Canvas site for the course. Students will have to purchase 3 books.