Part 1: The Making of the Modern State
Why Study Mexico?

- History of...Revolution, One-Party Dominance, Authoritarianism

- But has ended one-party rule, democratized, and is now considered a newly industrializing country...but many problems still exist
Geography & Population

- One of the most geographically diverse countries
  - Includes high mountains, coastal plains, high plateaus, fertile valleys, rain forests, and deserts
- Slightly less than 3x the size of Texas
- 2,000 mile border with USA and 600 mile border with Guatemala, 160 mile border with Belize
- Major Natural Resources:
  - Oil and Silver
Geography & Population

- Discussion Question: How has Mexico’s geography impacted its development?

- Mtns and deserts separate regions, and make communication/transportation difficult
- Rugged terrain has limited agriculture
- All this feeds into regionalism in the political culture
Geography & Population

- Over 114 million inhabitants makes Mexico the 2nd largest country in Latin America
  - 60% **Mestizo** (mixed Amerindian & Spanish descent)
  - 30% **Amerindian** (indigenous descent)
- Largest Spanish speaking country in the world
  - 92.7% speak Spanish
  - 5.7% Spanish/Indigenous
  - .8% Indigenous only
- 78% live in urban areas
- Mexico City has over 20 million people
- 83% Catholic
Geography & Population

- Northern areas much better off than the southern and central areas

- Southern and Central Regions
  - Denser population
  - Poorer land
  - More ejidatarios (borrowers of land from government)
  - Most of indigenous population lives in south

- Migration is a major issue
  - Economic opportunities in the industrial cities of the north lead many to seek jobs in the maquiladoras, (assembly factories)
    - Factories that produce goods for export, often located along the U.S./Mexico border
History – Colonialism & Independence

Colonialism
- Spain ruled Mexico for three centuries
- Colonial policy was designed to extract from “New Spain”

Independence
- 1810 Miguel Hidalgo began first of a series of wars for independence
- 1821 gained independence BUT struggled to create a stable gov’t for decades
- Chaotic period – Mexico lost half its territory
  - Instability – between 1833 and 1855, 36 presidential administrations came to power
    - In many regions local strongmen (caudillos) had more authority than govt
  - 1823 – Central America rejected rule from Mexico City
  - 1836 – Northern territory of Texan won independence
  - 1845 – Texas became a U.S. state
  - 1848 – treaty gave New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and part of Colorado to US
The Porfiriato (1876-1911)
- Dictatorship under Porfirio Diaz
- Came to power by military coup
  - Retired general
  - Instituted himself as the president of Mexico promise he would not serve more than
- Ruled for 34 years - Stability
- Authoritarianism
- Cientificos (scientists)
  - Group of young advisors that believed in bringing scientific and economic progress to Mexico
- Foreign investment and economic growth
  - Mostly from US – period of rapid growth and development
- Growing gap between rich/poor
  - Many elite became wealthy – most people remained poor
History – The Revolution Of 1910

- Revolution of 1910 - Reformers End Dictatorship
  - Díaz promised to retire and open election for president
  - 1910 Madero presented himself as a candidate (backed by reformers)
  - Díaz cancelled election due to increasing opposition, but it was too late
    - Díaz forced into exile and Madero elected
  - Madero resorted to military to suppress other revolutionaries
    - Madero assassinated (1913)
History – The Revolution Of 1910

- Revolution turned into Civil War
  - **Caudillos** (political/military strongmen) challenged one another for power
    - Rise of patron-client system
  - **Emiliano Zapata** led peasant revolt (central/southern states)
    - His manifesto became cornerstone of radical agrarian reform
    - A peasant revolt had roots in legislation that made it easy for wealthy landowners to claim lands of peasant villagers
    - Villagers joined forces under Zapata
  - Francisco (Pancho) Villa in the north
    - Combined military/warlordism
History – The Constitution of 1917

- Mexican Constitution of 1917 was forged out of diverse/conflicting factions from Revolution
- Guaranteed:
  - Agrarian reform, social security, right to organize in unions, minimum wage, eight hour workday, universal secular education, adult male suffrage
    - Women do not get the right to vote in national elections until 1958
- Limited the power of foreign investors
  - Only Mexican citizens/gov’t could own land or rights to other natural resources
- Limited the power of Catholic Church
  - Anticlericalism – opposition to power of churches/clergy in politics
Plutarco Elias Calles (1924-28)

Establishes the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

1929 – Calles brought together many of the most powerful contenders for leadership to create a political party

Plan was to bring all caudillos under one big political party – intended to bring stability through agreement to “pass around” the power from one leader to the next as presidency changed hands

Each president could have only one six year term – Sexenio

Other leaders would be given major positions in gov’t
History – PRI, Sexenio, & Import Substitution

- Lazaro Cardenas (1934-40)
  - Hand picked by Calles
  - Sometimes called the “Roosevelt of Mexico”
  - Gave voice to peasant demands from Revolution
  - Land reform – **Ejidos** (collective land grants)
    - Redistribution of land
      - Land was taken away from big landlord and foreigners and redistributed
  - Nationalized the oil industry – **PEMEX**
  - Investments in public works
    - Gov’t built roads, provided electricity, created public services that modernized Mexico

- **Import Substitution Industrialization**
  - Employs high tariffs to protect locally produced goods from foreign competition, govt ownership of key industries, govt subsidies to domestic industries
History – Rapid Development

- **Clientelism** to oil (1940-1982)
  - An informal aspect of policy-making in which a power patron (for example, a traditional local boss, govt agency, or dominant party) offers resources such as land, contracts, protection, or jobs in return for the support and services (such as labor or votes) of lower status and less powerful clients
    - Corruption, preferential treatment, and inequality are characteristics of clientelist politics
  - PRI and Patronage
  - Oil in Gulf of Mexico/fluctuating prices/debt

- Crisis and Reform (1982 – 2000)
  - Presidents Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) introduce major reversal of the country’s development strategy, limiting the government’s involvement in the economy
  - From import substitution to **neoliberalism**
    - Calls for free markets, balanced budgets, privatization, free trade, and limited govt intervention in the economy
  - 1994 – **NAFTA** – committed Mexico, the U.S., and Canada to elimination of trade barriers between them
History – Instability

- Economic Crisis of 1994
  - Globalization led to greater economic vulnerability
  - Mexico’s economy shrank by 6.2%, inflation soared, taxes rose, wages frozen
- Rebellion in Chiapas (1994)
  - Zapatistas seized 4 towns in southern state of Chiapas
  - Demanded land, democracy, indigenous rights, & repeal of NAFTA
- Assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio (1994), PRI candidate for President
History – Weakening of the PRI

- 1997 – first time in modern Mexican history PRI lost absolute majority in Chamber of Deputies (lower house)
  - Mexicans questioned the right of the PRI to monopolize political power
  - Wanted fairer elections, more responsive public officials
  - Demanded the right of opposition parties to compete with the PRI on an equal basis
  - Said the president had too much power and the PRI was corrupt
  - Not ready for change in 1994 when Ernesto Zedillo (PRI) easily won, but by 2000 they had had enough

- Dec 1, 2000 Vincent Fox became President

- Why is that important?
  - For the first time in 71 years, the President of Mexico did not represent the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)
  - Fox is from the National Action Party (PAN)
  - The other major party in Mexico is the PRD
Recent Presidents

- **2000 = Vicente Fox (PAN)**
- **2006 = Felipe Calderón (PAN) – 2nd PAN President**
  - Very close and questionable; Contested by Obrador
  - Presidency suffered from legitimacy issues
- **2012 = Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI) – current president**