

Colonial Latin America

HIST 150 / AAAS 150

Fall 2022 syllabus
Prof. Pablo Sierra



Diego Rivera, detail of "La Gran Tenochtitlán" (1945)

“Gazing on such wonderful sights, we did not know what to say, or whether what appeared before us was real, for on one side, on the land, there were great cities, and in the lake ever so many more, and the lake itself was crowded with canoes, and in the Causeway were many bridges at intervals, and in front of us stood the great City of Mexico, and we,—we did not even number four hundred soldiers! and we well remembered the words and warnings given us by the people of Huexotzingo and Tlaxcala and Tlamanalco, and the many other warnings that had been given...”

- *Bernal Díaz del Castillo*

Course description

Welcome! This introductory survey will cover the unequal encounter of Africans, Europeans, Native Americans, and Asians in the vast area that we know today as Latin America. The latter term, by the way, is open to debate. Whether we think of it as Anáhuac, Tawantisuyu, or by any other name, Latin America was arguably the site of the most intense exchange of cultures, technologies, diseases and religions in the world from the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This course will cover three centuries of change, accommodation and negotiation that defined the region from 1492 up to the Independence movements of 1810. As a result, we will understand the viceroyalties, audiences, and kingdoms that gave way to the nations that we know as Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, etc. However, to properly understand “Latin America,” we must look past the Spanish-speaking regions to include the history of Haiti (colonial Saint-Domingue), Jamaica, and Brazil.

Our course privileges the experiences of common people. Our interest lays not so much in the political projects of the colonial elite (which we will learn about, of course), as in the everyday letters that Spanish and Portuguese carpenters, sailors and musicians wrote to their lovers, cousins and business partners. Many of the assigned readings for this course come from the pens of indigenous people in Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala and explain how Native people understood the colonial experience. We will also attempt to reconstruct the motivations and family strategies of Africans and their descendants by studying freedom letters, marriage papers and the demands of runaway communities. Throughout the course, we will address topics not traditionally associated with the Latin American region, such as the prohibited existence of Jewish communities throughout the colonial period. All of the cases listed above can be studied through primary source materials, which you will learn to analyze throughout the course.

There are no examinations in this course. Instead, students will develop three short papers. The first will take the form of a reading response, the second essay will respond to a prompt. The third assignment consists of a student-driven research paper. The choice of topic is yours. You will spend the last third of the semester developing your essay. With this choice, however, it is also your responsibility to identify the necessary primary sources to develop your paper. All papers for this class must be written in English. However, you are more than welcome to cite documents, books and chapters in other languages that advance your research.

Course Information

Class Location : Bausch & Lomb 270

Class Times : Mon. & Wed. 11:50 am - 13:05 pm

Email: pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Office Location: Rush Rhees 461

Office Hours: Mon./Wed. 3:20-4:20 pm

Grading

- 15% Participation
- 15% Attendance
- 10% Essay 1 – three pages, reading response
- 20% Essay 2 – six pages, essay prompt
- 40% Essay 3 – nine pages, open research topic
 - Outline worth 10%
 - Final version worth 30%

Course Policies

In accordance with the College credit hour policy, which awards 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week, students are expected to devote at least one hour each week identifying the main lines or argument in course readings, working alone or in groups.

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

This is a DACA/Undocu-friendly course. The UofR and I are committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or if I can connect you to University resources. For more information see the Burgett Intercultural Center's page: <https://www.rochester.edu/college/bic/support-inclusion/international-students.html#Undocumented>

Course Expectations and Essay Policy

This course is designed as lecture-discussion hybrid. Mondays will feature lectures, while Wednesdays will be devoted to group discussions, primary source activities, and debates. All students are expected to complete the assigned readings in time for our Wednesday in sessions.

The papers for this course have been scheduled very carefully to allow for sufficient preparation and feedback. Any papers received after the deadline will automatically receive a full letter grade reduction (A- to B-). Papers received 24 hours after the deadline will receive two letter grade reductions (A to C) and so forth for every day it is late. In essence, make sure to turn in your papers on time. **All papers or communication for this class must be sent to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu**

Kelly Book Fund

If you are an undergraduate student facing financial hardship in acquiring the books listed above, you may apply to the Kelly Book Fund. These funds are for undergraduate students in need to purchase books for their history courses; preference will be given to those majoring in History. Students may apply for these funds using this link:

<https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>

Required Books

Bialuschewski, Arne. *Raiders and Natives: Cross-Cultural Relations in the Age of Buccaneers*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2022.

Lane, Kris. *Potosí: The Silver City that Changed the World*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.

