**The Global Media Festival Course Module**

**Prepared by:**

**Dr. Paul Alonso, assistant professor, School of Modern Languages, Georgia Tech.**

**Title of the Course Module:**

**Sustainable Development and the Water Problems in Mexico City**

***Introduction: Instructions for Instructors***

**Issues:** water resources, sustainability, population growth, environmental activism, Latin America, Mexico.

**Time commitment**: 4 hours (plus watching the documentary)

**Overview:** Mexico City, a megacity with over 20 million citizens, was built in the middle of a lake. However, to supply it with fresh water requires to bring it from other states, while sewage water ends up in agriculture. This learning module focuses on the environmental case study of the Valley of Mexico and its challenges to become water sustainable.

**Media content:** *H2O MX* (José Cohen, Mexico, 2014) examines Mexico City's water problems through the perspective of residents, government agencies, business owners and engineers.

**Reading sources:** Provide a list of reading sources that will help introduce the subject and issues.

Kahn, Carrie (September 14, 2018). Mexico City Keeps Sinking As Its Water Supply Wastes Away. NPR. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/14/647601623/mexico-city-keeps-sinking-as-its-water-supply-wastes-away>

Hogenboom, Melissa (May 14, 2018). How a city that floods is running out of water. BBC. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/future/gallery/20180510-how-a-city-that-floods-is-running-out-of-water>

Fox, Justin (April 25, 2018). Mexico City Is Always Either Too Wet or Too Dry. Bloomberg. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-04-25/mexico-city-s-water-problem-is-going-to-get-worse#footnote-1524518888603>

**Instructions:** Watch the documentary and complete the assigned readings above; then assign the course module activities to students.

**Learning outcomes:**

1. To engage students in a critical thinking process about sustainability and urban development
2. To understand the different socio-political and economic dimensions of the urgent problem of water resources in Mexico
3. To discuss the importance of the media and environmental activism to engage citizens into taking action regarding our future

***Course Module Activities: Instructions for Students***

**Previewing Activities:**

1. **After reading the three stories from the BBC, NPR and Bloomberg, answer the following questions:**
* Describe concretely what is the water problem in Mexico City.
* What are the main factors of problem?
* What are the consequences?
* What is the relation of the problem with climate change?
* How have the authorities and population dealt with the water problem in Mexico City?
* What are the possible solutions?
1. **Prepare a 10-minute oral presentation about how Mexico’s water problem has impacted the population**. Offer context, description of the problem, and gather examples, testimonies, documented cases, and cite your sources. The evaluation considers the following aspects: Introduction (10%), Body of Content (40%), Conclusions (10%), Powerpoint (10%), Delivery (30%). Students should use PowerPoint or other similar visual aids in their presentations and generate interaction with the class.

**\*Students taking this class at the graduate level will be producing a more in-depth presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes. The distribution of grade percentages remains the same for both graduates and undergraduates.**

**Viewing Activities:**

1. **Guiding question for watching the documentary**
* What is the goal that the documentary H2O tries to accomplish?
* How is the water problem of Mexico City described in the documentary?
* List at least 6 sources used in the documentary, and discuss what are their contributions to the credibility of the documentary.
* How is the narrative style of the documentary (narrating voice, use of music, camera, images)?
* Identify three scenes of the documentary in which the photography plays an important role to convey the message. Explain why or why not it’s effective.
* Does the documentary achieve its goal?
1. **Write a 750-word film review** of the documentary H2O. Remember that film analysis is a type of academic writing characterized by research, reflection, and strong argument development. A film analysis is NOT a plot summary or report. It is neither a series of superficial generalizations nor a listing of discrete details. Your analysis should be selective and cohesive: Choose one or two (at the most) areas of focus and develop an argumentpulling in all elements of the film that support your thesis (for example, the use of music in the documentary is essential in conveying the urgency of the problem, the film highlights the importance of an engaged citizenship to deal with the water conflict in Mexico City, etc.).

**\*Students taking this class at the graduate level will be producing a more in-depth film review of approximately 1500 words.**

**Postviewing Activities:**

1. **Discussion questions**
* Reconsider the possible to solutions to the water problem in Mexico City.
* What have been the main challenges to implement them?
* What are the possible outcomes to those solutions?
* How would you deal with the problem?
1. **Guest speaker**

One of the directors/producers of H2O Mexico (José Cohen, Lorenzo Hagerman, and/or Alejandra Liceaga) will be connected online through Skype for one hour, and give updates on the evolution of the case, and the impact of the documentary. Prepare a list of three potential questions for him/her, and take notes about his/her presentation to be incorporated in your final essay.

**Assignments:**

1. **Essay**

**Write a 750-word essay** about the relation between environmental sustainability and activism, covering the following questions:

* What is the role of activism in a conflict like the one presented here?
* How can global activists become engaged with the issue?

**\*Students taking this class at the graduate level will be producing a more in-depth essay of approximately 1500 words.**

1. **Class Presentation**

Based on your essay about the role of activism in the water crisis in Mexico City, prepare a 10-minute oral presentation explaining concrete ways for activists to participate in potential solutions. The evaluation considers the following aspects: Introduction (10%), Body of Content (40%), Conclusions (10%), Powerpoint (10%), Delivery (30%). Students should use PowerPoint or other similar visual aids in their presentations and generate interaction with the class.

**\*Students taking this class at the graduate level will be producing a more in-depth presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes. The distribution of grade percentages remains the same for both graduates and undergraduates.**

**Further Reading:**

Watts, Jonathan (November 12, 2015). Mexico City's water crisis – from source to sewer. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/12/mexico-city-water-crisis-source-sewer>

Kimmelman, Michael (Feb 17, 2017). Mexico City, Parched and Sinking, Faces a Water Crisis. The New York Times. Available at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html>