**Judas at the Jockey Club Discussion Guide with Additional Documents and Links**

Mexico’s Porfiran era, called the Porfiriato after the perennial president, Porfirio Díaz, provides the chronological, political, social, and economic context for events that are described in *Judas at the Jockey Club*. As an introduction to the study of the era (1876 to 1911), students could report on or read one of the following sources to provide helpful historical background.


Anyone wanting a visual portrait of the Porfiriato has several outstanding options. Early films about Díaz portray his role as an ally of Benito Juárez in the struggle against French intervention. Two such films are *The Mad Empress* (1939) and *Juarez* (1939), the latter with John Garfield playing the role of Díaz. (The American Historical Association created a forty-minute edited version of the film for classroom use.) The first full-length biography of the man appeared as the film *Porfirio Díaz* (1944).

Students or readers who have a knowledge of spoken Spanish can watch the outstanding soap opera *El Vuelo del Águila* (1994), which recounts Díaz’s career and regime and stars Manuel Ojeda as the adult Porfirio. This program has 141 thirty-minute episodes that are available for purchase or live streaming from a variety of sources. The prominent director of video programs and author of Mexican political histories Enrique Krause produced the program. It includes many motion and still images never seen before and represents the best historical interpretation of the era.

The Porfirian paradigm that dominated Mexico at the time drew heavily on the social interpretations of Auguste Comte known as positivism. An additional report or discussion could
be based on the book by Mexican author Leopoldo Zea: *Positivism in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974). William H. Beezley discusses in both English and Spanish the scholarship about the era in “The Era of Porfirio Díaz, 1876–1911,” Oxford Bibliographies (http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0035.xml). All of these sources can be used to provide general background of the time using classroom discussion of the era or individual reports on Porfirio Díaz, his politics, his relations with foreign governments, the role of foreign investors, economic developers, military programs, and Díaz’s cosmopolitan aspirations.

The preface to the second edition of *Judas at the Jockey Club* includes the names of historians writing in English. This list can guide students to authors and subjects that could be used for book reviews or term papers, such as the question of fires in Mexico City. This topic has since formed the basis of an excellent urban environmental history written by Anna Rose Alexander entitled *City on Fire: Technology, Social Change, and the Hazards of Progress in Mexico City, 1860–1910* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016). By reading the book or hearing a report on it students have an opportunity to discuss fires, urban dangers, and imaginative inventions.

The book’s preface also explains that the book’s focus is on ordinary Mexicans and their daily lives. Attention to this topic resulted in the excellent series of anthologies published by El Colegio de México, *La historia de la vida cotidiana en México*. One volume, edited by Anne Staples, focuses on the nineteenth century, including the Porfiriato, entitled *Bienes y Vivencias* (Goods and experiences). Anyone able to read Spanish should examine some of the excellent essays contained in the volume to discover fascinating aspects of daily life including meals, work, and festivals.

The introduction to the book offers some generalizations about Porfirian Mexico and the way Judas figures challenged and represented the society and the conflicts within it. The sarcastic humor often expressed, though sometimes only implied, comes from a social tradition that enlisted practices developed in Naples during the time that the King of Aragon ruled the two Sicilies. Customs, which spread to other Spanish territories and came to New Spain, included turning the world upside down at Carnival; mocking prominent individuals or aberrant community members in puppet theaters and festival costumes; and the publication of the occasional broadsheet. These together formed part of the context of Judas burnings. Readers who want a glimmer of understanding of these practices should begin with the classic by Mikael Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965). Robert Darnton’s delightful *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1985) examines eighteenth-century cultural topics through a collection of essays that parallel the chapters of the Judas book. Many additional
fascinating titles are listed in this manual. The introduction also includes at least five generalizations about the Porfiriarian society. Students can be asked to make a list of these generalizations and see how they continue as themes through the remaining chapters. After reading the book, ask if they support the themes or would propose others. If they choose the latter, what would they select? Students might also begin a list of the major celebrations and modified fiestas observed or initiated during the Porfiriato, noting how these serve to express the ideas and ideals of Porfiriarian society.

