

History 271—Latin America to 1824 (Colonial Latin America) Fall 2012

Instructor:

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DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Despite their proximity, the countries of Latin America remain a mystery to most citizens of the United States. Here's a chance to get acquainted. This is a general survey course, the purpose of which is to explore the principal historical themes of Latin America during the colonial period (roughly, from the beginning of the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries). Over the course of the semester, we will examine in detail several crucial issues of this formative period in Latin American history—the dynamics and justification of conquest, Spanish and Portuguese Indian policies and native responses, institutional structures and social hierarchies of the colonial world, economies and labor systems, the age of imperial reforms, and finally, and the growth of distinctive “American” identities on the eve of independence. The class format consists primarily of lectures, augmented by readings of specialized texts and images.

Like most countries in the Western Hemisphere, the modern nations of Latin America confront on a daily basis the legacy of colonialism. Thus, our examination of the colonial period will not be a simple exercise in rote memorization, but rather an opportunity to ponder the historical forces that in many ways laid the foundation for present-day Latin America. It might also serve as a way to think about our own assumptions about how we live, work, and interact in today's world. By the end of the course, students will show their familiarity with the key issues of the colonial period and will be able to express (in writing) their understanding of how these important historical themes unfolded in different ways, with respect to region, chronology, and culture.

GRADES and GRADING POLICY

Grades for the course will be determined by student performance in the following assignments: midterm essay exam=33⅓% (100 points); final essay exam=33⅓% (100 points); four assignments/quizzes based on common readings and one map quiz=33⅓% (100 points for the five combined assignments).

A make-up for the midterm exam—more difficult, of course—will be given about one week after the regularly scheduled event. Except under truly extraordinary circumstances (i.e., the outbreak of a pandemic, some natural or man-made disaster, etc.), students may make up ONE (and ONLY one) of the five quizzes. The quiz make-up will be given at the end of the semester during the two-hour block of time for the final exam. Just to clear up any potential misunderstanding down the road, an “**Incomplete**” grade can only be assigned under a specific set of circumstances. The university's criteria for assigning a grade of “Incomplete,” as found in the Office of the Registrar's Form 60, are as follows:

1. The student's work was interrupted by *unavoidable absence* or other causes beyond a student's control.
2. The student is *passing the course* at the time it was interrupted.
3. The completion of the course *does not require the student to repeat the class*.
4. The incomplete grade *is not to be used as a substitute for a failing grade*.

I would add, based on my experience at Purdue, that “I” grades eventually become “F” grades in about 90% of the cases. Let’s avoid that situation.

READINGS.

Mexico and the Spanish Conquest, by Ross Hassig. 2nd edition. University of Oklahoma Press.

The World Upside Down: Cross-Cultural Contact and Conflict in Sixteenth-Century Peru, by Susan Elizabeth Ramírez. Stanford University Press.

Women Who Live Evil Lives: Gender, Religion, & the Politics of Power in Colonial Guatemala, by Martha Few. University of Texas Press.

(Assortment of online docs and articles, TBA)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER ISSUES

Students are responsible for regular class attendance, keeping up with assigned readings, and completing all major course requirements (in this case, the midterm and final exams). I urge you to seek help from the Teaching Assistant or me if you have any concerns about the course, have difficulties with the subject matter, or are unsure about your methods of preparation for quizzes and exams.

Although we do not take formal attendance in this course, it is extremely unwise to miss class. Over the years, I have noted a direct correlation between good class attendance and good grades. This correlation probably stems from the fact that students who come to class have a much clearer idea of what’s going on in the course. Bear in mind that we do not have a “main text.” The lectures (and the extensive notes that you take during those lectures) serve this function. The “required readings” are meant to deepen your understanding of certain themes and issues. So, when you don’t show up for class you miss not only a highly entertaining and informative lecture, but also the “text” material for that day.

Another reason to come to class is that, periodically, we will pass around an attendance sheet. By signing this sheet (in person), you qualify for Super Cosmic Bonus Points—known in this class as “Puntos Supercósmicos.” A hefty accumulation of “puntos” at the end of the semester can nudge your grade upward.

