

Cemanahuac

Educational Community

Winter 2011 Newsletter



Cultural activities at Cemanahuac

The study of the Spanish language should not exist in a cultural vacuum, and Cemanahuac is known for its emphasis on the history and culture of Mexico. Each week Cemanahuac offers supplementary classes on the history and culture of Mexico and Mesoamerica. These optional Latin American studies classes are in the areas of the art, history, anthropology, cuisine, and literature of the region: these are held for two or three hours per day. Cultural classes are taught in both English and Spanish, and there is no additional cost for participation in these classes. In these classes, the emphasis is in on both culture and language instruction, all provided in a less formal setting. Cemanahuac's program of field study is undeniably the most educational one in Mexico, with each excursion to sites of historic and archeological importance, containing a tremendous amount of information about both Mesoamerican history and contemporary culture.

Some of the additional activities available to enhance the cultural learning are:

-- **Good food with cultural information and language practice in a fun educational format!** Cooking class focusing on the importance of corn, with hands on preparation of *tortillas*, *tamales*, *atole*, and *gordos*, among other Mexican favorites, with trips to the public market to buy supplies. Cemanahuac instructors have created some outstanding power point presentations, in Spanish, with information on some of the best Mexican culinary traditions. One of these covers "Mexico's Gifts to the World" ("Los Regalos de México al Mundo") - corn, tomato, chocolate, chiles, potatoes, yams, etc. It's an interactive session, and all levels of language learners enjoy it together. One teacher has prepared a presentation on *mole*, the wonderful sauce for festive occasions -- how it is made, what the ingredients are, and what traditions surround it, all with a good deal of new vocabulary, and, of course, followed by a tasting session with various types of *mole*. Another teacher has developed a presentation is on *pulque*, the fermented sap of the maguey plant (not my personal favorite, but very Mexican! *vbh*) The class presents information on the plant, how the liquid is extracted, how it is processed, and who was allowed to to drink it in Mesoamerican times. Students then have a sample in tiny tasting cups.

Literature of Mexico in a Cultural Context Upon request, Cemanahuac can offer additional classes each day in literature, much of it as short stories which convey historical and/or cultural information. They will includes works by authors whose writings are included in the AP literature exams. These classes would meet at 1:00 each weekday and will have no additional cost.



For more information:

Vivian B. Harvey, Educational Programs Coordinator
vivian@cemanahuac.com

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Library and video A library/media center with books and videos in English and Spanish, with a large screen TV to watch the videos at the school. Cemanahuac has amassed a good collection of films with a strong social or educational message, including:

“Sin Nombre”

“La Misma Luna”

“Yo, la Peor de Todas.” a biography of Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz

“Santitos”

“Frida,” a biography of Frida Kahlo

“Maria, Full of Grace”

In addition, we have many documentaries from PBS and the History Channel, and students are welcome to view these on their own.

Latin American Dance classes Salsa and other Latin dance classes, which in addition to the actual dance instructions, include a host of directions, all provided in Spanish, so vocabulary learning is reinforced and new vocabulary is introduced.

Introduction to the Arts and Crafts of Mexico

Afternoon classes in backstrap weaving as it is done all over the highlands of Mexico and Guatemala and *papel picado* (cut paper), and creating paper flowers and *piñatas*. For those who want a BIG project, one of our teachers teaches making *papier mache alebrijes*, the fanciful animals for which Mexico is famous.

Volunteer work For those who want a meaningful volunteer opportunities, we link our students with an after-school literacy program to work with Mexican children

Stay on top of the news in Mexico, by attending current events lectures/discussions once a week.

Field excursion opportunities include:

-- Educational afternoon field study trips focusing on important art, historic, or archeological sites in and near Cuernavaca, including the Robert Brady Museum, the Cortes Palace, Taxco, and Xochicalco.

-- Full-day comprehensive field study trips in Cemanahuac van/bus, with guidance, with destinations including Teotihuacan, the Historic District in Mexico City, the magnificent Museum of Anthropology in Chapultepec Park, the many art museums of Mexico, and the colonial city of Puebla.

-- Other destinations available by request.



For more information, write to:

Vivian Harvey

Educational Programs Coordinator

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And finally, many cultural activities in the city of Cuernavaca are open to all Cemanahuac students, with a calendar published each week.