Students can also consider various approaches to historical methodology. Four intriguing lines of analysis were used in this volume and links to them are provided here. Each author offers advice on how to conduct an analysis. Instructors might begin with a discussion of these essays, their major points, and a comparison of the methods suggested by each author. Here are the essays as well as some discussion suggestions for each¹:

   - What does the title say about the essay form itself, about the American Historical Association, and about the popular character of history?
   - What does the author mean by “history”? How does he describe “the specious present” and how it is used in discussions? How does he see history as an imaginative creation? How does this perspective provide methodology for a historian?
   - Is the succinct definition of history given in this essay the same as the one the author later uses, that is: “Since history is not part of the external material world, but [rather is] an imaginative reconstruction of vanished events, its form and substance are inseparable.” In the realm of literary discourse, is substance, being an idea, the same as form; and is form, conveying the idea, substance? What differences are there between the two? Which do you prefer, and why?

   - Geertz received recognition for his powerful thick description of a cockfight in Bali,² which provided analysis of the Balinese culture. His use of thick description encouraged scholars to write cultural history. Can “history” be a substitute for “ethnography”?
   - Does the following definition qualify as history: “Descriptions of Berber, Jewish, or French culture must be cast in terms of the constructions we imagine Berbers, Jews, or Frenchmen to place upon what they live through, the formulae they use to define what happens to them.”
How does the following admonition about ethnography provide an essential approach for history: “If anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens, then to divorce it from what happens—from what, in this time or that place, specific people say, what they do, what is done to them, from the whole vast business of the world—is to divorce it from its applications and render it vacant. A good interpretation of anything—a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society—takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation.” Can historians be said to write in the same way that ethnographers do? In what sense is this meant?

Regarding anthropologists, Geertz says: “He confronts the same grand realities that others—historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists—confront in more fateful settings: Power, Change, Faith, Oppression, Work, Passion, Authority, Beauty, Violence, Love, Prestige; but he confronts them in contexts obscure enough—places like Marmusha and lives like Cohen’s—to take the capital letters off them. These all-too-human constancies.” How does this apply to historians in their work?


- What is the Morelli method? What is the significance of the persons in the title being connected to medicine? Identify and discuss the steps taken in understanding (analysis, comparison, classification). Are these the same with Becker and Geertz?
- Ginzburg writes about “the provisional, conjectural nature of human knowledge.” Could this be used as a specific description of history?
- Compare Ginzburg’s analysis to this comment by Geertz: “Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape.”


- The author mentions several volumes on history defined through objects. Images (power point or the books or online versions) from these can be used for discussions or written assignments.
- Discuss the author’s conclusion, “Fashioning a meaningful narrative from them [objects] means more than randomly rummaging through memorabilia and heirlooms. . . . They must also encompass the broad spectrum of human experience.” Russell Baker’s comments, quoted in the essay, express a kind of whimsy. Suggest objects that display playfulness and enjoyment in the past.
What objects did the other authors suggest as significant in creating the narratives of history? Keep a list of objects found in the following chapters that provide keys to Porfírian society.

Chapter 1. The Porfírian Persuasion: Sport and Recreation in Modern Mexico

A major argument in this essay looks at the cosmopolitan nature of sports and how sports indicate the prevalence of activities associated with modernization. Students should read a portion of the careful and well-written argument of Allen Guttmann: From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 15–55. Guttmann’s outline of the relationship between sport and modernization should provoke an interesting and intense discussion in class or in written essays.

As for the popularization of particular sports in Porfírian Mexico, the following additional readings offer material for individual reports or should satisfy a reader’s curiosity. Videos for these sports exist on the internet; a good place to start is YouTube.

