

**History 475**  
**The Conquest of Spanish America**  
**Dr. Chad Black**  
**Spring 2007**

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Office Hours: Monday 12:15-1:15; 2:30-3:30

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue and... discovered or destroyed America. Sixty years later, in 1552, López de Gómara, the private secretary of Hernán Cortes, wrote, "The greatest event since the creation of the world (excluding the incarnation and death of Him who created it) is the discovery of the Indies [i.e. Americas]." He was, himself, a participant in the great conquest of Mexico. From the very beginning, not only the magnitude, but also the meaning of the Conquest of the Americas has been a point of controversy and acclaim. We will examine the societies of central Mexico, the Andes, and the Iberian Peninsula on the eve of their cataclysmic encounter, the ways in which each of these distinct societies impacted one another, and the hybrid societies that emerged on the other side. Our investigation of Conquest will rely as much as possible on primary sources, and your critical thinking and discussion skills to make sense of the many meanings of conquest.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

1. **Reading.** Each week's assigned readings should be completed for the first class of the week.

2. **Participation.** 20%. Learning is an interactive process, and as such a requirement for our class. Each meeting, we will begin class with 10 minutes of writing, in response to the readings for discussion. These daily responses, in combination with your participation in the discussions, will form the basis of the participation portion of your grade.

3. **Exams.** 80%. There will be four exams, each of which will count for 20% of your final grade. Two of the exams will be in-class essays. The other two are take-home exams, due in class on the date indicated. Take-home exams will consist of one well-developed, sourced 5 to 7 page essay each.

4. **Attendance.** Class attendance is mandatory. Each student is allowed three (3) absences for whatever reason. Each ensuing absence will result in one letter grade reduction of the student's final grade.

#### **TEXTS**

Restall, Matthew. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Schwartz, Stuart. *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 200.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

Townsend, Camilla. *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*. Albuquerque: UNM Press, 2006.

All other readings will be placed available online.

## OTHER COURSE POLICIES

**Please Note:** If any special accommodations are needed to complete the course requirements, please come see me at the beginning of the semester.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism occurs when someone knowingly or unknowingly presents another person's words or ideas as his or her own. Any work turned in for this class must meet University standards for academic honesty. Any students unsure about how to apply these rules are urged to consult with me *prior* to turning in any written work.

**Deadlines:** Assignments that are due in class must be turned in at the start of class. If you anticipate problems, please contact me before the assignment is due, not after!

**Office Hours:** Students are strongly encouraged to speak with me outside of class. I am available during office hours on a first-come, first-served basis. If you cannot come during office hours, please contact me via email or phone to schedule an appointment.

### WEEK #1

Jan. 10 Course Introduction  
Jan. 12 1492/1992—The 500 Year Controversy

#### READING:

1. Rigoberta Menchú, "The Quincentenary, a Question of Class, Not Race: An Interview with Rigoberta Menchú," *Latin American Perspectives*, 1992;
2. Mario Vargas Llosa, "Questions of Conquest: What Columbus Wrought, and What He Did Not," *Harpers Magazine*, Dec. 1990.

### WEEK #2

#### Indigenous Peoples I

Jan. 15 MLK Day—NO CLASS  
Jan. 17 A Hemispheric View  
Jan. 19 Central Mexico

#### READING:

1. William Brandon, *The Rise and Fall of North American Indians: From Prehistory through Geronimo*, 2003, 3-70.
2. Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation*, 1991, 45-86.

### WEEK #3

#### Indigenous Peoples II

Jan. 22 Central Mexico  
Jan. 24 Maya Remnants  
Jan. 26 NO CLASS

#### READING:

1. Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs; An Interpretation*, 1991, 111-140, 153-173.

