HIST 109 - Latin American History: Conquest and Colony
King 337, M/W/F, 9-9:50am (Fall 2013)

Professor Melanie Huska
Office Hours: Mondays 4-5:30 and Fridays 10:15-12 and by appointment, Rice 309
Email: mhuska@oberlin.edu

Course Description

This course surveys the diverse histories of Latin American nations from the eve of encounter, the conquest period, and three centuries of colonial rule (by Spain and Portugal) to its collapse after three centuries. The broad geographical and temporal scope of the class makes exhaustive coverage impossible. Instead, we will focus on a balance of broad political, social, economic, and cultural transformations, with insight into the daily lives of ordinary people. Throughout the course we will examine the persistence of hierarchies based in class, race, ethnicity, and gender.

In this class we will all be historians; we will focus on learning the skills that historians use to interpret and analyze primary and secondary documents and to craft arguments. Writing is central to this endeavor. Writing is a process as well as a product and proficiency is best achieved through focused and repeated practice; therefore, this course will offer many opportunities for you to develop your written communication skills while also introducing you to many of the key concepts, expectations, and assumptions essential to the field of history.

Course Objectives/Learning Goals

By the course’s end, students should be able to:
1. Identify the broad contours of colonial Latin American history
2. Understand the political and social systems of colonial power, how they vary across time, space, and experience, as well as how they were resisted and subverted
3. Evaluate primary sources and consider the author’s influences and positionality
4. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of historical argumentation and understand how different types of primary sources influence analysis
5. Communicate effectively, particularly in the written format, by presenting clear, reasoned arguments supported with evidence

Required Texts


***All additional readings will be posted on our Blackboard site.***

Course Requirements

1. **Informed class participation:** Though this is a relatively large class (by Oberlin standards), participation will play a key role in the success of this class. This means that attendance and preparation is paramount. Please bring any notes you take while reading, the assigned course readings for the day’s discussion, and talking points and/or questions that you have regarding lecture topics. The course is structured with frequent group discussions. I will periodically collect worksheets from these groups as well as individual in-class writing assignments in order to assess your attendance and participation. Please email me if you plan to be absent for a session or have been absent. If you have a planned excused absence, assignments and responses are still due on time, so plan your time accordingly.

When reading and preparing for class, consider these questions:

- What are the differences and similarities between different national contexts and approaches?
- What is the major argument of each article, chapter, or book?
- What sources did the author use?
- What is the historiographical context of the book? For example: Where do the authors place themselves within the literature? What key concepts, conversations and arguments do they draw upon?
- What did you like and dislike? Think about this in terms of the questions the authors ask, the theoretical and methodological approach, the sources used, and your critical response.
2. Three short papers of 4-6 pgs: For the first paper you will be required to compare different accounts of the Noche Triste, a battle in the conquest of Tenochtitlan. The second paper requires you to draw on the work of Guaman Poma to explore a facet of life in colonial Peru. Suggested topics will be provided. The final short paper is a book review of *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity*. More detailed assignment instructions will be distributed closer to the due date.

3. Final Exam: This is a take-home exam that I will give you on the last day of classes. It will be a synthetic paper of approximately 3 pages that will require you to draw on both primary and secondary sources from the class to answer a question about the process of colonization in Latin America.

Grades for the course will be apportioned as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Source paper</td>
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<td>Guaman Poma paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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* All assignments must be completed to receive credit for the course.
** All work is governed by the Honor Code and must state, “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” at the top of the first page of all written work. For more information, see [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html).

Late Work: Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on their due date. No assignments will be accepted electronically. Late work will be graded as submitted and penalized 1/3 letter grade for each day late. For example, a B paper handed in 1 day late would earn a B-.

Support for Student Writing: I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center and to meet with their writing associates to hone your skills. For more information, see [http://new.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/departments/rhetoric/writing-associates-program/writing-center.dot](http://new.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/departments/rhetoric/writing-associates-program/writing-center.dot)

Disabilities: I am committed to working with students with disabilities to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. In order to establish a plan for assistance, contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Disability Services, Room G27 Peters Hall, ext. 55588.

Classroom Conduct: It is our responsibility to foster a safe classroom environment which is conducive to learning. Although lively discussion and disagreement with your colleagues can and should be part of the learning process, students who create a hostile environment for others
through discourteous, threatening, harassing, or aggressive behavior will be asked to leave and counted absent. Nor will students be permitted to sleep in class, read non-class materials, dispute grades, talk or text message on cell phones, listen to iPods, or surf the internet. During class, please do not engage with your phone in any manner. If this policy is violated, I will ask you to leave for the class period. You may use a laptop computer to take notes, provided that it is not used for Facebook, etc. However, if you abuse this privilege by surfing the internet, checking your email, or engaging in any non-class related activities, all computer privileges will be withdrawn for the rest of the semester.

**Contacting me:** I am delighted to be teaching this course, and I look forward to getting to know each of you better. Please visit me during office hours with questions or concerns about the course. If your schedule conflicts with my posted office hours, please email me or speak to me following class to set up an alternate meeting time. Please note that I will not be checking my email after 6 pm and on the weekends, so plan accordingly.

I am happy to discuss your assignments or review papers with you. However, I will not review any assignment within 24 hours of the due date, so plan ahead. If you have a question about your grade you must set an appointment with me at least one day after receiving your graded paper. At the appointment I expect you to have read all the comments on your paper and to have specific questions that you wish to discuss.

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**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 – Introductions and Spain on the Eve of Conquest**

Wed, Sep 04 - Introduction: What is Latin America?

Fri, Sep 06 – Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada, “Spain, circa 1492: Social Values and Structures,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between*

**Week 2 – Mesoamerica and the Andes before Spanish Conquest/Early Encounters**


**Week 3 - Comparing Accounts of the Conquest**


Film: selections from *La otra conquista* (The Other Conquest)


**Week 4 – Conquest in Myth and Memory**


Fri, Sep 27: Peer editing – Bring a hard copy of paper #1 draft

**Week 5 - Spiritual Conquests and Conversions**


Film: The Mission
Wed, Oct 02: No readings - The Mission Continued

PAPER #1 DUE


Week 6– Gender in Conquest and Colony


LIBRARY WORKSHOP (in-class)


Week 7 – Labor and Political Structures


Fri, Oct 18: Thesis Workshop for Paper #2 – email thesis by Thursday at 4pm

Thu, Oct 19: Thesis Workshop for Paper #2 – email thesis by Thursday at 4pm

Week 8 - Fall Break

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Week 9 – Brazil: Comparing Colonial Experiences

Wed, Oct 30: Peer Editing of Paper #2 – Bring hard copy to class
Fri, Nov 01: Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, To Be a Slave in Brazil, 1550-1888 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 85-106

PAPER #2 DUE

Week 10 – Gender in the Colonial Order: A Comparative Perspective


Week 11 - Colonial Racial Hierarchies


MUSEUM VISIT - TBA

Week 12 - Colonial Social Structures


Week 13 – The Bourbon Reforms and Creole Discontent


Fri, Nov 29: Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 14 – Creole Discontent**


Wed, Dec 04: Peer review of Paper #3 (Book Review)

**PAPER # 3 DUE (BOOK REVIEW)**

**Week 15 – Colonial Collapse**


Wed, Dec 11: Wrap-up

**TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE: Friday, Dec. 20th by NOON**