- **Baseball**: No solid history of baseball in Mexico exists. A good introduction comes from the Baseball Historian’s website, http://www.baseballhistorian.com/mexico_baseball.cfm. Otherwise there are a spate of articles (and movie accounts) on baseball in general, plus information on the Monterrey Little League team that twice claimed the title at the World Series. For early period baseball, see William H. Beezley, “The Rise of Baseball in Mexico and the first Valenzuela,” Studies in Latin American Popular Culture 4 (1985): 1–14. One recent and useful article with early baseball information is Miguel Esparza’s “La pugna por el diamante. La institucionalización del béisbol capitalino en el periodo posrevolucionario, 1920–1930” in Historia Mexicana. The effort to establish a Mexican Major League in the 1940s has not yet found a historian, but it can be read about in a novel filled with factual information entitled The Veracruz Blues by Mark Winegardner (New York: Penguin, 1997).
- **Bicycling**: The emblematic sport during the Porfírian period, cycling serves as a microcosm of other sports, technology, recreation, competition, and changing attitudes toward rural regions. Robert A. Smith’s A Social History of the Bicycle: Its Early Life and Times in America (New York: American Heritage, 1972) remains a credible place to begin an examination of the bicycle and the sport. David V. Herlihy offers interesting reading in

- **Futbol** (soccer): The origins of soccer in Mexico are disputed. The common attribution places the introduction of the game to Welsh miners in the state of Puebla, but other investigations point to youthful professionals, both Mexicans and foreigners, who learned the game in England and brought it home. Various discussions of the topic have appeared. Of the several videos on YouTube, one example is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Y0GLyFWpA&feature=youtube. PBS did an eight-part history of the sport in Mexico, which can also be accessed on the internet.

- **Lucha libre** (professional wrestling): Heather Levi, *The World of Lucha Libre: Secrets, Revelations, and Mexican National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), offers a history and participant ethnography of wrestling. Lucha Libre has been featured in a great many popular films (the greatest wrestling performer, El Santo, starred in fifty-two movies, among them one regarded as the best, *Santo vs. the Vampire Women.*); El Santo has become involved in politics (most dramatically with Super Barrio, who appeared in the wake of the 1985 earthquake and who has been featured in three biographies, two documentaries, a comic book series, and a French play). Many of the lucha heroes are featured on YouTube, especially El Santo and Super Barrio. There are ample opportunities for students to write papers about the evolution of lucha libre from the Porfirian to the present or to offer theories on the popularity of wrestling.

- **Rowing**: Rowing clubs had an important role in the rise of organized sport in Porfirian Mexico (as it did in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro at the same time, where rowing clubs came to sponsor soccer teams). Mexico’s earliest and most important was the Lakeside Rowing Club, which claims to be the first sporting club in Mexico. A student can research the club to give a report or to write a short paper, starting at its webpage, https://sites.google.com/site/lakesiderowingclub/home/historia-del-remo. This leads to
other rowing clubs and links to the sport. This edited version of the introduction should be added to the information in Judas at the Jockey Club:

The history of Lakeside Rowing Club is closely related to the Mexican rowing history. In the second half of the nineteenth century, during the General Porfirio Díaz government, British engineers moved to Mexico work in the silver mines in Hidalgo state. The family Phillips was among them. Thomas Phillips was born in Mexico, and together with Reverend Thomas Sherlock (from Oxford) founded the first rowing club in Mexico in 1888. Thomas Phillips was so fascinated with rowing, people began to call him “Lakeside,” the origin of the Lakeside Rowing Club name, the first sport club in Mexico.

The Lakeside Rowing Club was first established in Ayotla on the shore of Lake Chalco. By this time, the “Cosmopolita Rowing Club” was founded and the first competitions started. Cosmopolita had a very short life. When Chalco Lake dried up, Lakeside Rowing Club was moved to the “Peñón” on the shore of the Texcoco Lake, but some years after, due to the bad conditions of this lake, Lakeside was moved to Mexicaltzingo.

