

# Spanish/Art 231

## Pre-Columbian, Colonial, and Contemporary Mexican Art

**Instructor:** Rosa Blanca Graciela Zamora Limón, M.A. in Art History

**Prerequisites:** SPA 212 (Intermediate II) or permission of the instructor

**Cross-listings:** This course may be taken for Art or Spanish credit.

**General Education Requirements:** ART/SPA 231 fulfills the Liberal Arts Foundation (LAF) requirement in Fine Arts for Augsburg students.

**Major/minor Requirements:** Augsburg students taking SPA 231 may count it an elective towards their Spanish major or minor.

### Fine Arts LAF Statement

All peoples everywhere, have an abiding need for meaning - to connect time and space, experience and event, body and spirit, intellect and emotion. People create art to describe, define and deepen human experience. Because the arts are one of humanity's deepest rivers of continuity, the study of the Fine Arts is fundamental in a liberal arts education. As a liberal arts foundation course in the Fine Arts, this course will examine the arts as creative expression of the human imagination through activities such as creation, historical study and critical analysis.

The Fine Arts are traditionally defined to include dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Augsburg's Fine Arts departments are Art, Music, and Theatre. There is also an emerging Film Studies program. These four disciplines engage very different realms of knowledge, sets of skills, techniques and modes of discourse, but all share a common goal of rigorous inquiry into the ways artistic expression can record, discover and creatively express the truths of human experience.

### Course Description

This course enables students to develop an understanding and appreciation of Mexican art from its origins to the contemporary period. The study of Pre-Columbian civilizations is a key element of the course, as it enables students to understand the development of diverse cultures and their abilities to transform their environment. Through the study of neo-indigenous colonial art, students will be able to observe the ways in which the indigenous assimilated Spanish colonial art influences in their own particular and unique forms.

During the colonial period, the Spanish influence was dominant and imposed over native art forms. Many artists arrived from Spain to the New World and created workshops and taught the native inhabitants the models and styles of the Iberian Peninsula, including gothic, renaissance, baroque, neoclassic styles.

During the contemporary period of Mexican art, students will study the great Mexican muralists, such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco, as well as other artists, such as Frida Kahlo. They will analyze the influences of earlier periods on the contemporary artists and identify key characteristics of Mexican art.

The course comprises a visual and historical tour of three periods of Mexican art:

1. The Prehispanic period: the preclassic, classic and postclassic periods in Mesoamerica (Olmecas, Teotihuacan, Toltecas, Zapotecas, Mayas, Aztecs and Tarascos)

2. The Baroque-colonial period
3. The Contemporary period, with special emphasis on the muralists

The course will use experiential pedagogy, so it will include excursions to many museum as well as archaeological and historical sites. Field trips will most likely include:

- Xochicalco pyramids
- Teotihuacan pyramids
- Templo Mayor in Mexico City
- National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City
- An excursion to baroque churches and museums in and around Puebla
- The Ex-Hacienda de Cortez
- The National Art Museum in Mexico City
- The Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City
- Murals by Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco
- The course will try to answer the following questions:
  - What do we call art?
  - How can you recognize the different periods of prehispanic art?
  - Where and when did these prehispanic cultures flourish?
  - What are the key characteristics/traits of the Mexican Baroque period?
  - Who are the most representative artists, and what are the most representative works of art from the Mexican Baroque period?
  - What was the historical context in which each work of art you see took place in terms of architecture and painting?
  - What are the key characteristics/traits of the Mexican muralist movement?

### **Course Goals**

You will:

1. Identify different Mexican artistic expressions from the prehispanic period through the 20th century.
2. Appreciate the aesthetic value and their historical legacy of art from each period of Mexican history.
3. Recognize the different periods of Mexican art and the existing relationships between the historical-political contexts, as well as the different artistic styles and trends of each time period.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Throughout this course, you will:

1. Engage in the creative and imaginative process to interpret Mexican works of art.
2. View specific works of Mexican art from multiple places and times.
3. Identify or recognize the breadth and diversity of work in the Fine Arts across time, space, and culture.
4. Show developing competencies to question, probe and inquire about human expression in their own and other cultures.
5. Engage through writing and discussion in critical analysis of the contrasting paradigms of human expression.
6. Analyze common characteristics of artistic expression evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups for formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning.
7. Critically analyze Mexican works of art and articulate different theories of aesthetics.
8. Show developing competency in such areas as the ability to:
9. Distinguish between form and content in specific works of art
10. Articulate the interaction between form and content to arrive at interpretation
11. Draw appropriate conclusions about different theories of aesthetic judgment as distinguished from personal, subjective taste.
12. Recognize the fine arts as expressions of the human condition and reflections of values and cultures
13. Demonstrate developing competencies in dealing with issues of difference.