

# Early and Colonial Latin America – HIST 5391

Mondays, 6:00-8:45 PM

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Office Hours:  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30 AM  
Tuesdays, 10:15-11:45 AM  
Or by appointment

## Description

**“The examination of Latin American colonial subject formation is an evaluation of how New World subalterns came to be thinking, acting Christian subjects under Spanish colonial rule. More specifically, it is an investigation into intellectual change, an effort to point to the moments in which subaltern reasoning was undone by new forms of colonial thinking while also documenting how new structures of subaltern knowledge were erected in their place. [...] it is an attempt to document the processes of thinking that emerged in a new colonial context, novel processes introduced by colonizing powers that were mediated and transformed by colonial subjects.” – William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico***

This course offers an in-depth study of the scholarship in Latin American history from pre-contact societies to independence at the graduate level. It is designed to help graduate students simultaneously become familiar with the history and historiography of early and colonial Latin American history from pre-contact societies up through independence. At the same time, this course will help students explore the various types of history that historians embrace.

In particular, as the epigraph suggests, this course introduces students to Colonial Latin America through the theme of Knowledge and its production and transformation. This course will consider Indigenous, European, African, and hybrid epistemologies to analyze a number of questions: how are systems of knowledge produced, maintained, legitimized, and delegitimized? In what ways do epistemological structures reify or challenge dominant forms of power? What were key features of non-European forms of knowledge? What were the processes and consequences of colonization in the Americas after 1492? In drawing on historiography to consider these questions, this course will simultaneously help graduate students become familiar with the history and historiography of early and colonial Latin American history from before contact with Europeans up to independence in the 1820s while also considering broader questions about the relationship between knowledge, power, and society.

Materials in this course will familiarize graduate students with the general narrative of early and colonial Latin American history while also introducing them to many of the fundamental paradigms and analytical models that shape the field of history today. Core readings will be drawn from recent scholarship on early and colonial Latin America that will both reveal what recent trends have developed, even while addressing some of the older scholarship and issues that historians have confronted across the past several decades. This course should help you not only to better understand the peoples, culture, societies, and events of early and colonial Latin American history, but also to help you identify the kind of historian you are or hope to become and provide analytical tools to achieve your intellectual, personal, and professional goals.

## **Objectives**

This class is designed to strengthen graduate your abilities to provide critical and original analysis of historical processes, events, and monographs, even while introducing them to the history and historiography of Early and Colonial Latin America at the local, regional, national, and global levels. Drawing on recent historiography, this class will sharpen graduate your abilities in critical thinking, analysis, and writing, even while the course also helps students better understand the peoples, culture, societies, and events of Colonial Latin American history and apply an understanding of Latin American history to the past and present at the local, national, and global levels. Additionally, you will identify the type of historian they are or hope to become and will gain analytical tools to achieve their intellectual, personal, and professional goals. Thus, in accordance with the Student Learning Outcomes for this course, by the end of the semester, you will acquire the following skills:

- You will develop critical thinking skills that reflect an ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while improving creative thinking, innovation, and inquiry.
- You will develop communication skills that reflect the ability to develop, interpret, and express their own ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- You will develop a sense of social responsibility that reflects intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.
- You will develop a sense of personal responsibility that the ability to connect individual choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

More specifically, in accordance with the Student Learning Outcomes as they pertain to the material in this course, the student learning outcomes will accomplish the following:

- You will understand the social, cultural, political, and economic systems and worldviews of major pre-contact Indigenous Empires.
- You will analyze the effects of colonization on the lives of Indigenous peoples and Africans in the Americas. You will identify with the broad historiographical debates and issues that have defined Colonial Latin American history.
- You will identify the various lived experiences of a variety of peoples in all arenas of colonial life, including the social, political, cultural, and economic.
- You will be able to identify the continuities and transformations as Latin America went from Habsburg to Bourbon colonial rule.
- You will identify the contours and differences between Spanish and Portuguese colonization and societies in the Americas.
- You will situate the Americas within the broader world historical processes of the fourteenth to the early-nineteenth centuries.
- You will analyze what Colonial Latin American history reveals about world history and historical process.
- You will identify how trends in Latin American history can inform our understanding of history, cultures, societies, and peoples in other parts of the world.
- You will compare and contrast the ways in which different societies conceptualize and construct identities within terms of race, class, gender, ideology, and other categories of analysis.
- You will develop the ability to think critically about historical monographs, including the merits or demerits of their source base, the quality of their arguments, and their contributions to the broader field of historiography, in and beyond Latin America.
- You will discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that historians employ in analyzing

historical processes.

