

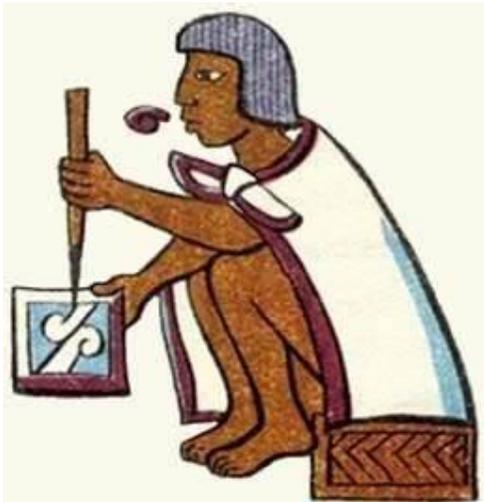
HIST 200 – Gateway course: Mexico through Time

Spring 2023 – Mondays and Wednesdays 10:25-11:40 am
Rush Rhees Library Room 305 (the new Lasch Seminar room)

Prof. Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva
pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 pm
Office Location: Rush Rhees 461

This course opens a window into the techniques, methods and sources that historians of Mexico use to understand the prehispanic and colonial past up to 1800. Our focus on movement and migration will enable us to study a wide range of historical sources, beginning with pictographic codices that recount the migration story of Mexica settlers to Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City). We will then turn to documents produced by (and about) Spanish conquistadors, Indigenous nobles, African maroons and mestizo merchants as they traversed the viceroyalty of New Spain willingly and unwillingly. Spanish colonists also migrated to the viceroyalty and in doing so produced the bulk of colonial documentation. As a result, our discussions will allow us to debate the possibilities, limitations and biases built into colonial sources. With this knowledge, students will develop their own research paper *throughout the semester*.



“Mexico through Time” is open to students in all disciplines. No prior knowledge of the Latin American or Mesoamerican region is required. You need not speak Spanish or Nahuatl to join us! This class fulfills Gateway requirement and the pre-1800 requirement for the History major. The class also counts for the new Latin American Studies minor.

As a Gateway course, this class offers insights into historians' methods. Using the case of colonial Mexico, it will teach you how historians do what they do. In other words, we will learn how to identify a research topic, pose a historical question, locate and interpret the documents that allow us to craft a narrative of the past. To do justice to the complexity of Mexican history, we will use ethnohistorical techniques to examine Indigenous documents. The course will begin with a brief examination of Nahuatl pictographic sources and codices to illustrate the movements of the Mexica people and the politics of their history. We will also consider the use of alphabetic indigenous sources (in translation) by urban chroniclers such as Chimalpahin.

We will then move through the colonial period by means of different types of accounts from the military phase of the Spanish conquest. From conquistador memoirs to judicial cases, we will study questions of perspective, access to written documentation and legal representation. These case studies will inevitably lead us to consider the evidence that we have (and do not have) for mestizo individuals, Indigenous women and people of African descent. Thematically, we will cover the everyday histories of blasphemers, artisans, apprentices, food vendors and militiamen.

Throughout the course, you will develop a research paper based on a set of primary sources. I strongly recommend you visit me during office hours to discuss what kind of materials are available for your project. Locating colonial letters, maps, contracts, bills of sale, and criminal trials can be a very time-consuming endeavor. If the library does not hold the book or article you need, you may have to request it on InterLibrary Loan (ILL). In this course, identifying precisely what documents you will use and situating them in the work of previous scholars will be essential elements of your research paper. In the final weeks of the course, you will focus your efforts on justifying the use of your source base and fully developing your arguments into a polished research paper.

Required Books

Cope, Douglas R. *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

Curcio-Nagy, Linda A. *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.

Jaffary, Nora E., Edward W. Osowski, and Susie S. Porter. *Mexican History: A Primary Source Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Townsend, Camilla. *Annals of Native America: How the Nahuas of Colonial Mexico Kept Their History Alive*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Villa-Flores, Javier. *Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico*. Tucson: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

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>

A Note on Leading Discussion

In this course, you will be assigned as discussion leader at least once, although you will actively participate every session. Leading discussion is a crucial component of your participation grade for the course. To begin class, you will present a ten-minute summary for that day's assigned readings. At a minimum, you will establish the author's key arguments and methods. You must also situate the book or article in relation to the author's intellectual trajectory (current academic institution, previous studies, current or future projects, etc.).

After your 10-minute presentation, you will lead discussion. To do this, you must produce a list of 5 questions to stimulate class discussion. You are welcome to praise the author's methods, advance your own criticisms of the text, identify sections that could have been approached differently or that left you uncertain of the author's intent. Ultimately, however, your task is to encourage scholarly dialogue with your peers.

Grading

Participation & Attendance	20%
Essay 1 – Picturing the Past (3 pages)	15%
Essay 2 – Chimalpahin's World (6 pages)	25%
Essay 3 – Research Paper (10-12 pages)	40%
- Outline	10%
- Final Version	30%

Course Policies

The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 2 credit hours for courses that require 340 minutes of average course work per week. Students enrolled in this course are expected to devote 265 minutes each week outside of class to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for their research projects.

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.