In 1893, the “Veracruzanos Ruderverein” club was founded in the City of Veracruz. In that year, Lakeside Rowing Club was established in Xochimilco, close to the present location of the club. By the year of 1909, a group of German oarsmen founded the “Eureka Club” later named as “Deutscher Ruderverein Mexiko” and also known as “Club Alemán de Regatas” (nowadays “Club Antares”). In 1912, the Lakeside Rowing Club changed its name to “British Boating Club.” In the next year the first Rowing Association in Mexico was founded. It was named “Asociación de Regatas de México.” The “British Boating Club” (nowadays “Lakeside Rowing Club AC”), the “Club Alemán de Regatas” (today “Club Antares”), the “Veracruzanos Ruderverein” (disappeared) and the “Corona Rowing Club of Tampico” (dissapeared) were part of the Association.

- **Golf:** Other important sporting clubs brought together members to enjoy exercises and golf.

The modernization and expansion of Mexico City has been analyzed in detail by Michael Johns in *The City of Mexico in the Age of Díaz* (Austin: University of Texas, 1997). This is an excellent book to use for a student report followed by a class discussion. Class members should read the information and examine the photographs of the expansion of the capital city provided by Patricia Massé in “The House at Sadi Carnot 33: Amateur Photography and Domestic Architecture in Porfírian Culture,” in *A Companion to Mexican History and Culture*, edited by William H. Beezley (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 361–70.

The Porfírian modernization of the city and efforts to achieve a more cosmopolitan society brought new activities and customs beyond organized sport. Chief among these were new patterns of shopping and a desire for different goods created for a society of consumers. Steven Bunker examines this activity in *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture in the Age of Porfirio Díaz* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

Entertainment underwent changes as well, including musical performances. As an example activity, students could listen to the music in the wax cylinder collection at the
The elites attended opera and other dramatic performances in modernized theaters such as ChinChunChan. On street corners all classes and groups of Mexican society could enjoy various popular entertainments, especially puppet shows. Several puppets, recognized by name, served as stereotypes of common behavior. An introduction to Vale Coyote, El Negrito, and other puppets could begin with William H. Beezley, *Mexican National Identity: Memory, Innuendo, and Popular Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008).

Aristocratic and bourgeois society also placed great emphasis on structured social mores. An introduction to these can be found in the documents discussing Family Etiquette Manuals in William H. Beezley and Monica A. Rankin, eds., *Problems in Modern Mexican History: Sources and Interpretations* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). Manners aside, questions of gender behavior, especially for women, received great attention. For a discussion of gender expectations for men, students should consult Robert M. Buffington’s *A Sentimental Education for the Working Man: The Mexico City Penny Press, 1900–1910* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2015). After reading the book and taking notes, students should watch Rob Buffington discussing his book, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCS5cIeM-N0. An introduction to these topics, for student discussions or papers, could start with the volumes mentioned in the *Problems* book. The students could discuss how this information on manners could result in new interpretations of the *Judas* book.

Another development came in different types of crimes and methods of policing. James Garza offers an examination of this topic in *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfriean Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). The issues discussed by Garza can be compared with those in Robert M. Buffington’s *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). In particular, students should consider how criminal activity resulted from efforts to create a modern society.

Chapter 2: Rocks and Rawhide in Rural Society:
Tools and Technology in Porfirian Mexico

Review the portion on material cultural and objects as historical sources. Ask students to discuss various objects implements used in farming, such as plows, to evaluate rural technology and agriculture. What conclusions do the students reach that confirm or contradict those of the author?

A series of fundamental conclusions are addressed by Moramay López-Alonso in Measuring Up: A History of Living Standards in Mexico, 1850–1950 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012). A student could read the book and then lead a discussion on López-Alonso’s conclusion that average adult height offers an indicator of biological standards of living because stature is a function of the interaction between genetics and childhood nutrition. (Most Mexicans born in the 1890s were up to three centimeters shorter than their compatriots had been in the 1850s.) What had changed in standards of living? This report should include a discussion of the sources used as evidence.