### **Required Readings**

Students are required to complete *all* of the readings for the course. As this is a graduate readings seminar, students are expected to complete one book a week. Unless otherwise noted below, [nearly all these books are available digitally \(with some limitations\) through the library](#). The readings are:

- Bialuschewski, Arne. *Raiders and Natives: Cross-Cultural Relations in the Age of Buccaneers*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2022.
- Covey, R. Alan. *Inca Apocalypse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Germeten, Nicole von. *Death in Old Mexico: The 1789 Dongo Murders and How They Shaped the History of a Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. [**Not available digitally through the library**]
- Gitlitz, David M. *Living in Silverado: Secret Jews in the Silver Mining Towns of Colonial Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019.
- González Espitia, Juan Carlos. *Sifilografía: A History of the Writerly Pox in the Eighteenth-Century Hispanic World*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019.
- Hughes, Jennifer Schepher. *The Church of the Dead: The Epidemic of 1576 and the Birth of Christianity in the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.
- Lamana, Gonzalo. *How "Indians" Think: Colonial Indigenous Intellectuals and the Question of Race Theory*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019. [**Not available digitally through the library**]
- Norton, Marcy. *The Tame and the Wild: People and Animals after 1492*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2024.
- Ochoa, Margarita, and Sara Guengerich, eds. *Cacicas: The Indigenous Women Leaders of Spanish America, 1492-1825*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021.
- Owensby, Brian Philip. *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of the Modern Economy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022.
- Pennock, Caroline Dodds. *On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe*. New York: Knopf, 2023.
- Ramos, Christina. *Bedlam in the New World: A Mexican Madhouse in the Age of Enlightenment*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022.
- Roller, Heather F. *Contact Strategies: Histories of Native Autonomy in Brazil*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.
- Rosenmüller, Christoph. *Viceroy Güemes's Mexico: Rituals, Religion, and Revenue*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2024.
- Townsend, Camilla. *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

### **Course Requirements**

There are three major elements that will make the totality of your grade in this seminar-style course: attendance and participation; weekly reflections on the readings; and a 7000-8500 word historiographical essay.

#### **I. Attendance and Participation (15%)**

Participation means coming to class well prepared and participating every week. This means being prepared to discuss, analyze, and compare the works and ideas we encounter in the weekly readings, having ideas and questions of your own to raise and discuss in class, and being able to address directed questions to demonstrate familiarity with the week's readings and preparedness for the

class. In the event you miss a class (excused or unexcused), you will be required to write an 800-word book review of the book we discussed in the class you missed. [Please note: these book reviews are not substitutes for weekly reflections; you would still be expected to submit the more informal reflections.]

**II. Weekly reflections (15%):** Given this course’s focus on exactly how we think about, approach, study, and “do” history, you will be required to submit a weekly reflection on the readings each week. These reflections should be brief – 200-250 words – and, as their name suggests, may be reflective, opting for a more “informal,” personal journal-style prose (though still following basic grammatical and syntactical reflections). You are not necessarily expected to have a full comprehension over the readings each week; rather, these reflections should serve as ways to work through your ideas, understandings, and thoughts on each week’s topic. Questions you can address in these reflections include (but are not limited to):

- What the student thinks the main idea(s) are of the week’s monograph(s) are.
- The methodologies of the work and their strengths and/or limitations
- Areas where the student was uncertain/unclear, why, and what the student might think the scholars were trying to say or accomplish
- What the contributions of that week’s readings are to the historiography of Latin America and/or to understandings of colonialism.
- Ways the week’s reading can inform our own approaches to historical research and analysis.
- Questions you would like to see discussed in class.

You are expected to submit these reflections **every week by 8:00AM every Monday**. These reflections are worth 15% of the student’s final grade. There is no makeup if a student misses a reflection; they will simply receive a zero (0) for that week’s reflection (1% of the total grade).

### **III. A historiographic Essay (70%)**

A historiographic essay of books from outside of the class (i.e., not from our weekly readings) will make up the final 70% of your grade. This paper is to be 7000-8500 words in length. The paper is due at the end of the semester. This essay will analyze the state of research in a particular subject or area of the history of Colonial Latin America and will be based on a subject/conceptual framework that interests you. You may do **any topic on Colonial Latin America** that interests them. You are expected to email your topic idea or meet with Dr. Snider to discuss it by **week 7**. The final paper will be due **by 7:00AM on Friday, December 13**. There will be a guide on a historiographic essay is, and some of the methods and strategies for writing one, available on Canvas.

