

# “Portrayals of Pancho Villa North of the Rio Grande and South of the Río Bravo”

**Instructor:** Emron Esplin

## **Course Description**

In this course we will examine the iconic and controversial Mexican revolutionary and folk hero Doroteo Arango—better known as Francisco (Pancho) Villa. Villa fascinated military leaders, politicians, news and fiction writers, and the general public on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border during his life. While academics, authors, and film makers remain fascinated with Villa’s complex and volatile life, he has also become a mythic figure throughout Mexico, the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, and in the United States in general.

We will approach Villa through four broad genres—biography, fiction, visual media (political cartoons and posters), and film in order to answer the following questions: Who was Pancho Villa? Why does he remain one of the two most popular and most powerful Mexican revolutionaries in both the public mind and the creative world of fiction/film almost a century after his military defeat in 1915 and his assassination in 1923? What do his life experiences teach us about U.S.-Mexico relations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? What do the disparate portrayals of Villa suggest about current U.S.-Mexico relations?

To frame our discussions we will also read selected articles and book chapters from several theorists and literary critics about the following topics: stereotypes, exoticizing the racial other, imperialism, and hagiography (writing about saints).

## **Required Texts**

Mariano Azuela *Los de abajo/The Underdogs*  
Nellie Campobello *Cartucho* (sold as a course pack)  
Earl Shorris *Under the Fifth Sun*

## **Films**

Jack Conway *Viva Villa!*  
Fernando de Fuentes *Vámonos con Pancho Villa*  
Joselito and Ismael Rodríguez *Así era Pancho Villa*  
Bruce Beresford *And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself*

## **Course Pack Materials**

from Martín Luis Guzmán *Memoirs of Pancho Villa*  
from Martín Luis Guzmán *The Eagle and the Serpent*  
from Edgcomb Pinchon *Viva Villa!*  
from John Reed *Insurgent Mexico*  
Homi Bhabha “The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism”  
from Ariel Dorfman/Armand Mattelart *How to Read Donald Duck*

Abdul R. JanMohamed “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature”  
Deborah Mistrón “The Role of Pancho Villa in Mexican and American Cinema”  
Allen L. Woll “Latin Images in American Films”  
Luis Valdez *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*  
Amando Álvarez “Pancho Villa Comes to El Paso”  
Emron Esplin “The Profane Saint vs. the Revolutionary Child: Portrayals of Pancho Villa in the Writings of Nellie Campobello and Jack Conway’s *Viva Villa!*”  
from Mark Anderson *Pancho Villa’s Revolution by Headlines*

## **Calendar**

**Week 1 Introductions; Inter-American Studies; Why Pancho Villa?**

**Week 2 Villa in Mexican Biography**

-from Martín Luis Guzmán *The Eagle and the Serpent*  
-from Martín Luis Guzmán *Memoirs of Pancho Villa*

**Week 3 Villa in U.S. Biography**

-from John Reed *Insurgent Mexico*  
-from Edgcomb Pinchon *Viva Villa!*

**Week 4 Villa in U.S. Film/Stereotypes; Colonialism; Imperialism**

-Homi Bhabha “The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism”  
-from Ariel Dorfman/Armand Mattelart *How to Read Donald Duck*  
-Abdul R. JanMohamed “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature” (Vista)  
\*\*Jack Conway *Viva Villa!*

**Week 5 Villa in Mexican Film/Villa’s Fascination with the Cinema**

-Deborah Mistrón “The Role of Pancho Villa in Mexican and American Cinema”  
-Allen L. Woll “Latin Images in American Films”  
\*\*Fernando de Fuentes □ *Vámonos con Pancho Villa!*

**Week 6 Villa in Mexican Fiction**

-Mariano Azuela *The Underdogs*

**Week 7 Villa in Chicano Literature**

-Luis Valdez *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*  
-Amando Álvarez “Pancho Villa Comes to El Paso”

**Week 8 Villa in Mexican Fiction/Hagiography; Profane Hagiography**

-Nellie Campobello *Cartucho*

-Emron Esplin "The Profane Saint vs. the Revolutionary Child: Portrayals of Pancho Villa in the Writings of Nellie Campobello and Jack Conway's *Viva Villa!*"

**Week 9 Villa and Pop Culture (Cartoons, Posters, Music, T-shirts, etc.)**

-from Mark Anderson *Pancho Villa's Revolution by Headlines*

**Week 10 Villa in U.S. Fiction**

-Earl Shorris *Under the Fifth Sun* (pages 3-198)

**Week 11 Villa in U.S. Fiction**

-Earl Shorris *Under the Fifth Sun* (pages 198-419)

**Week 12 Villa in U.S. Fiction**

-Earl Shorris *Under the Fifth Sun* (pages 419-622)

**Week 13 Student/Teacher Conference**

**Week 14 Peer Review**

**Week 15 Villa in Mexican Film/Wrap Up**

-Joselito and Ismael Rodríguez *Así era Pancho Villa*

**Finals Week Final Exam; Final Discussion**