

UC SANTA BARBARA

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[Andrea Estrada](#)

UCSB Conference to Mark the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution

Scholars from around the state will gather at UC Santa Barbara on Friday, February 26, to discuss the Mexican Revolution, the major civil war that initiated that country's transition to modern nationhood.

"The Mexican Revolution of 1910: A Centennial Conference" will explore the meaning and legacy of the revolution a century later, not only for Mexico but for the millions of Mexicans who have crossed the border into the United States during the last 100 years. The conference begins at 2 p.m. in the McCune Conference Room, 6020 Humanities and Social Sciences Building. It is free and open to the public.

Speakers will include Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, professor emeritus at UC San Diego and a leading historian of the Mexican Revolution, who will give the keynote address; Kathleen Bruhn, professor of political science at UCSB; and Alex Saragoza, professor of ethnic studies at UC Berkeley. In addition, the conference will feature the premiere of the documentary "The Wind That Swept Mexico," which will air on public television this fall. Producer Raymond Telles will introduce and discuss the film.

Ruiz will speak on "Remember the Mexican Revolution," while Bruhn will discuss "The Ghost of Pancho Villa: The Contemporary Relevance of the Mexican Revolution"; and Saragoza will address "Cross-Border Meanings of the Mexican Revolution."

"It is only appropriate that here at UCSB, in an area that was once a part of Mexico, with its proximity to Mexico, and with its large Mexican-origin population, that we remember the centennial with this special event," said Mario García, professor of Chicana and Chicano studies and of history. He is organizing the conference with Saragoza.

Although independent from colonial Spain since 1821, Mexico did not have a strong identity as a nation due to civil conflict, ethnic and geographic divisions, and foreign invasion, explained García.

The imposition of a strong-armed dictatorship headed by Porfirio Díaz from 1877 to 1910 opened Mexico to foreign economic control. This influence only exacerbated Mexico's disunity, he continued. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 not only successfully overthrew the Díaz dictatorship, but promoted a national identity centered on Mexico's mestizo, or mixed population and culture, as well as revived appreciation for its indigenous roots. Despite the violence and heavy loss of life, a more unified and nationalistic Mexico emerged following several years of civil war.

"Contemporary Mexico is the result of the Mexican Revolution," García said.

"The Mexican Revolution of 1910: A Centennial Conference" is dedicated to Luis Leal, professor emeritus of Chicana and Chicano studies at UCSB and an internationally recognized scholar of Mexican, Chicano, and Latin American literature. Leal, who wrote widely on the Mexican Revolution, died on January 25 at the age of 102.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.