### **Grades**

Based on the assignments outlined above, your grade breaks down as follows (with the standard scale of A, 90-100; B, 80-89; C, 70-79; D, 60-69; and F, 59 or lower):

<b>Attendance and Participation</b>	15%
<b>Historiographic Essay’s Annotated Bibliography</b>	15%
<b>Final Historiographic Essay</b>	70%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Attendance and Makeup Policy**

Students must make every effort to be in class regularly. In cases of **emergency** (i.e., serious illness, family emergencies, etc.), however, an absence may be excused. The student should make sure to consult with the professor as soon as possible in order to provide advance warning of absences where possible. Students must also provide documentation in order for an absence to be excused. As noted above, whether an absence is excused or unexcused, a student must submit a book review for that week's reading when missing a class.

Students also must put forth every effort to submit their papers on time. Each day the paper is late will result in a reduction of one-letter grade from the student's paper. If the paper is one week late, it will not be accepted, and the student will receive an **automatic zero** for the assignment. In the event a student needs a paper extension due to serious illness, family emergency, etc., they must make every effort to speak with the professor in advance, keeping in mind that paper extensions remain the professor's prerogative.

### **Syllabus Notice**

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus; however, you will be given ample warning to any possible changes, and no changes will be made in ways that negatively affect your expected deadlines.

**UT Tyler Honor Code** Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

## Course Calendar

### **Week 1 (August 26) – Precontact Empire in Mesoamerica**

Townsend, Camilla. *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

### **Week 2 (September 2) – Precontact Empire and Conquest in South America**

Covey, R. Alan. *Inca Apocalypse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

[Labor Day – No Class Meeting; Discussion of Covey on September 9 alongside week 3 reading]

### **Week 3 (September 9) – Knowledge and Environment in Contact**

Norton, Marcy. *The Tame and the Wild: People and Animals after 1492*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2024.

### **Week 4 (September 16) – Indigenous Knowledge on the Global Stage**

Pennock, Caroline Dodds. *On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe*. New York: Knopf, 2023.

### **Week 5 (September 23) – Colonialism and Commodities**

Owensby, Brian Philip. *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of the Modern Economy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022.

### **Week 6 (September 30) – Religion and Society**

Hughes, Jennifer Schep. *The Church of the Dead: The Epidemic of 1576 and the Birth of Christianity in the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.

### **Week 7 (October 7) – Ethnicity, Economy, and Extraction [No Class Meeting this week;**

Discussion of Gitlitz on October 14 alongside week 8 reading]

Gitlitz, David M. *Living in Silverado: Secret Jews in the Silver Mining Towns of Colonial Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019.

### **Week 8 (October 14) – Extralegal and Peripheral Contact and Exchange**

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

### **Week 9 (October 21) – Race and Colonial Knowledge Production**

Lamana, Gonzalo. *How “Indians” Think: Colonial Indigenous Intellectuals and the Question of Race Theory*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019.

### **Week 10 (October 28) – Gender and Colonialism**

Ochoa, Margarita, and Sara Guengerich, eds. *Caciccas: The Indigenous Women Leaders of Spanish America, 1492-1825*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021.

### **Week 11 (November 4) – Disease, Culture, and Knowledge**

González Espitia, Juan Carlos. *Sifilografía: A History of the Writerly Pox in the Eighteenth-Century Hispanic World*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019.

### **Week 12 (November 11) – Enlightenment Thought and Society in Late Colonial Latin America**

Ramos, Christina. *Bedlam in the New World: A Mexican Madhouse in the Age of Enlightenment*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022.

**Week 13 (November 18) - Indigenous Society and Survival**

Roller, Heather F. *Contact Strategies: Histories of Native Autonomy in Brazil*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.

**Week 14 (November 25) - Reform in Late Colonial Latin America**

Rosenmüller, Christoph. *Viceroy Güemes's Mexico: Rituals, Religion, and Revenue*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2024.

[No Class Meeting - Thanksgiving Break; Discussion of Rosenmüller on December 2 alongside week 15 reading]

**Week 15 (December 2) - Social Unrest and New Ideas in the Late Colonial Era**

Germeten, Nicole von. *Death in Old Mexico: The 1789 Dongo Murders and How They Shaped the History of a Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

**Finals Week (December 9)**

*Historiographic Essay due at 7AM on Thursday, December 12*