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined here ([http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/.](http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/)) For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's 'Defining Plagiarism,' <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>

Grading scale

A 100-93%	A- 92.9-90%	
B+ 89.9-87%	B 86.9-83%	B- 82.9-80%
C+ 79.9-77%	C 76.9-73%	C- 72.9-70%
D+ 69.9-67%	D 66.9-63%	D- 62.9-60%
E Below 60%		

Course Schedule

- readings marked with an * will be posted to our course Blackboard page

Week 1 – Welcome!

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Introductions, syllabus, and motivations

Week 2 – History: Tlacuilo Style – No class Monday

Wednesday, Jan. 18

John Pohl, "Mexican Codices, Maps and Lienzos," 137-160*

Lori Boornazan Diel, *The Codex Mexicanus*, 94-120, also see the images in Plates 10-23*

In-class exercise: *Mexican History*, Source 5, 30-37*

Week 3 – Making Memory, Making Empire

Monday, Jan. 23

Peter Gerhard, “A Black Conquistador in Mexico,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 58, No. 3 (August 1978): 451-459*

Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, “Mexican Manuscripts and the First Images of Africans in the Americas,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2019): 223-248*

Wednesday, Jan. 25

Lori Boornazan Diel, “Manuscrito del aperreamiento (Manuscript of the Dogging): A “Dogging” and Its Implications for Early Colonial Cholula,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 58, No. 4 (Fall 2011): 585-611*

Mexican History, Source 13, 74-79

Week 4 – Spectacles of Conquest

Monday, Jan. 30

Linda Curcio-Nagy, *The Great Festivals*, 1-66
Mexican History, Source 15, 85-88

Wednesday, Feb. 1

Miguel Valerio, *Sovereign Joy*, Ch. 1, 26-79*

Friday, Feb. 3 – Essay 1 due by noon, send to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Week 5 – Spectacles of Loyalty

Monday, Feb. 6

Linda Curcio-Nagy, *The Great Festivals*, 67-120

Wednesday, Feb. 8

Linda Curcio-Nagy, *The Great Festivals*, 120-154
Primary Source, Controlling Mardi Gras in Puebla

Week 6 – Native Memory

Monday, Feb. 13

Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 1-54
Chimalpahin selections and PDF provided by Prof. Sierra*

Wednesday, Feb. 15

Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 55-98

Week 7 – Native Vitality

Monday, Feb. 20

Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 99-140
Chimalpahin selections and PDF provided by Prof. Sierra*

Wednesday, Feb. 22

Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 141-174

Week 8 – Chimalpahin’s World

Monday, Feb. 27

Camilla Townsend, *Annals of Native America*, 175-226
Chimalpahin selections and PDF provided by Prof. Sierra*

Wednesday, Mar. 1

Mexican History, Source 20, 113-119

Friday, Mar. 3 – Essay 2 due by noon, send to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Week 9 – Spring Break – No Class

Week 10 – Piracy and Captivity

Monday, Mar. 13

Jesse Cromwell, “Life on the Margins: (Ex) Buccaneers and Spanish Subjects on the Campeche Logwood Periphery, 1660-1716,” *Itinerario* Vol. 33, no. 3 (2009): 43-71*

Wednesday, Mar. 15

Alejandra Dubcovsky, "The Testimony of Juan de la Torre, a Spanish Slave," *William & Mary Quarterly* Vol. 70, no. 3 (2013 July): 559-580*

Week 11 – Yucatán under Siege

Monday, Mar. 20

Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle*, Ch. 5, Ways up and Ways Out, 153-199*

Wednesday, Mar. 22

Arne Bialuschewski, "Slaves of the Buccaneers: Mayas in captivity in the second half of the seventeenth century," *Ethnohistory* Vol. 64, no. 1 (2017 January): 41-63*

Mar. 22 mandatory event - In-person guest lecture with Prof. Bialuschewski, 3:30-5:00 pm

- location TBD

Week 12 – Cursing the State

Monday, Mar. 27

Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech*, 3-76

Wednesday, Mar. 29

Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech*, 77-156

Friday, Apr. 1 – Research outline due at noon – send to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu

Week 13 – Plebeian Plight

Monday, Apr. 3

Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 3-48

Wednesday, Apr. 5

Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 49-105

Week 14 – Plebeian Power

Monday, Apr. 10

Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 106-124
Mexican History, Source 27, 149-154

Wednesday, Apr. 12

Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 125-168

Week 15 – Blackness and the Mexican Archive, pt. I

Monday, Apr. 17

Patrick Carroll, “Black-Native Relations and the Historical Record in Colonial Mexico,”
244-269*

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, “From Chains to Chiles: An Elite Afro-Indigenous Couple in
Colonial Mexico,” 361-384*

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Nicole von Germeten, *Black Blood Brothers*, Ch. 5*

Mexican History, Source 25, 137-141

Week 16 – Blackness and the Mexican Archive, pt. II

Monday, Apr. 24

Magali Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain*, Ch. 2, 22-43*

Mexican History, Source 29, 162-169

Wednesday, Apr. 26

Ben Vinson III, “The Racial Profile of a Mexican Rural Province in the “Costa Chica”:
Iqualapa in 1791,” *The Americas*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Oct. 2000): 269-282 *

Mexican History, Source 33, 184-187

José María Morelos y Pavón, “The Sentiments of the Nation”

Final papers are due Monday, May 1 by noon.

E-mail digital copy to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu AND drop off hard copy at History Office