Restall, Matthew, Kevin Terraciano and Lisa Sousa, eds. *Mesoamerican Voices: Native Language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Yucatan, and Guatemala*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

All other course readings will be posted to our course Blackboard page, listed as (BB)

UNIT I – Conquest and Extraction

Week 1 – Introductions – Aug. 31

Inspirations, memories, biases

Week 2 – Al-Andalus and “the Indies” – Sept. 7

“The Report of Diego Chanca,” Document 2 in *Of Cannibals and Kings*, 72-80 (BB)

“Writings of Friar Roman on the Antiquities of the Indians,” Document 3 in *Of Cannibals and Kings*, 83-112 (BB)

Mesoamerican Voices, Chapters 1-2, pp. 3-20

Week 3 – Making Quisqueya Caribbean – Sept. 12 / 14

Erin Woodruff Stone, “America’s First Slave Revolt: Indians and African Slaves in Española, 1500-1534,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 60, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 195-217. (BB)

Jose Juan Ponce Vázquez, *Islanders and Empire*, pp. 22-56 (BB)

“The Deposition of Rodrigo Figueroa,” Doc. 4 in *Of Cannibals and Kings*, pp. 115-119 (BB)

Week 4 – Military Conquest – Sept. 19 / 21

Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Chapter 1 and 3, pp. 1-26 and 44-63 (BB)

Selections from *Letters & People*, Docs. 1-4, pp. 2-24 (BB)

Mesoamerican Voices, 23-42, pp. 62-77

Week 5 – Silver Mountains – Sept. 26 / 28

Kris Lane, *Potosí, the Silver City*, Introduction-Chapter 2, pp. 1-66

Dana Velasco Murillo, “‘To search and claim’: indigenous prospectors, silver mining, and legal practices in Spanish America, 1530–1600,” *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 30, No. 4: 498-519 (BB)

Mesoamerican Voices, pp. 77-94

Essay #1 due on Friday, Sept. 30 by 12 pm

UNIT II – Resistance and Negotiation

Week 6 – Slavery by Many Names — Oct. 3 / 5

Alejandro de la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic*, Chapter 6, pp. 147-185 (BB)

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, “The Slave Trade to Colonial Mexico: Revising from Puebla de los Ángeles, 1590-1640,” in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in Spanish America*, pp. 73-102 (BB)

Ana María Silva Campo, “Through the Gate of the Media Luna: Slavery and the Geographies of Legal Status in Colonial Cartagena de Indias,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3: 391-417 (BB)

- In-class primary source exercise from *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom*

Week 7 – Chocolate Sins – Oct. 10 / 12 (Fall Break, No Class Oct. 10)

Margaret Graham and Russel K. Showronek, “Chocolate on the Borderlands of New Spain,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2016): 645-665 (BB)

Marcy Norton, “Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 3 (2006): 660-691 (BB)

Mesoamerican Voices, pp. 130-146

Week 8 – Brazil and the *Bandeirantes* – Oct. 17 / 19

Alida Metcalf, “The Entradas of Bahia in the Sixteenth Century,” *The Americas*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (January 2005): 373-400 (BB)

Catherine Myscofski, *Amazons, Nuns, Witches & Nuns*, pp. 1-54 (BB)

Week 9 - The Global City – Oct. 24 / 26

Kris Lane, *Potosí, the Silver City*, Chapters 3-5, 67-136

Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, Chapters 1-2, pp. 9-48 (BB)

Mesoamerican Voices, pp. 150-157

Week 10 - The Iberian Union: Inquisition, Foreigners, and Conspiracies - Oct. 31 / Nov. 2

Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions*, Prologue-Chapter 1, pp. 3-53 (BB)

Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Sea*, Chapter 3, pp. 67-90 (BB)

Optional: *Mesoamerican Voices*, 184-201

Essay #2 due on Friday, Nov. 4 by 12 pm

UNIT III – Colonial Disruptions

Week 11 – Pirates and Plunder – Nov. 7 / 9

Arne Bialuschewski, *Raiders and Natives*, Intro-Chapter 3, pp. ix-47,

Documents 5-10 in *Piracy in the Early Modern Era*, 9-25 (BB)

Week 12 – Pirates and Periphery – Nov. 14 / 16

Arne Bialuschewski, *Raiders and Natives*, Chapter 4-Conclusion, pp. 48-122

Documents 22-29 in *Piracy in the Early Modern Era*, pp. 58-85 (BB)

Week 13 – Jamaican Counterpoint – Nov. 21 (Thanksgiving - NO CLASS Nov. 23)

Casey Schmitt, “Centering Spanish Jamaica,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (October 2019): 697-726 (BB)

Document 30-32, in *Piracy in the Early Modern Era*, pp. 86-96 (BB)

Week 14 - Scientific Revolution and Sugar Slavery – Nov. 28 / 30

Martha Few, “Circulating Smallpox Knowledge: Guatemalan Doctors, Maya Indians and Designing Spain's Smallpox Vaccination Expedition, 1780-1803,” *British Journal for the History of Science* Vol. 43, No. 4 (December 2010): 519-537 (BB)

Cristina Soriano, *Tides of Revolution*, Chapters 1-2, pp. 15-75 (BB)

Essay # 3 outline due Friday, Dec. 2 by 12 pm

Week 15 – Rumor, Rebellion and Revolution – Dec. 5 / 7

David Garrett, “ ‘His Majesty’s Most Loyal Vassals’: The Indian Nobility and Túpac Amaru” *Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 84, No. 4: 575-617.

Cristina Soriano, *Tides of Revolution*, Chapter 4, pp. 117-147 (BB)

Week 16 – Ghosts of Haiti - Dec. 12 / 14

Kris Lane, *Potosí, the Silver City*, Chapters 7-8, pp. 158-185

Cristina Soriano, *Tides of Revolution*, Chapter 6-Conclusion, pp. 183-213 (BB)

- In-class primary source exercise, José María Morelos, “The Sentiments of the Nation” (BB)

Essay #3 paper due Monday, Dec. 19 by midnight