If some situation arises that forces you to miss an extended period of class—i.e., prolonged illness, personal or family difficulties, etc.—please report the circumstances to the Dean of Students. Doing so will facilitate your “reentry” to academic life when the time is right.

Class Comportment

I always welcome questions during lectures, even in a large class like this one. Don’t hesitate to ask when you need further clarification or elaboration of a particular point. However, please refrain from engaging in a running dialogue with your neighbor. This behavior is disruptive and only shows a lack of respect for the instructor, for your fellow classmates, and for scholarly endeavor in general.

It’s important to give your full attention to what’s going on in class. Concentrate on the lectures and on taking good, complete notes. DO NOT use class time for activities extraneous to the course—i.e., to “text” friends and family, read the Exponent, finish up homework for other classes, etc.

Electronic Devices

Please turn off all electronic devices during class period. The only exceptions are laptops, which may be used, but **ONLY for taking notes**. If, for whatever reason, you need an exemption to this rule, please see me—we’ll discuss your situation.

Just to cover our bases, no electronic devices of any kind are allowed during quizzes and exams.

Academic Integrity

Purdue University has strict regulations that govern issues of academic honesty. (See below). Academic dishonesty—in any form—will not be tolerated in this class. A good overview of the subject can be found at <http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/studentconduct/regulations.html>. I urge you to read it.

Course Evaluation

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and the instructor (though not the TA). To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation.

UNIVERSITY DISCLAIMERS TO BE INCLUDED IN SYLLABI (courtesy Purdue University)**Cheating / Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.

Disclaimer:

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines, and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted once the course resumes on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email or phone. Contact information is listed above.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I. The Encounter of Two Worlds

Week 1. August 20-24

Introduction and mechanics of course

Pre-Columbian civilizations

*****Locate and download maps on Blackboard Vista**

Week 2. August 27-August 31

Spain's legacy of conquest

What to make of Columbus?

*****Map Quiz, Friday, August 31**

Week 3. September 5-7 (No class Monday, September 3, Labor Day)

The Age of Conquest

Spanish exploration and early settlement patterns

*****Book Quiz, Mexico and the Spanish Conquest, Friday, September 7**

Part II. Building a New World

Week 4. September 10-14

Victors and Vanquished: Early Colonial Society

The encomienda as a system of political and social control

Indigenous peoples under Spanish rule

Week 5. September 17-21 (Mon., Sept. 17, last day to drop w/o grade)

Indians and the Church

Governance in Spanish America

Viceregal and provincial governments

*****Book Quiz, The World Upside Down, Friday, September 21**

Week 6. September 24-September 28

The colonial legal system

The Catholic Church

Week 7. October 1-5

Leftovers and Review

*****MIDTERM EXAM, Wednesday, October 3**

Part III. Brazil

Week 8. October 10-12 (no class Monday, Oct. 8, October break)

Contact, exploration, and early settlement of Brazil

Institutional structures

Week 9. October 15-19

Fazendas and mines—the colonial Brazilian economy
 Brazilian society
 Pombaline reforms

Part IV. The Mature Colony, Spanish America

Week 10. October 22-26 (Wed., Oct 24, last day to drop with grade)

Caste, Class, and Patriarchy: Social Hierarchies in the Mature Colony
 The sistema de castas
 Afro-hispanos

Week 11. October 29-November 2

Gender and family relations

*****Book Quiz, Women Who Lead Evil Lives, Friday, November 2**

Week 12. November 8-12

Economic structures of the mature colony
 Mining, trade, and agriculture—toward economic self-sufficiency Labor systems
 The Era of the Bourbon reforms
 The politics of dynastic change

Week 13. November 12-16; and Monday, November 19

Redrawing the colonies
 Economic and social reforms

(Wednesday & Friday, Nov. 21 & 23, no class—Thanksgiving break)

Week 14. November 26-30

Toward Emancipation
 American reaction to Bourbon reform policy
 The emergence of an “American” identity

*****Short writing assignment based on Blackboard sources, Friday, November 30**

Week 15. December 3-7

Leftovers and review

Week 16. **Final Exam—dates and times to be announced**