**WEEK #4**                    **Indigenous Peoples III**

Jan. 29                    Andean Heartland

Jan. 31                    Andean Heartland

Feb. 2                    Discussion

READING:

1. Selections from the *Peru Reader*, 17-80.

**WEEK #5**                    **Iberian Conquest Culture**

Feb. 5                    Iberian Expansion

Feb. 7                    Projections

Feb. 9                    In-class Exam

READING:

1. William D. Phillips, Jr., and Carla Rahn Phillips, "Spain in the Fifteenth Century," in Adorno and Andrien, *Transatlantic Encounters*, 11-40.

**WEEK #6**                    **Columbus**

Feb. 12                    The Ocean Blue

Feb. 14                    Taino Perspectives

Feb. 16                    Discussion

READING:

1. Todorov, Chapter 1.
2. Columbus documents from the Medieval Internet Sourcebook:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1z.html>

**WEEK #7**                    **Mexico I**

Feb. 19                    Mainland Contacts

Feb. 21                    From Veracruz to Tenochtitlan

Feb. 23                    Discussion

READING:

1. Schwartz, 29-99.
2. Townsend, 1-108.

**WEEK #8**                    **Mexico II**

Feb. 26                    La Noche Triste

Feb. 28                    Aftermaths

Mar. 2                    Film: "La otra conquista."

READING:

1. Schwartz, 100-244.
2. Townsend, 109-171.

**WEEK #9**                    **Peru**

Mar. 5                    Atahualpa and the word.

Mar. 7                    Cuzco

Mar. 9                    Discussion. Exam II Due.

READING:

1. Patricia Seed, "'Failing of Marvel': Atahualpa's Encounter with the Word," *LARR* 26.1 (1991), 7-32.

2. John Hemming, "Atahualpa and Pizarro," in *Peru Reader*, 84-106.
3. John F. Guilmartin, Jr., "The Cutting Edge: An Analysis of the Spanish Invasion and Overthrow of the Inca Empire, 1532-1539," in Andrien and Andorno, 40-72.

**WEEK #10**

SPRING BREAK!

**WEEK #11 Evaluations**

Mar. 19 Mythologies

Mar. 21 Possession

Mar. 23 Discussion

READING:

1. Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, 1-63.
2. Patricia Seed, "Ceremonies of Possession:

**WEEK #12 Knowledge**

Mar. 26 Indian

Mar. 28 Jesus, Mary, the Saints

Mar. 30 Discussion

READING:

1. Todorov, Ch. 4.
2. Restall, 100-146.
3. Louis Burkhart, "The Solar Christ in Nahuatl Doctrinal Texts of Early Colonial Mexico," *Ethnohistory* 35.3 (1988): 234-256.
4. Selections from Las Casas.

**WEEK #13 Sex**

Apr. 2 Body

Apr. 4 Hybrid

Apr. 6 SPRING RECESS—NO CLASS

READING:

1. Pete Sigal, "The Cuiloni, the Patlache, and the Abominable Sin: Homosexualities in Early Colonial Nahua Society"
2. Matthew Restall, "'He Wished It in Vain': Subordination and Resistance among Maya Women in Post Conquest Yucatan," *Ethnohistory* 42.4 (1995): 577-594.
3. Townsend, 172-214.

**WEEK #14 Order**

Apr. 9 Structures of Rule

Apr. 11 Authority/Conflict

Apr. 13 In-Class Exam III

READING:

1. Restall, 64-76.
2. Lockhart *Nahuas after Conquest*,

3. "The New Laws 1542."

**WEEK #15**

**Language**

- Apr. 16      What Record?  
Apr. 18      Whose words?  
Apr. 20      Discussion

READING:

1. Martin Lienhard and Carlos Perez, "Writing and Power in the Conquest of America," *LAP* 19.3 (1992), 79-85
2. Karen Graubart, "Indecent Living: Indigenous Women and the Politics of Representation in Early Colonial Peru."
3. Selections from Nahuatl documents.

**WEEK #16**

**The Meaning of Conquest**

- Apr. 23      Agency in domination?  
Apr. 25      Legacies of Conquest  
Apr. 27      Wrap-up.

Final exam is due May 8<sup>th</sup>, between 12:30 and 2:30pm during the regularly scheduled examination period. You can, as always, email the exam early!