

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE COOPER UNION

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SUMMER 2026

HSS-4 – The Modern Context – Mexican Modernity: Revolution and State-Building

This section studies the history of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the cultural, institutional, and political consolidation of a postrevolutionary state in Mexico (1920-1940.) We begin by discussing the social and political conditions of Mexico in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and how they were radically changed during the revolutionary process. We will comment on the different political and cultural agendas that emerged during the revolution and the ways they were implemented in the following decades. Particular attention will be paid to the ideologies of race and racial mixing, the role of intellectuals in the state, education and institutional reforms, and new technologies that circulated in postrevolutionary Mexico (including typewriters, radio, and cameras.) We will study an array of primary texts (proclams, speeches, laws, and letters) and selected historiographical pieces.

3 credits. Emmanuel Velayos Larrabure.

SS-334 – Microeconomics

Microeconomics is primarily the study of the determinants of prices and the distribution of income. The focus is on studying the strategic behavior of individual business firms, workers and consumers in dynamic interaction with the institutions that shape and constrain this behavior, while also being subject to change themselves through legal and political action. We will look at how certain aggregate patterns ‘emerge’ from the complicated interaction of interests while studying how societies can structure production and distribution systems toward specific goals.

3 credits. Edner Bataille.

HTA-261 – Art and Social Practice

This course explores socially engaged practices worldwide from the mid-twentieth century to the present. We will examine participatory, collective, and interventionist projects that challenge the idea of the individual artist; undertake the ethics of collaboration; negotiate symbolic and concrete action; resist conventional art settings; and push for art as a dynamic, shared, and politically impactful experience. Our readings will cover various disciplines, including radical political theory, sociology, theatre, education, psychology, and communication—all reflecting the interests of artists and communities behind these participatory projects. Through our discussions and assignments, we will work to decenter Euro-American frameworks to better understand activist-oriented projects within their specific contexts and surrounding social and political landscapes.

2 credits. Robin Simpson.

HTA 313-I – History of Video

This course is organized chronologically and thematically and intends to define major moments, preoccupations, and opportunities offered by video, as a new medium for visual artists. We will examine the beginning of video art, in the 1960s and early 1970s, with video sculptures and installations, militant and sociological video, as well as

within Fluxus and Body Art. In this context we will discuss the use of video in relationship with other media such as painting, performance, television, and cinema. Considering the evolution of video art in contemporary works and artists' films, we will reflect on themes such as self-representation, narration & fiction, immersion and viewer's relationship with the screen. The course will also approach questions relative to the formats and temporalities specific to video, its terminology, its access and institutionalization learning from exhibition and collection histories. Examples discussed in the course will be found principally in the United States, UK, and France and present a significant number of works by women, as a result of them being pioneers and major contributors to the history of video.

2 credits. Stephanie Jeanjean.

HUM-363 – Caribbean Literature and Societies

The Caribbean region is known for lush landscapes, pristine beaches, and iconic bits of culture such as reggae, Rastafarianism, salsa, calypso, and carnival. The beauty of these islands belies serious political and social issues of which visitors are generally unaware. However, the history and cultural practices of the region paint a different picture. In this course, we will examine how the earliest institutionalized and intertwined forms of violence and economics—including genocide of the indigenous population, slavery, the rise of the plantocracy, and the impact of globalization on the economies of the region—and their attendant/resultant forms of cultural production continue to shape present Caribbean life. We will examine the various systems of colonial and imperial power, past and ongoing, and their lasting impact in various ways across the region. Finally, we will consider the idea of the Caribbean as a haven for tourists that depends upon a sanitized representation of the region's history of institutionalized violence and exploitation. We shall conduct our investigations through film, literature, history, sociology, and theory.

3 credits. Tara Menon.