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Homophobia and the Mexican Working Class

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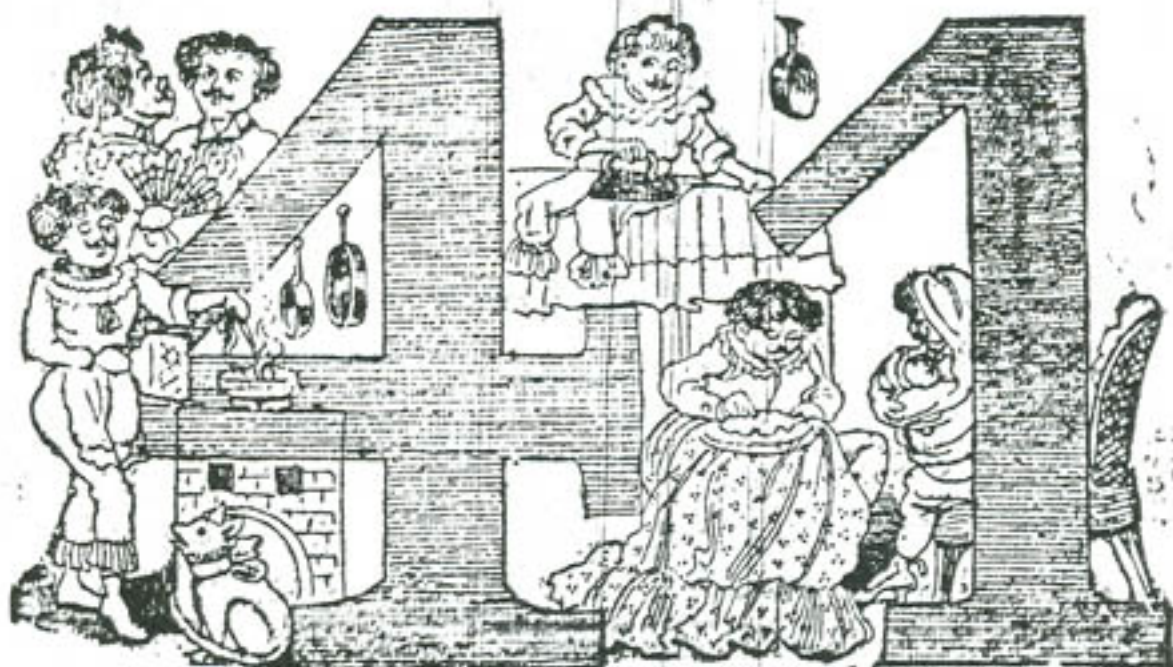
Wednesday, November 6

12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

Student Union 314

On November 17, 1901, responding to neighbors' complaints of lewd behavior, police raided a private dance party in downtown Mexico City. Forty-one men were arrested, half of them dressed as women. The resulting scandal rocked the complacent bourgeoisie whose insistence on their own moral superiority had played a vital role in justifying twenty five years of authoritarian rule under "indispensable" strongman Porfirio Diaz. For the middle classes, the 41 Scandal produced the usual mix of puritanical moralizing and prurient fascination (a formula not unfamiliar to Americans at the turn of the next century). For the working classes, however, it provided the perfect opportunity to hoist the Porfirian bourgeoisie on their own petard—to portray decadent elite dandies as too effeminate and too narcissistic for the manly work of nation-building. In this context, homophobia became a potent political tool and an important symbol of resistance to oppression even as it fostered the oppression of "deviant" men.

El feminismo se impone



Professor Buffington has been a member of the BGSU history faculty since 1999. He is the author of *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), several articles, and an edited volume (with Carlos Aguirre, *Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2000)). He spent the past summer in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of San Andres. Professor Buffington is currently a Fellow at the BGSU Institute for the Study of Culture and Society.