A major institution in rural Mexico during the nineteenth century and especially in the Porfirian era was the large landed estate, generally known as the hacienda. To understand the rise of haciendas, one place to start is with the liberal land law, known as the Lerdo Law, incorporated into the 1857 Constitution, with Porfirian-era additions. The implementation of these laws can be consulted in Raymond B. Craib’s Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes. (Durham NC: Duke University Press. 2004). A student could report on the book to the class. The origin of the hacienda system can be traced through Charles Gibson’s The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810 (Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 1964). A student could report to the class on Gibson’s discussion of gañan labor and its connection to hacienda labor. In addition, students have the opportunity to experience daily life by creating and playing the game “Game of Life,” which is based on Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Bloomsburg, 1970) and developed by USAID for its Ecuador Program. (A discussion of the book is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CGowW4E-2w&feature=youtu.be) Instructions for adapting the game to nineteenth-century Mexico is described in William H. Beezley, “‘Hacienda, the Game of Life’: (A Simulation Game for Classroom Use),” Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies 12 (March 1976): 44–54. From the readings and the game students should be able to discuss why Andrés Molina Enriquez described contract (gañan) labor as one of the greatest national problems in his book Los Grandes Problemas Nacionales. His book has not been translated into English, but a student can report on both the author and the main points of the book by reading Staley Shadle’s Andrés Molina Enríquez: Mexican Land Reformer of the
Revolutionary Era (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994). Concluding this chapter, students should be prepared to discuss why conditions in rural Mexico, especially on haciendas, offered a major cause of the revolution in 1910.

**Judas at the Jockey Club**


Over twenty videos of Judas Burnings are available on the internet. One example is: www.films.com/id/15355. After viewing the videos, students could discuss the papier-mâché figures and what or whom they represent, or they could choose one of the videos and write a short paper on it.

The jockey club offers a fascinating example of the interactions among Mexicans and foreign elites, but little has been written about individual club members and their activities. Members have never, to my knowledge, been listed, although, of course, Porfirio Díaz was the honorary president. Richard Honey (1839–1913) and four foreigners helped establish the club (and the Reforma Athletic Club).³ The club’s meeting rooms were in the Casa de Azuelos (the house of titles), which today is one of the Sanborns’ restaurants in the historic district of the capital.⁴ Comparisons can be made with other Latin American jockey clubs. Thomas More Edsall examines the Argentine organization in “Elites, Oligarchs, and Aristocrats: The Jockey Club of Buenos Aires and the Argentine Upper Class, 1920–1940” (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 2000). For similar information on Costa Rica see the article by Adrian Masters, a University of Texas graduate student: “Judas and the ‘Gentlemen of the Legion of the Ear’: Modernization and the Judas Burning Rituals in Liberal-era Costa Rica.” Membership, buildings, and other jockey clubs offer potential research papers and thesis topics for students intrigued by these elite clubs.

Further discussion of Judas burnings with images is available in Spanish in William H. Beezley, “La quema de Judas en Mexico como comentario político y social: Un ejemplo de la metodología de Geertz y Ginzburg,” *Intercultura* (2015); the article also appears in *La historia cultural y la memoria popular en México*, edited by Servando Ortoll (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California del Norte, 2017).

A PowerPoint presentation of numerous Judas figures, entitled “La historia de la vida cultural: La historiografía, los Judas y los títeres,” can be accessed by email from the author. The
images provide a number of Judas figures for students to discuss in class.

For students or other curious readers who want to read in Spanish, the following essay provides a discussion of present-day Judas burnings: “Emmanuel Ortega, “Todos a tronar Judas” Artes 9 (March 16, 2015), https://artes9.com/todos-a-tronar-judas/. The article has interesting photographs and can be used for class discussion for individual or class essays using visual analysis.

This teacher’s manual is updated every three to four months. Suggestions and comments are welcomed by the author at beezy@u.arizona.edu.

Notes
1. These essays and the questions are also used in the manual Problems in Mexican History.
3. Honey arrived from Cornwall in 1862 and established iron works and railways in Hidalgo. He later owned a bank in Mexico (information obtained from D. F. Chris Davidson, Hampshire, UK, email to the author, January 5, 2014).
4. Kevin Chrisman, in the Department of History of York University (Toronto, Canada), is writing his dissertation on Sanborns in Mexico City.